



Farmington Canal Heritage Trail Gap Closure Study and CTfastrak Connection Study

Steering Committee/Technical Team Meeting

July 11, 2017 / 2:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Plainville Public Library, Auditorium

56 E Main Street / Plainville

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Public Comment
3. Minutes from April 19th meeting
4. Project Updates
 - a. Public Meeting May 22nd
 - b. Plainville Town Council Briefing June 5th
5. Alternatives Evaluation
 - a. Evaluation Criteria and Methods
 - b. Findings
 - c. What's Next?
6. Public Outreach Schedule
 - a. New Britain Bike Rodeo July 8th
 - b. Public Workshop (Date TBD – late Summer [August or September])
7. Next Steps and Adjourn

NOTE TO PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

We do not discriminate on the basis of disability. Individuals who need auxiliary aids are invited to make their needs known by contacting us by mail, phone, fax or email as soon as possible. Contact: Timothy Malone, (860) 724-4221 or tmalone@crcog.org.

Un interprete estará disponible para esta reunión si usted lo solicita al (860) 724-4221, lo más pronto posible. Contact: Timothy Malone at tmalone@crcog.org.

Jeśli potrzebujesz tłumacza na język polski, zadzwoń (860) 724-4221, jak najszybciej. Contact: Timothy Malone at tmalone@crcog.org.



241 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06106-5310





Meeting Notes

Place: Plainville Public Library
Auditorium
56 East Main Street
Plainville, CT

Date: April 19, 2017

Notes Taken by: Geoffrey Morrison-Logan
and Theresa Carr

Project #: 42201.00

Re: Steering Committee and Technical Team Meeting
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail Gap Closure Study and
CTfastrak Connection Study (Gap Closure Trail Study)

ATTENDEES

Steering Committee & Technical Team

Tim Malone, Capitol Region Council of Governments
Anna Bergeron, CTDOT
Jim Cassidy, Plainville Greenway Alliance
Garrett Daigle, Town of Plainville
Mark Devoe, Town of Plainville
Bruce Donald, East Coast Greenway Alliance
Laurie Giannotti, CT DEEP
Sue Jacozzi, Plainville Southington Health District
Maureen Lawrence, CTDOT
Mark Moriarty, City of New Britain
Rob Phillips, Town of Southington
Edward Sabourin, CTDOT
Pete Salomone, Plainville Greenway Alliance
Grayson Wright, CTDOT

Consultant Team

Theresa Carr, VHB
Mark Jewell, VHB
Geoffrey Morrison-Logan, VHB

The 5th Steering Committee meeting took place on Wednesday, April 19, 2017 from 2:30-4:30pm at the Plainville Public Library. Much like the November 2016 meeting, this was a joint meeting with the project's Technical Team. The meeting purpose was to review project updates, discuss the screening criteria that led to the identification of a shortlist of practical and feasible alternatives, and walk through the shortlisted alternatives. The group also discussed upcoming public outreach efforts, including a possible public meeting on May 22nd. This meeting summary is organized by agenda item, and captures the main points of the discussion and action items. Materials presented during the meeting are included at the end of this meeting summary.

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Introductions

Tim Malone, CRCOG Project Manager, opened the Joint Steering Committee/Technical Team Meeting and then reviewed the purpose of the meeting:

*Today's meeting is about discussing **recent project activities**, presenting a **practical and feasible set of alternatives** for completing the gap in the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, including the criteria used to get where we are, and **how we will evaluate remaining alternatives**.*

Tim review the agenda for the meeting, which included the following items:

- Public Comment
- Project Updates
- Alternatives Development
 - Long list
 - Short list
- Public Outreach Schedule
- Next Steps and Adjourn

Tim reviewed the project Vision Statement:

*"The vision for the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and CTfastrak Gap Closure study is to connect the communities with a **world-class multi-use trail** that closes the gap in the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT) through the towns of Southington and Plainville with a connection to the CTfastrak station in downtown New Britain. These links will **prioritize safety, comfort, and mobility for all users, regardless of age or ability**, through cohesive and attractive trails that promote economic and community vitality."*

Meeting participants went around the table introducing themselves.

2. Public Comment

Tim opened the meeting for Public Comment. No members of the public were present.

3. Project Updates – Restarting the Project

A summary of project updates was provided by Tim. The updates included items that were undertaken since the last Joint Committee Meeting that was held on November, 15, 2016. Tim provided copies of the November 2016 meeting summary and asked the group if there were any changes that needed to be made. The group had no changes to the meeting notes and agreed with their content.

The summary of Project Updates includes the following:

- An introduction to new team members
- Discussions about use of rail right of way
- Reference to the draft Existing Conditions report
- Adjustments to “decision matrix” from the November meeting
- Organization and screening of alignment alternatives

Team Organization:

Tim introduced the Organization of the Team with and updated Organization Chart. Theresa Carr is our new consultant Project Manager, Mark Jewell moves into a Senior Technical Advisor role, Geoffrey Morrison-Logan will take a more active role leading outreach efforts, Chris Dewitt joins the team as the task lead for transportation planning. Theresa and Geoffrey introduced themselves.

Use of Rail Right of Way:

Tim provided an update on the Use of the Rail Right of Way based on discussion with Pan Am Railways. The following was noted by Tim:

- At this time, the project will not assume rail right of way is available
- Use of north-south rail right of way is not considered a fatal flaw
 - Effort made to shift alignments outside rail right of way
 - Will take impacts on rail right of way into consideration during evaluation

Existing Condition Report:

Tim provided an update on the Existing Condition Report. The following was noted by Tim about the Report:

- The Report sets the “goal posts” for evaluating alternatives
- The Report compiles information about what is on the ground today so that it can inform the alternatives evaluation step
- The Report considers Transportation and Land Use
- The Report existing and future (near-term)
- Plainville and New Britain (some reference of Southington)

Refinements to Decision Matrix:

Comments provided by the Steering Committee and the Technical Team from the November worksession have been incorporated into the decision matrix. Further refinements to the evaluation step are covered under the next agenda item.

Organization and Screening of Alignment Alternatives:

This topic is covered under the next agenda item.

4. Alternatives Development and Screening Summary

Geoffrey Morrison-Logan described how each of the individual concepts introduced through the fall 2016 public charrettes and outreach discussions were converted into alternatives for either the Plainville or New Britain segments. A total of 14 concepts were developed in Plainville and 5 in New Britain. Together, these 19 concepts are referred to as the long list of potential alternatives.

Theresa Carr provided a summary of the Screening Criteria that was used to assess the long list, and to create a shortlist of practical and feasible alignments to be carried through the evaluation step. The intent of the screening step is to create a shortlist of practical and feasible alternatives. The intent of the evaluation step is to identify one preferred alignment connecting the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail through Plainville, and one preferred alignment connecting this trail with the CTfastrak station in New Britain.

These screening criteria are as follows:

No.	Screening Question	Threshold
1.	Does the alternative connect at the north and south ends with the East Coast Greenway (constructed, or in design)?	Connects at north end with North West Drive between Route 10 and Route 177 Connects at south end with Town Line Road between Route 10 and Route 177
2.	Does the alternative connect with downtown?	Connects with Route 372 (Main Street) no further east than Woodford Avenue Connects with Route 372 (Main Street) no further west than Route 177
3.	Does the alternative have a major off-road element?	More than 75% off street, to get as close as possible to East Coast Greenway goals of 100% off-road trail facility

No.	Screening Question	Threshold
		NOTE: Side paths adjacent to roads are considered off-road
4.	Can the alternative be constructed without significant ROW impacts?	Fewer than 30
5.	Does the alternative avoid undue reliance on Railroad ROW?	Avoids requiring portions of path being constructed within the Waterbury Branch ROW Avoids having three or more at-grade crossings of the Waterbury Branch Avoids requiring permanent impacts to rail yard
6.	Does the alternative avoid being overly circuitous (for no apparent reason)?	Not more than double straight-line distance between North West Drive and Town Line Road

Theresa described that the application of the six screening criteria resulted in the identification of four alignments in Plainville. Of these four, she described that one (Alignment A) does not meet the 75% off-road criterion but was retained because it was the preferred alternative from the latest study on this segment, the 2009 Milone & MacBroom study. Furthermore, one additional alignment (Alignment B) was potentially problematic in that it requires a flyover of the Pan Am rail yard, but upon further consideration it was deemed feasible and should be evaluated.

Theresa stated that because the starting number of concepts in New Britain was small the screening step was not applied.

Comments from Committee

- 1) The Committee stated support for the screening criteria and the screening results
- 2) One Committee member asked about the ROW impact threshold of 30 impacts – was that 30 impacts to private parcels, or private and public combined? Theresa clarified that the threshold was 30 impacts to private parcels, which could be residential, commercial, or industrial.
- 3) There was a discussion about reliance on railroad ROW, and whether that screening criterion should be expanded to include any reliance on rail ROW, including the north south line. Theresa clarified that even though the north south rail line was not considered to be a fatal

flaw criterion, all effort was made to shift trail alignments outside the rail ROW. This would not preclude future discussions with Pan Am but would allow the current project to move forward.

- 4) Some discussion took place about whether Alignment B, which features a flyover of the Pan Am rail yard, should be screened out due to screening criterion 5. Theresa clarified that Alignment B appears to require a construction easement from Pan Am, but does not appear to impact train movements on a permanent basis. Alignment B therefore, for now, will move forward into the evaluation step.
- 5) The group discussed screening criterion 6. What does overly circuitous mean, and does a recreational trail need to worry about being circuitous? Theresa agreed, and stated that this was why the criterion allowed for diversion and meandering by creating a threshold of double straightline distance. If a concept was more than double straightline distance, the team asked whether there was an obvious reason for the diversion (what attraction was connected). If no obvious connection was made, the concept was removed.

Mark Jewell walked the Steering Committee and Technical Team through the shortlisted alignments using Google Earth as the platform. The alignments were:

- **Alignment A** – the preferred alternative from the 2009 Milone & MacBroom study, this alignment assumes use of the Pan Am north south rail right of way, uses Cronk Road and Main Street, Pierce Street, Broad Street, Heminway Street, through Norton Park to Robert Jackson Way. It is majority on-road.
- **Alignment B** – this alignment turns east on an off road path on the northern edge of North West Drive, crosses North West Drive to an off road alignment on boardwalk or trail, curving back west along the southern edge of the treatment plant to Cronk Road, on a flyover of the Pan Am Rail yard and the Waterbury Branch to Neal Court, Main Street, Pierce Street, the historic canal right of way to Norton Park, continuing on historic canal right of way to Town Line Road.
- **Alignment C** – called “the western alignment” this alignment turns west on the northern edge of North West Drive, turning south on Peron Road connecting with Tomasso Nature Park and continuing south on mainly town-owned property, tunneling under Route 72. In the vicinity of Phoenix Soil, the trail would come along the eastern edge of Route 177 on an off-road alignment. South of downtown this alignment follows the previous paths of Pierce Street, former canal right of way to Norton Park to former canal right of way.
- **Alignment D** – similar to Alignment B but this alignment turns west at Robert Street extension, and follows an at-grade alignment at Cronk Road to Norton Place, E Main Street to Pierce Road, former canal right of way to Norton Park. This alignment might curve in back of the industrial businesses east of Robert Jackson Way to Town Line Road.

The New Britain alignments mainly follow Woodford Avenue and Black Rock Road. The New Britain off road alignment would fit between Route 72 and Black Rock Road. A variation of local street alignments are considered between Route 372 and the New Britain **CTfastrak** station.

Comments from Committee

1. The Committee stated general support for the shortlisted alternatives
2. Mark Moriarty of the City of New Britain asked why the screening criteria were not applied to New Britain alignments. When Theresa responded that the New Britain alignments did not appear to have the same goals as the FCHT alignments, Mark disagreed. He stated that off-road was critical to this alignment, even if it is not something the City could accomplish immediately.
3. The group went on to discuss this at some length and ultimately recommended that the consultant team apply the screening criteria to the New Britain alignments, knowing that only one alignment would pass the screening step. Therefore, the consultant team will devote resources in the short term to test the feasibility of this one off-road alignment, including an exploration of grades, property impacts, costs, crossings, and phaseability before proceeding to recommend it as a preferred alternative.

5. Public Outreach Schedule

Geoffrey talked through the project's workplan and next steps, with an emphasis on touch points with the general public. In particular, the group is looking at a public meeting to discuss the long list of project alternatives, the screening and evaluation criteria, and the shortlist of practical and feasible alternatives. The date that is being targeted for the public meeting is May 22.

The schedule and draft agenda for the next public meeting was provided as a handout.

Proposed Public Meeting Format

Presentation | Question and Answer | Open house

- 6:00-6:15 Sign in, open house
- 6:15-7:15 Presentation and Q&A
- 7:15-8:00 Open house, submit comments

6. Next Steps and Adjourn

The Meeting adjourned at 4:30pm.

Statement of Accuracy:

- We believe these minutes accurately describe the discussion and determinations of this meeting. Unless notified to the contrary within 5 business days, we will assume all in attendance concur with the accuracy of these notes.

Notes Submitted by:



Theresa Carr

Notes Approved by:



Tim Malone

Distribution: Attendees

Project File 42201.00



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

Meeting Notes

Date: May 22, 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, the development of a short list of trail alignments for Plainville and New Britain, and a set of criteria that will be used to evaluate 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, and 22 comment forms were submitted

1. Call to Order: Geoffrey Morrison-Logan (VHB) called the meeting to order at 6:20pm, welcoming members of the public and introducing 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
 - 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
- d.** Theresa Carr (VHB) provided a summary of the screening criteria that were 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 as much as possible 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 of 2016 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 as the projects moved forward. 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.

6. Additional Mail-in Comments

Comment forms were available at the public meeting and posted to the project website at www.gapclosuretrailstudy.com. The comment forms were a self-mailer format which allowed members of the public to fill them out at their leisure and mail them to Mr. Malone at CRCOG. A total of 22 comment forms were received. Feedback is organized by the questions asked by the comment form.

Questions Related to Screening: Do you agree with the screening criteria used to establish a shortlist of practical and feasible alternatives? Do you agree with the results of the screening process?

- 22 respondents answered yes, they agree with the screening criteria. No respondents answered no, and none of the respondents left this question blank.
- 17 respondents answered that they agree with the results of the screening process. 3 respondents answered no, and 2 left this question blank.

Raw comments provided on this question:

- More work needs to be completed and the public still needs to be educated as to the constraints that drove some of the preliminary alignment selections.
- Concerned that cost has not yet been factored into decision making. The longer it takes to design/engineer and building this trail, the more likely it will be that funds will be scarce or simply unavailable. If the latter is true and we (PGA) needs to look for private funding, cost will be a big factor in that effort.
- Include accessibility for as many people as possible. That section of Plainville has busy/dangerous roads, no shoulder, no sidewalks. We have to drive the ½-1 ½ miles to get into town if we want to do it safely.
- Strongly disagree that the trail which leads to the Tomasso Nature Park would disturb the wildlife. If the trail goes on the outside of the park, people could still enjoy the beautiful park.
- In Alignment C, please go around the park because of the wildlife.
- The idea of connectivity is the most important. Connect people to the trail, to town parks, to town center and businesses. Unfortunately, the portion of town north of Rt 372 and west of Rt 177 is currently not connected due to the lack of sidewalks and otherwise safe accessibility options. This trail is a chance to rectify that.

Questions Related to the Shortlist of Practical and Feasible Alternatives: What are your thoughts on the assumptions used to develop Alignment A, B, C, D, E, and F? Do you agree with the routing and trail type assumptions used?

- 19 respondents answered yes, they agree with the routing and trail type assumptions used. 2 respondents answered no (1 respondent answered both yes and no), and 2 respondents left this question blank.

Raw comments provided on the questions related to the shortlisted alternatives:

Preference for Alignment C due to its 95% off road character and that it utilizes the Nature Park.

- Preference for Alignment C which has the most off road options and seems like a safe route for children. Also, Alignment C has a nice route to the left of the airport through the swampy area. Preference for Alignment E since it's also mostly off road and the fact that Alignment C is to the left of Downtown Plainville, Alignment E from New Britain would bring you right through downtown to better businesses.

- Preference for Alignment B, C, and D. The more the historic canal can be used, the more attractive the Plan is. Avoid the routes going through neighborhoods, like the Willis Ave/Hemingway Street suggestion.
- None of the presented alignments brings the trail to the Plainville Senior Center so that the seniors would have a safe jumping off point for walking the trail. Many seniors do not or cannot drive, so they would not have access to the trail.
- Preference for Alignment D as it has most off road and does not go through center of Plainville. It will have access to center retail with connections to New Britain section.
- Preference for alignments that hug closely to Rt. 10.
- Agreed with the assumptions and as stated during the presentation, as the Technical and Steering Committees delve deeper into the details of the chosen preliminary alternatives, those assumptions might just be proven inaccurate, incorrect, or infeasible. Flexibility and adaptation are the keys to a successful conclusion to this study.
- Agreed with the majority: the northern rail is the greatest choice for that part of the alignment. Short of that, the march route intrigues me, but I wonder why the other side of the floodplain wasn't considered (west). If we can't get a significant amount of support from impacted property owners near the canal route by the church, we can hopefully still get the churches concurrence and get out onto Pearl St., then through the Park and to Town line, first via off road (east #1-west #2), then on-road if necessary. I like having the trail on Pierce Street and I like the floodplain route along the south bank of the Pequabuck River.
- Alignment C is the best route due to the fact that it's 95% off road which is great and it represents a nature/history (core) trail in Plainville. Alignment B would be second choice as it goes along the wetlands. Alignment E is preferred for New Britain section since it's mostly off road and protected.
- The single biggest criteria used is the minimum 75% off-road. PGA was always willing to accept less (much less) than that, and that has been a sticking point. Also please emphasize abandonment of any possibility of rail-with-trail.
- Alignment B, C, and D all have good parts to each, so how to select those and create one alignment that has the best of all three? For Alignment B, there seems to include fly over bridge at rail yard that is not a good idea due to long ramps required to get to height required. For Alignment C, how to do off-road on CT177? How to cross W. Main St? Alignment E looks to be a better off-road option and also possibly the more costly.
- Preference for Alignment C because of the mileage and the percentage off road for safety purpose.
- Alignment C is the best because it gives access to the trail and to downtown to people who don't have it. Please prioritize Plainville alignments before New Britain alignments because the prior have much higher priority to close the gap.
- Hemingway Street used in one route is heavily populated, with lots of houses, driveways, narrow roads, etc. Not a smart choice for a connection to the Park.
- On-road sections might not be safe, depending on what barriers can be effective for safety.
- Alignment C is visually the nicest though it might not be the most efficient.

- Hemingway Drive is such a thin road, hard to visualize a bike trail. Also, Hemingway and Broad have many private driveways, the chance of a car backs into a bike is quite possible.
- Respect fully the request that the North South project being prioritized over East West, if the two projects cannot be completed together. East West project should not delay completion of the North South project.
- Preference for Alignment C since it has the most percentage off road, uses state/town lands, and has little impact to privately owned properties.
- Preference for a multi-use trail having 90% or greater off-road. Having worked with the disabled for over 20 years and having a moderate to severe hearing impairment, safety and ADA compliance is of utmost importance to me. The trail chosen should also have minimal flooding concerns. Alignment B or C looks good.
- It is impossible not to go on the road somewhere. A large sidewalk with grass and a guard rail would work. Alignment C and D are two good choices which both show different parts of Plainville.
- The sections which are along roads should be protected from traffic using jersey barriers or other means.
- Would not pursue Alignment A, too much on road. On Alignment B, concerned about flyover in terms of both feasibility/expense and accessibility to persons of all ages or those with limitations. Pleased to see Norton Park as part of all alignments. The trails are appropriate resources to incorporate at Norton Park and also has great historical significance due to visibility of canal.
- Agreed with the focus on off road trails. The trail should offer people a chance to take advantage of what Plainville center has to offer. It's a way to showcase our town to passersby and solidify the connection to our residents. Alignment C is the best since it truly reconnects the northwest part of town back to the rest in a safe way. It also puts a bit of focus on the wonderful Tomasso Park. It avoids any entanglements with the railway and offers accessibility both to users and emergency services if needed.
- Preferred type of trails: Long stretch of undisturbed trails between road crossings, e.g. long sections of trail in and north of Granby; Trails leading to destinations, e.g. Unionville into Collinsville where the trail goes along the river into a quaint town like Collinsville; Wide multi-use trails with wide bike lanes and maintained during winter, e.g. Iron Horse Boulevard in Simsbury.
- Disliked type of trails: Trail is surrounded on both sides by very tall fence for a long straight section with one break in the middle, feels unsafe with no real escape route, e.g. where the trail crosses Tamarack Lane in Simsbury; Road crossing at every 300 ft., e.g. north section of New Haven; Bicycle unfriendly signs, e.g. "Bicyclists must dismount and walk across each road crossing".
- Need to make one section of the Plainville trail a destination for bicyclists where people want to stop and spend money.

Questions Related to the Evaluation Criteria: Each of the alignments will be evaluated against evaluation criteria that address: connectivity, safety, security, potential right-of-way/property impacts, environmental considerations, and costs. Are these the right criteria? Is anything missing? What in your opinion is most important?

- 18 respondents answered yes, they agree with the evaluation criteria. None of the respondents answered no, and 4 respondents left this question blank.

Raw comments provided on the questions related to the evaluation criteria:

- Safety is the most important evaluation criteria.
- Security and safety are the most important evaluation criteria.
- To have family use road sections must have barrier between cycles and motor traffic.
- Economic development is the most important criteria, e.g. the concept of transit oriented development.
- All are the right criteria and which one is most important is very subjective and has a lot to do with the specific design selected for each section of trail. A trail alongside a busy road will need to pay more attention to safety while a trail through a wooded area might be more concerned with security.
- Added plaques for history and nature summaries would be good.
- Connectivity is important. Also need to emphasize that planners are trying to get the alignment close to Plainville center.
- Needs to take into consideration if extra construction is needed such as tunnels or bridges.
- Highest priority: percentage off road should be very high (90%+). Connectivity for the section of Plainville near Tomasso is also priority.
- Unless we have safe and secure routes through town, people will go north from Farmington south from Farmington and not venture on our section of trail. Cooperation from police department is critical. Traffic enhancements through town is also very important.
- Environmental impact, safety, security and cost are important.
- Safety and environmental concerns are most important.
- Fun, emergency access, signage, facilities and parking are important.
- Safety and cost are important.
- Connectivity and safety are important.
- Connectivity and accessibility is most important. Beyond that, a focus on maximizing the off road nature of the trail.

Final Question: Do you have any other comments about the project?

- We want it yesterday (soon).
- Love the project. Hope the negativity will be proven wrong.
- Cost will be important but "cheap" is not always better. Also phasing in the Nature Park half of the trail first makes a lot of sense, especially following the canal route up to Pierce Street.

- Flexibility and adaptation are required. Unforeseen opportunities would be great. Hybrid designs are likely, as are on road portions of the trail.
- Presentation boards from 5/22 public meeting took too long to download, probably due to large file size. Please find a way to improve this, otherwise public will lose patience.
- Maps on the website print too small to distinguish street names. It would be great to have one pole in the middle of trail at intersections.
- All potential routes are well thought out and offer some creative solutions. On the New Britain link, any improvements a rail trail brings will improve Rt. 372 or Woodford Ave.
- Thank you for your patience, time and work! This is a very worthy project and you have a lot of support from the town's people!
- Impressed with the presentation. Very organized, well versed and no redundancy.
- Hope it finally goes through to completion.
- May consider implement project in phases if funding become a constraint.
- Suggest that parking lanes on both sides of streets be used for protected bike lanes and create off street parking.
- Urge more emphasis on the trail as multi-purpose, which will also increase public support and enthusiasm.
- Should focus on closing the gap and at a later date look at connecting to the FastTrack.
- This is a unique opportunity to look at surrounding multi-use trails in the state, take the best ideas from them, and create the perfect trail that would be the envy of surrounding towns.

Statement of Accuracy:

- We believe these minutes accurately describe the discussion and determinations of this meeting. Unless notified to the contrary within 5 business days, we will assume all in attendance concur with the accuracy of these notes.

Notes Submitted by:



Theresa Carr

Notes Approved by:



Tim Malone

Distribution: website – interested parties list
Project File 42201.00



GAP! CLOSURE TRAIL STUDY

Farmington Canal Heritage Trail Gap Closure and CTfastrak Study

CRCOG, Plainville, Southington and New Britain

Steering Committee/Technical Team Meeting
July 11, 2017

vhb | **MOBYCOB** | **CONNECTIONS GAP! TRAIL** | **6X SIXTY ZONES**

Purpose of Today's Meeting

Today's meeting is about discussing **recent project activities**, presenting the results of the **evaluation of the shortlisted alignments** for completing the gap in the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, and **discussing a preferred alignment** for the Plainville gap and the connection to *CTfastrak*



Agenda

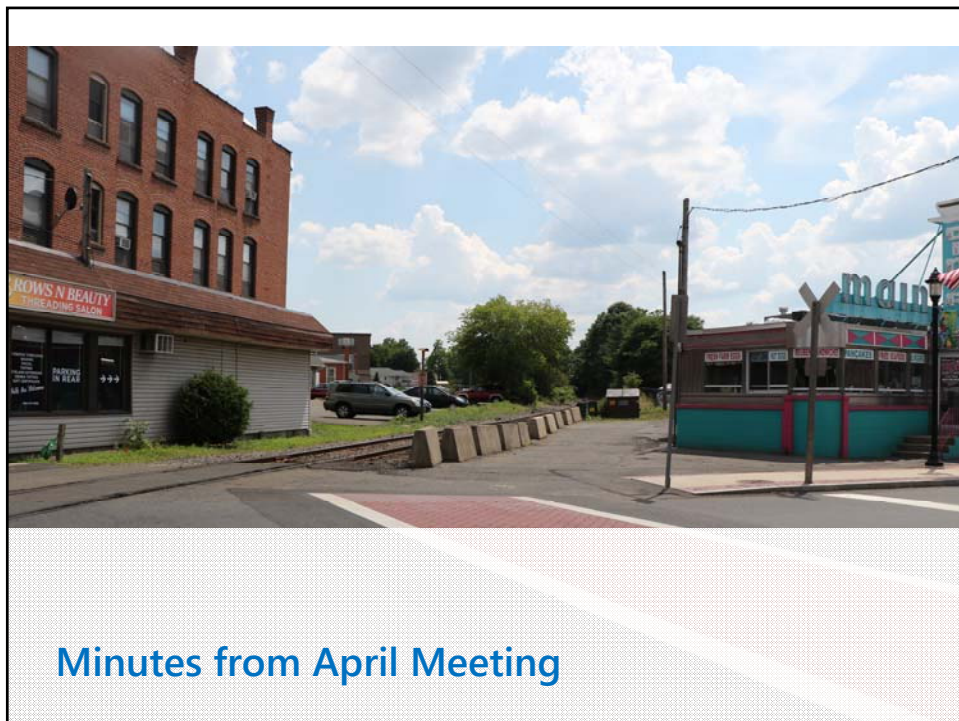
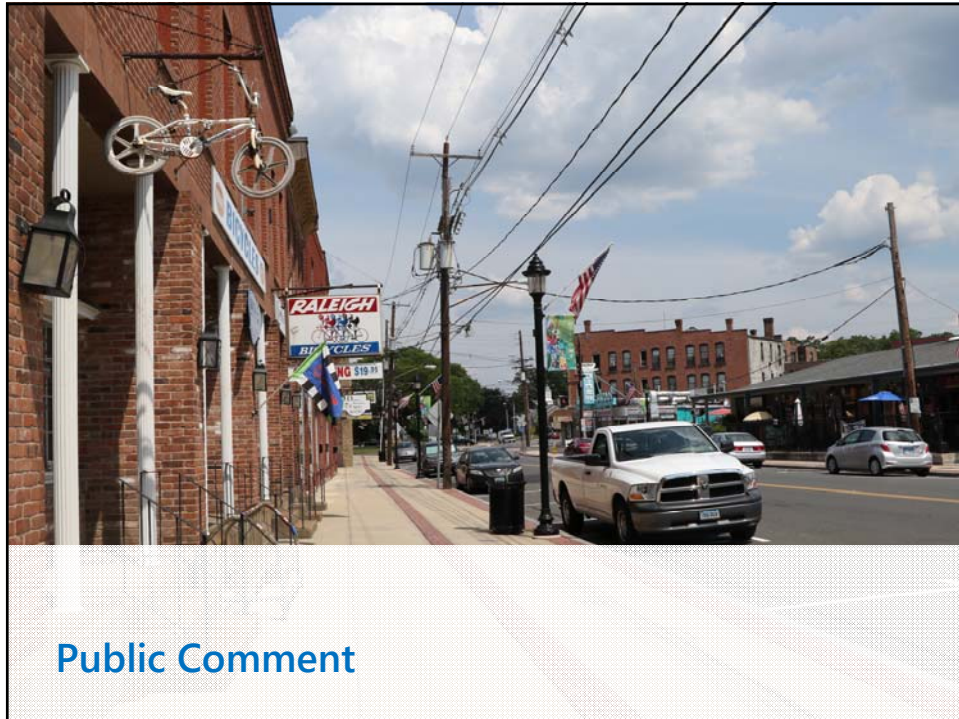
1. Public Comment
2. Minutes from April 19th Meeting
3. Project Updates
4. Alternatives Evaluation
5. Public Outreach Schedule
6. Next Steps and Adjourn

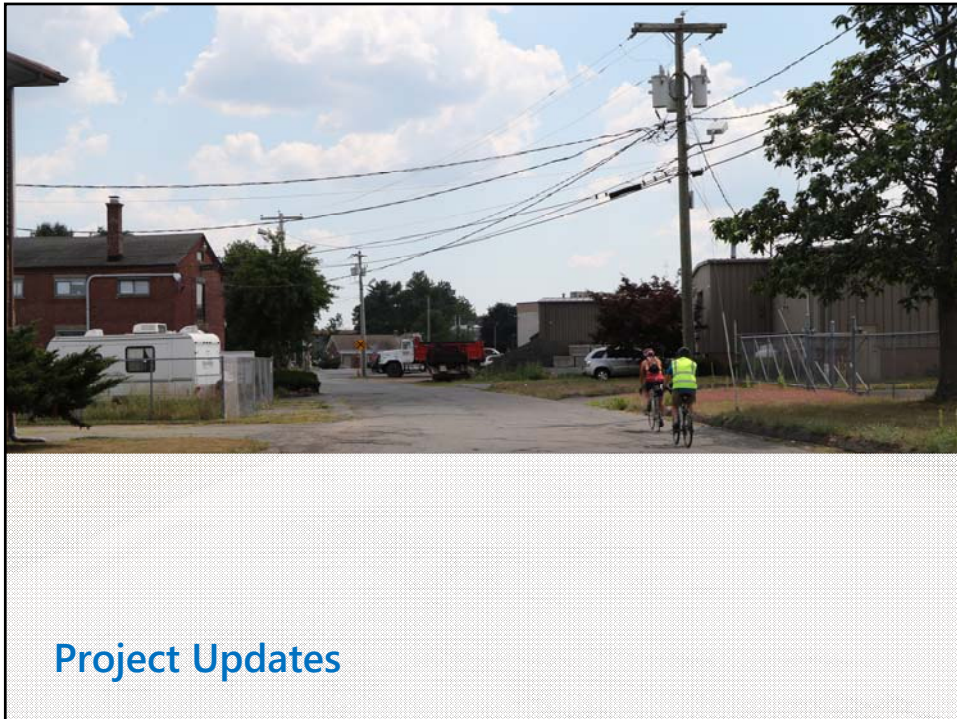


Vision Statement

"The vision for the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and CTfastrak Gap Closure study is to connect the communities with a **world-class multi-use trail** that closes the gap in the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT) through the towns of Southington and Plainville with a connection to the CT**fastrak** station in downtown New Britain. These links will **prioritize safety, comfort, and mobility for all users, regardless of age or ability**, through cohesive and attractive trails that promote economic and community vitality."







Activities Since Our Last Meeting

- Public Information Meeting May 22nd
- Plainville Town Council Briefing June 5th
- New Britain Bike Rodeo July 8th



Public Meeting May 22

- Approximately 100 people attended
- Presentation and open house
- Topics from comment forms
 - General support for project and progress made
 - Desire to connect with downtown
 - Preference to maximize off-road
 - Concerns about safety and traffic

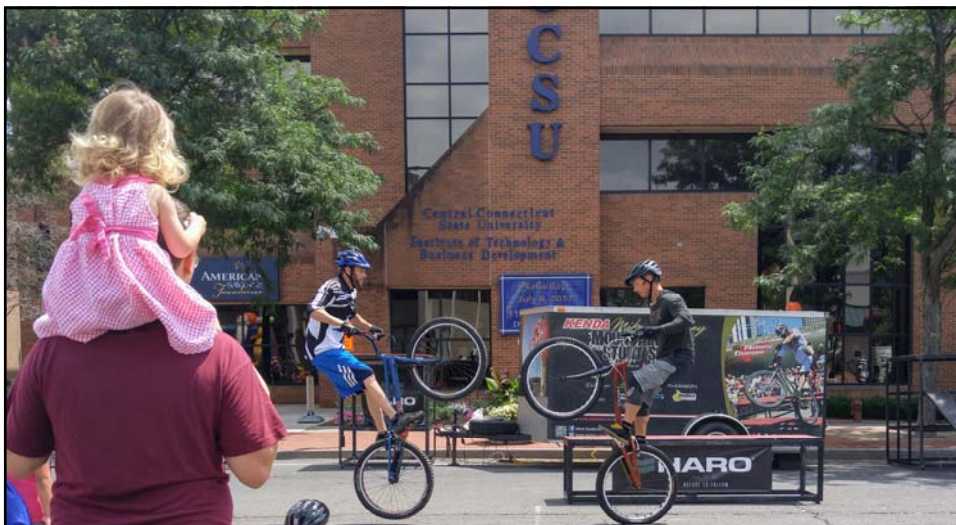


Plainville Town Council Briefing June 5

- Presented project to Town Council
- Reported on recent activities which included
 - April Steering Committee meeting
 - May public meeting
 - The screening of the long list of potential alignments
 - Details of the short list of practical and feasible alignments, with a focus on Plainville



New Britain Bike Rodeo July 8



Alternatives Evaluation

Public Comments Informed Evaluation

- Technical team considered public comments when preparing assumptions for shortlisted alignments, and in finalizing evaluation methods
 - Comments during Q&A session at public meeting
 - Those left on flip charts near shortlisted alignments
 - Comment forms at and after meeting
 - Online comments

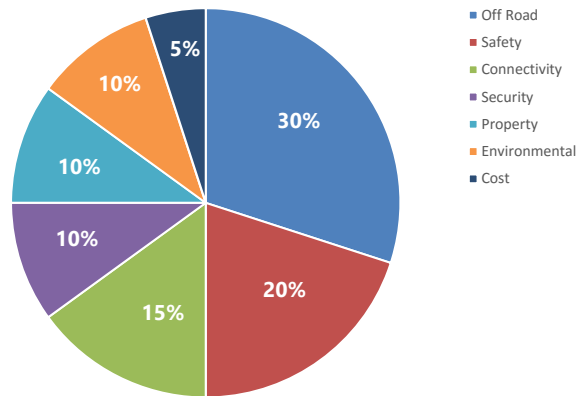


Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Factors Considered
Off Road	Potential for the trail to be separated from roads
Connectivity	Connections to people and recreational resources
Safety	Speeds, crash history, number of driveways, and traffic volumes
Security	"Eyes on the trail" and access/egress options
Potential Property Impacts	Easements needed, ease of construction
Potential Environmental Impacts	Floodplains, wildlife habitat, hazardous materials, historic/cultural, and section 4f
Estimated Costs	Order of magnitude lifecycle costs



Weighting of Criteria



How the Scoring was Conducted

- Qualitative Evaluation
 - High – fully meets the intent of the criterion
 - Medium – partially meets the intent of the criterion
 - Low – does not meet the intent of the criterion
- Organized Plainville alignments
 - North of downtown
 - South of downtown
 - Attempted to optimize Alignment A south of downtown



What we Evaluated

- Plainville
 - Alignment A – 2009 study preferred alternative
 - Optimized Alignment A – south of downtown only
 - Alignment B – Eastern Option
 - Alignment C – Western Option
 - Alignment D – Eastern Option
- New Britain
 - Alignment E – Off-Road Option
 - Alignment F – On-Road Option

Plainville Results – North of Downtown

Category	Alignment A	Alignment B	Alignment C	Alignment D
Off-Road Percentage				
Connectivity				
Safety				
Security				
Right-of-Way				
Environmental				
Cost				

Best Fit
 Moderate Fit
 Poor Fit

Plainville Results – South of Downtown

Category	Alignment A	Alignment A Optimized	Alignment B Alignment C	Alignment D
Off-Road Percentage				
Connectivity				
Safety				
Security				
Right-of-Way				
Environmental				
Cost				

Best Fit
 Moderate Fit
 Poor Fit

Connection to Ctfastrak Evaluation Results

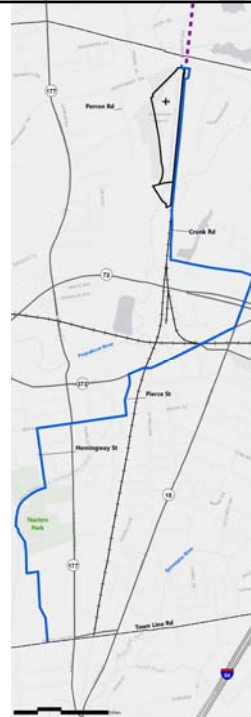
Category	Alignment E	Alignment F
Off-Road Percentage		
Connectivity		
Safety		
Security		
Right-of-Way		
Environmental		
Cost		

Best Fit
 Moderate Fit
 Poor Fit

Alignment A

- Performs well
 - *Cost*: largely on-road, lowest cost of all alignments
 - *Environmental*: minimal disruption, due to on-road alignment
- Performs poorly
 - *Off-Road*: Lowest of all alignments
 - *Safety*: Highest number of driveways, conflict with traffic
 - *Connectivity*: Minimal connectivity along the trail

NOTE: When optimized south of downtown, Alignment A can lower traffic conflict, but cost increases



Alignment B

- North of Downtown
 - Performs well
 - *Safety*: few driveways crossed
 - Performs poorly
 - *Right of way*: highest number of parcels impacted, difficult construction
 - *Cost*: highest cost of all alignments
- South of Downtown
 - NOTE: Alignment for B and C are the same south of downtown
 - Performs well
 - *Off-Road Percentage*: 100%
 - *Connectivity*: amenities along the trail
 - *Safety*: few driveways and traffic conflicts
 - Performs poorly - none



Alignment C

- North of Downtown
 - Performs well
 - *Off-Road Percentage*: 100%
 - *Safety*: few driveways crossed
 - *Environmental*: minimal impacts identified
 - *Cost*: second lowest of all alignments
 - Performs poorly – none
- South of Downtown
 - NOTE: Alignment for B and C are the same south of downtown
 - Performs well
 - *Off-Road Percentage*: 100%
 - *Connectivity*: amenities along the trail
 - *Safety*: few driveways and traffic conflicts
 - Performs poorly – none



Alignment D

- North of Downtown
 - Performs well – none
 - Does not fully meet the intent of any evaluation criteria
 - Performs moderately well for most criteria
 - Performs poorly
 - *Safety*: crosses many driveways
- South of Downtown
 - Performs well
 - *Environmental*: minimal impacts identified
 - *Security*: good access along alignment
 - Performs poorly – none



Alignment E



- Performs well
 - *Off-Road Percentage*: 92% off road, much higher than other alignment
 - *Connectivity*: true for both alignments, connectivity is maximized to residents and amenities
 - *Safety*: fewest driveways and traffic conflicts
- Performs poorly
 - *Security*: true for both alignments, few opportunities for eyes on the trail along the Black Rock Avenue portion of alignment

Alignment F

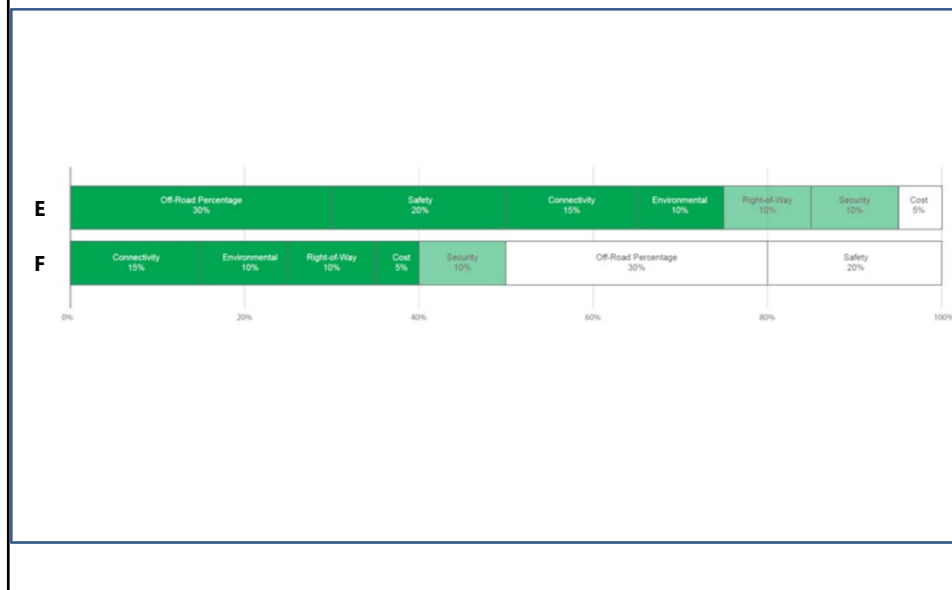


- Performs well
 - *Connectivity*: true for both alignments, connectivity is maximized to residents and amenities
- Performs poorly
 - *Off-Road Percentage*: only 25% off-road
 - *Safety*: Black Rock Avenue is a highly-traveled road for freight in Plainville
 - *Security*: true for both alignments, few opportunities for eyes on the trail along the Black Rock Avenue portion of alignment

When Weighting is Applied - Plainville



When Weighting is Applied - CTfastrak



Technical Team Recommendations

- Plainville North of Downtown
 - Alignment C
- Plainville South of Downtown
 - Alignment B/C
- Connection to *Ctfastrak* in New Britain
 - Alignment E

- Questions and Discussion



Public Outreach Schedule

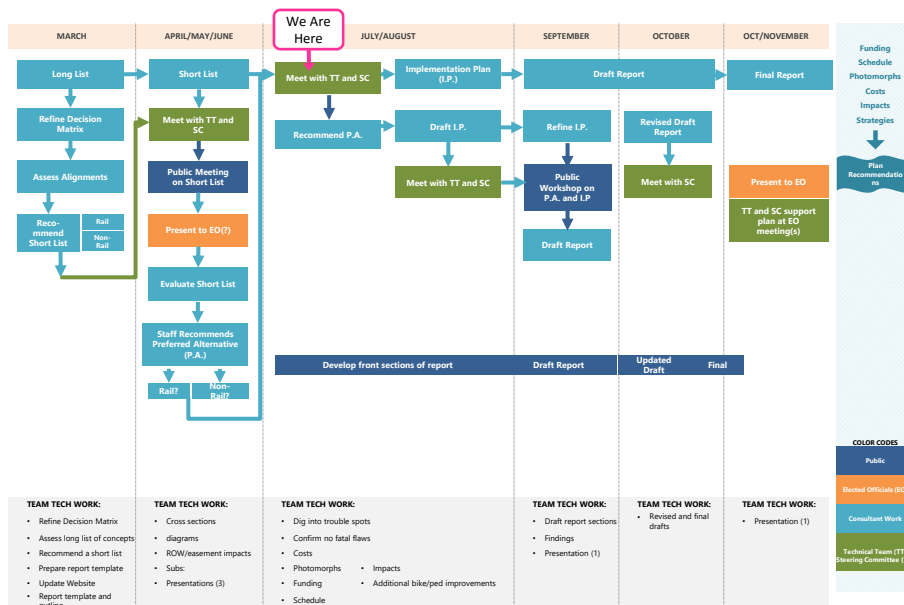
Next Steps

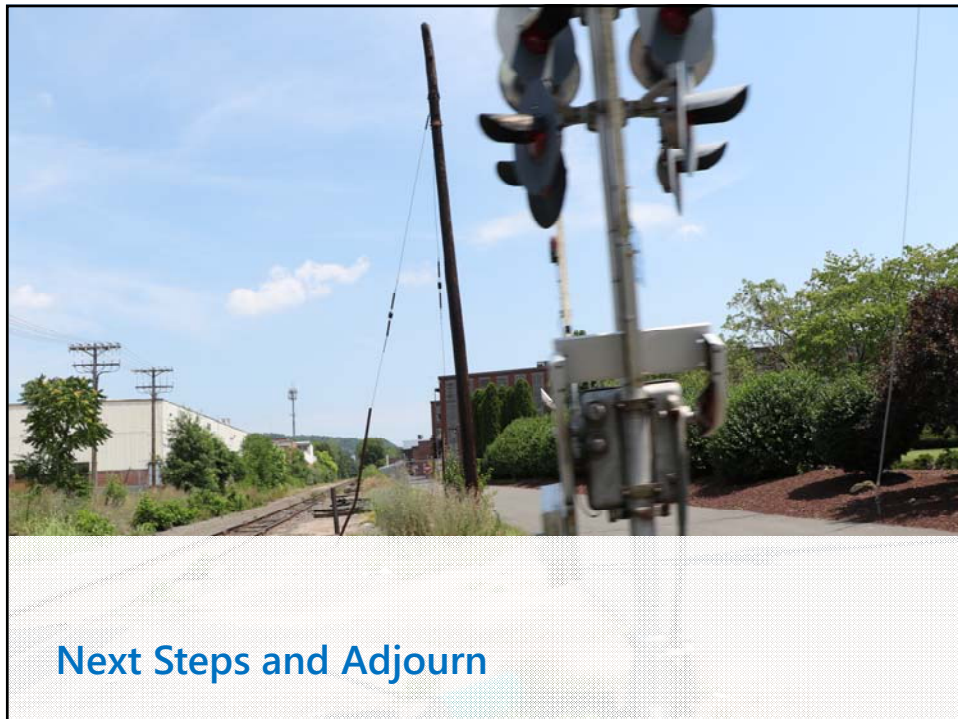
- Incorporate feedback received today from Steering Committee
- Meet with Town of Plainville and City of New Britain
- Meet with CTDOT
- Plan for Public Workshop to be held late summer (likely after Labor Day)

We
Are
Here



Project Workplan





Tim Malone | tmalone@crcog.org | 860.724.4221

Theresa Carr | tcarr@vhb.com

Mark Jewell | mjewell@vhb.com

Geoffrey Morrison-Logan | gmorrisonlogan@vhb.com





TO: Gap Closure Trail Study Steering Committee
Gap Closure Trail Study Technical Team

FROM: Tim Malone, CRCOG

RE: **CORRECTED:** Evaluation of Gap Closure Study Alternatives

DATE: July 18, 2017

A set of shortlisted practical and feasible alignments (referred to as shortlist or alignments) were created in spring 2017 for both the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail Gap Closure and for the spur to the CT **fastrak** station in downtown New Britain. This shortlist resulted from a screening process whereby a long list of possible alternatives (14 in Plainville and 6 in New Britain) developed in fall of 2016 were compared against a set of 6 screening questions. The shortlisted alignments (4 in Plainville and 2 in New Britain) were discussed with the Steering Committee and the Technical Team during a joint meeting in April 2017, and with the community at a public meeting in May 2017.

This brief memorandum documents an overview of the evaluation process whereby the shortlisted alignments were evaluated against a set of evaluation criteria. This memorandum describes the evaluation criteria, the criteria weighting, the scoring, and the results. It presents a staff recommendation for consideration and discussion by the Steering Committee and Technical Team during the July 2017 meeting. This memo is not intended to be the full alternatives analysis report.

Maps illustrating the 4 shortlisted alignments in Plainville and 2 shortlisted alignments in New Britain are provided at the end of this memorandum.

The staff recommendation is to move forward with Alignment C in Plainville and Alignment E connecting to the CT **fastrak** station in New Britain.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation categories are:

- Off-Road Percentage
- Connectivity (Proximity is $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the alignment center line for this category)
- Safety
- Security
- Environmental Considerations
- Potential Right-of-Way Easements or Acquisitions
- Estimated Costs

Each of these categories is described below.

Off-Road Percentage

Goal: An alignment with the highest percentage off-road is more favorable.

To assess the appeal to the largest number of user groups of all ability levels, the percent of the alignment that is either off-road or on-road was determined.

Alignments that attract the greatest number of users will rate higher than those that limit users to more experienced cyclists or a certain age group. A multi-use trail (off road) in an attractive surrounding that offers reasonable connectivity will attract a larger user group than, for example, shoulders, or bike lanes on a busy roadway.

A Facility Type Preference Survey was offered to the public through the website www.gapclosurestudy.com, as well as through paper surveys available at community events and through the public library, to determine their preference for the facility types listed below. With each facility type category the general preference from the survey has been noted (representing approximately 300 responses). The survey results made it readily apparent that the facility type was very important to the public and that the public is much more likely to use an off-road alignment than a facility that is on-road.

An alignment with a higher percentage off road is more desirable and will have a higher score as compared to an alignment with a higher percentage on road.

Connectivity

Goal: An alignment with a greater number of people and recreational amenities within proximity to the trail is more favorable.

Connectivity describes how well an alignment enhances the accessibility to resources in a community. Good connectivity was defined as an alignment being a distance of a ¼ mile or less from a community resource. The community resources are listed below. For this category the alternatives were compared against their proximity to a set of community resources. People may choose not to use a facility that does not provide a reasonable direct connection to destinations. Alignments will score higher for closer proximity to existing recreational, cultural, educational and commercial areas. For this category high connectivity (the more resources an alignment “connects” with) received a higher rating (high benefit), while if it “connects” with fewer resources, it received a lower rating (low benefit).

- Schools
- Recreational facilities – Parks, Linear Trails, Open Space
- Commercial Locations – Town/City Center, Technology Parks, Office Parks
- Cultural Resources – Museums, Historical Locations, Religious Institutions, Cultural Centers (such as YWCA, Historic Centers, American Legion, Elks Lodge, Polish National Alliance, etc.)
- Population

Safety

Goal: An alignment with lower potential for vehicular conflicts is more favorable.

Safety is defined in relation to how many conflict points with motor vehicles, such as commercial driveways and intersections, are likely to be present along an alignment. Conflicts with motor vehicles can be a major impediment for use of bicycle facility by less experienced users, especially recreational users, children and the elderly. Alignments that avoid or minimize these conflicts by being located away from busy roadways, and on separated facilities, rated higher than on-road facilities. An alignment with a fewer number of conflict points, such as, intersections with streets, commercial driveways and mid-block crossings rated higher than one with more conflict points.

- Safety – Number and speed of conflict points along the alignment
 - Commercial Driveways
 - Intersections
 - Mid-block crossings

Safety is also defined in relation to the level of traffic stress experienced along the route. Routes with higher levels of traffic stress have high traffic volumes, high speeds, and multiple lanes, which contribute to a less comfortable experience for riders. Low levels of traffic stress are associated with low speeds, low volumes, simple crossings, and separation from automobile traffic. Alignments with higher levels of traffic stress are seen as less comfortable and received a lower score.

Security

Goal: An alignment with greater proximity to access/egress points is more favorable.

Security can be and is perceived differently from person to person, which can make measuring this criteria difficult. However, a common definition for how secure a bicycle / pedestrian facility is the potential for people to be “watching the trail” or “eyes on the trail,” and the number of access points and trailheads to the facility. Alignments that are isolated with few access points along them received a lower score than alignments with multiple access/egress locations along their route.

Environmental Considerations

Goal: An alignment that has fewer regulatory hurdles and minimizes potential impacts to natural resources is more favorable.

It is important to assess the potential impacts to natural and cultural resources for each alignment in order to be able to determine which may have the greatest environmental impact. For this assessment, several resources were measured. These are listed below:

- **Wetlands** – For this study Inland Wetlands and Watercourses were evaluated based on the most recent GIS mapping obtained from the communities¹.
- **Floodplain** – The extent to which the alternative is within the 100 year floodplain.
- **Wildlife Diversity** – if the alignment crosses a Natural Diversity Data Base (NBBDD) area then it was calculated as a “Yes”, if not, a “No.”

¹ CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP), Inland and Tidal Wetlands webpage, http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2720&q=325674&deepNav_GID=1654

- **Historic Resources** – Number of historic resources within 50 feet of the center line of the alignment was determined.
- **Hazardous Materials** – Number of known hazardous materials locations within 10-feet of the center line of an alignment.

Property Effects (Rights-of-way)

Goal: An alignment that minimizes complex right-of-way arrangements and minimizes impacts to the community is more favorable.

The potential effects of the alignments to private and public properties along the alignments were assessed. This is not a determination of actual impacts, but a tool identifying potential impacts of an alignment so that a comparison can be made between alignments. The number of private and public properties potentially impacted were counted and compared for each alignment. An alignment with a higher number of potential impacts received a lower score as compared to an alignment with less potential impacts.

Estimated Costs

Goal: An alignment with fewer major cost elements is more favorable.

The construction cost of an alignment is an important component, especially where right-of-way would need to be purchased, bridges or other expensive infrastructure needed. Major cost elements will be identified for each of the shortlisted alternatives and used to compare high level conceptual construction costs between the various alternatives. Maintenance considerations for each of the trail alignments were considered as well.

Category Weighting

Each category has been weighted based on input from the Steering Committee, Technical Team and Public. These weightings are as listed below:

- Facility Type (If a facility is on road, off road or adjacent to a road) – **30 percent**
- Safety - **20 percent**
- Connectivity – **15 percent**
- Security - **10 percent**
- Environmental Considerations – **10 percent**
- Potential Right-of-Way Easements or Acquisitions – **10 percent**
- Cost – **5 percent**

Scoring

The alignments were evaluated against each of the criteria categories described above. The Plainville alignments were evaluated separately north of downtown and south of downtown, recognizing that any of the alignments north of downtown could be matched with any of the alignments south of downtown (and vice versa). Scoring was done on a qualitative level as follows:

- High: A high rating represented that the alignment fully met the intent of the criterion, either in isolation or when compared to other alignments

- **Moderate:** A moderate rating represented that the alignment partially meets the intent of the criterion, and may not fully achieve its goals
- **Low:** A low rating represented that the alignment did not meet the intent of the criterion, either in isolation or when compared to other alignments

Evaluation Results

The matrix on the following pages provides an overview of the evaluation results. These are summarized by alignment below:

FCHT Gap Alignments (A through D)

Alignment A – North of Downtown

Pros

- *Cost:* largely on-road, lowest cost of all alignments and low maintenance costs
- *Environmental:* minimal disruption, due to on-road alignment

Cons

- *Off-Road:* Lowest of all alignments
- *Safety:* Highest number of driveways, conflict with traffic
- *Connectivity:* Minimal connectivity along the trail

Alignment A – South of Downtown

Pros

- *Cost:* largely on-road, lowest cost of all alignments and low maintenance costs
- *Security:* good access along alignment
- *Environmental:* minimal disruption, due to on-road alignment

Cons

- *Off-Road:* Lowest of all alignments
- *Safety:* Highest number of driveways, conflict with traffic
- *Connectivity:* Minimal connectivity along the trail

Optimized Alignment A – South of Downtown

When Alignment A south of downtown Plainville is optimized, its safety and off-road performance is improved. This lowers the performance of this alignment in relation to cost and right-of-way factors, however.

Pros

- *Off-Road:* Off-road percentage can be optimized to 100%
- *Security:* good access along alignment
- *Environmental:* minimal disruption, due to on-road alignment

Cons

- *Safety:* Highest number of driveways, conflict with traffic
- *Connectivity:* Minimal connectivity along the trail

Alignment B – North of Downtown

Pros

- *Safety:* few driveways crossed

Cons

- *Right of way*: highest number of parcels impacted, difficult construction
- *Cost*: highest cost of all alignments, and high maintenance and bridge inspection costs

Alignment B – South of Downtown

NOTE: Alignment for B and C are the same south of downtown

Pros

- *Off-Road Percentage*: 100%
- *Connectivity*: amenities along the trail
- *Safety*: few driveways and traffic conflicts traffic

Cons

- *None*

Alignment C – North of Downtown

Pros

- *Off-Road Percentage*: 100%
- *Safety*: few driveways crossed
- *Environmental*: minimal impacts identified
- *Cost*: second lowest of all alignments

Cons

- *None*

Alignment C – South of Downtown

See Alignment B – south of downtown

Alignment D – North of Downtown

Pros

- Does not fully meet the intent of any evaluation criteria
- Performs moderately well for most criteria

Cons

- *Safety*: crosses many driveways

Alignment D – South of Downtown

Pros

- *Environmental*: minimal impacts identified
- *Security*: good access along alignment

Cons

- *None*

CTfastrak Connection Alignments (E through F)

Alignment E

Pros

- *Off-Road Percentage*: 92% off road, much higher than other alignment
- *Connectivity*: true for both alignments, connectivity is maximized to residents and amenities
- *Safety*: fewest driveways and traffic conflicts

Cons

- *Cost:* Cost is higher for this alignment when compared to Alignment F.
- *Security:* true for both alignments, few opportunities for eyes on the trail along the Black Rock Avenue portion of alignment

Alignment F

Pros

- *Connectivity:* true for both alignments, connectivity is maximized to residents and amenities

Cons

- *Off-Road Percentage:* only 25% off-road
- *Safety:* Black Rock Avenue is a highly-traveled road for freight in Plainville
- *Security:* true for both alignments, few opportunities for eyes on the trail along the Black Rock Avenue portion of alignment

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Evaluation Results Matrix – Plainville Alignments

Category	Alignment A	Alignment B	Alignment C	Alignment D	Alignment A	Alignment A Optimized	Alignment B Alignment C	Alignment D
	North of Downtown				South of Downtown			
Off-Road Percentage	44.80%	94.90%	100%	85.60%	30.60%	100.00%	100%	94.60%
1. Connectivity	Alignment with a greater number of people and recreational amenities within proximity to the trail is more favorable.							
Population	Pros: Good connection to residential areas. Cons: Amenities are concentrated in downtown rather than dispersed along the trail.	Pros: Good proximity to residential areas and amenities including the YMCA. Cons: Limited connectivity on boardwalk section.	Pros: Good connections to natural amenities including Tomasso. Cons: Lower population and households when compared to other alignments.	Pros: Good proximity to residential areas and amenities including both the canal and the YMCA. Cons: Limited connectivity on boardwalk section.	Pros: Good connection to residential areas. Cons: Does not have strong connections with the canal.	Pros: Good connection to residential areas. Cons: Does not have strong connections with the canal.	Pros: Good proximity to residential areas and connects with the entire canal. Cons: N/A	Pros: Good proximity to residential areas and connects with a portion of the canal. Cons: N/A
Amenities								
2. Safety	Alignment with lower potential for vehicular conflicts is more favorable.							
Driveways	Pros: N/A Cons: Highest number of driveways and intersections, and includes facilities on Farmington and Main.	Pros: Off road just north of Robert Street with low number of driveways and intersections. Cons: Crosses some driveways along Main.	Pros: Predominately off road with low number of driveways and intersections. Cons: Potential conflicts at 72 slip lanes if box culvert isn't feasible.	Pros: Off road and along canal north of Robert Street. Cons: Crosses high number of driveways along Norton Place and Main Street.	Pros: N/A Cons: Highest number of driveways and intersections, and includes substantial facilities on Broad.	Pros: Bi-directional off-road facility crosses fewer driveways compared to Alignment A. Cons: Contains high number of driveways.	Pros: Highest percent of trail off road with low number of driveways and intersections. Cons: N/A	Pros: Predominately off road. Cons: Small stretch of trail on Willis which adds moderate number of driveways and intersections.
Intersecting Traffic								
Traffic Stress/LTS								
3. Security	Alignment with greater proximity to access/egress points is more favorable.							
Accessibility	Pros: N/A Cons: Limited access along rail, and parking access only provided in downtown rather than dispersed along trail.	Pros: Potential for parking access at YMCA, in addition to downtown parking access. Cons: Limited access on boardwalk section.	Pros: Parking access most evenly dispersed along trail, including the Fire Department. Cons: Somewhat limited egress along Tomasso.	Pros: Potential for parking access at YMCA, in addition to downtown parking access. Cons: Limited access on boardwalk section.	Pros: Potential for parking access at Broad/ Pierce and Norton, and includes egress on Broad and Hemingway. Cons: N/A	Pros: Potential for parking access at Broad/ Pierce and Norton, and includes egress on Broad and Hemingway. Cons: N/A	Pros: Potential for parking access at Broad/ Pierce and Norton. Cons: Somewhat limited egress along canal south of Norton.	Pros: Potential for parking access at Broad/ Pierce and Norton. Cons: N/A

Category	Alignment A	Alignment B	Alignment C	Alignment D	Alignment A	Alignment A Optimized	Alignment B Alignment C	Alignment D
	North of Downtown				South of Downtown			
4. Right-of-Way	Alignment that minimizes complex right-of-way arrangements and minimizes impacts to the community is more favorable.							
Property Acquisition	Pros: Generally good construction access along the rail. Cons: Requires FAA coordination, and overlaps with railroad right of way not available for use.	Pros: Generally good boardwalk construction access. Cons: Highest number of overlapping parcels, and challenging flyover design and construction.	Pros: Good construction access through Tomasso and along trail. Cons: Space constraints at DPW. Potential traffic issues for 72 culvert during construction.	Pros: Generally good boardwalk construction access. Cons: Some congested downtown areas at Norton Place, including right of way impacts at the apartment complex.	Pros: Straightforward construction. Cons: 1 anticipated right of way impact.	Pros: N/A Cons: Off-road facility will have impacts to utilities and roadway, and significant traffic constraints during construction.	Pros: N/A Cons: Has the most right of way impacts including church and residential areas, with narrow/ wet construction area through canal south of Norton.	Pros: Has fewer right of way impacts to residential properties and avoids narrow/ wet canal area. Cons: N/A
Constructability								
5. Environmental	Alignment that has fewer regulatory hurdles and minimizes potential impacts to natural resources is more favorable.							
Wetlands	Pros: Minimal potential for environmental impacts.	Pros: N/A	Pros: Minimal potential for environmental impacts.	Pros: N/A	Pros: Minimal potential for environmental impacts.	Pros: Minimal potential for environmental impacts.	Pros: N/A	Pros: Minimal potential for environmental impacts.
Floodplain	Cons: 3 hazmat locations.	Cons: Greater wetlands and floodplain impacts.	Cons: Potential for 4f evaluation.	Cons: Greater wetlands and floodplain impacts, and 4 hazmat locations.	Cons: Potential for 4f evaluation.	Cons: Potential for 4f evaluation.	Cons: Greater potential for wetlands impacts. Potential for 4f evaluation and Section 106 evaluation.	Cons: Potential for 4f evaluation and Section 106 evaluation.
Wildlife								
Hazardous Materials								
Regulatory Reviews								
6. Cost	Alignments with fewer major cost elements are more favorable.							
Estimated Costs	\$2-3 million Low maintenance costs	\$19-20 million High maintenance and bridge inspection costs	\$6-7 million Moderate maintenance and bridge/tunnel inspection costs	\$12-13 million Moderate boardwalk maintenance costs	\$1-2 million Low maintenance costs	\$4-5 million Low maintenance costs	\$6-7 million Moderate maintenance costs (for canal south of Norton)	\$4-5 million Low maintenance costs

Weighted Evaluation Results – Plainville

The evaluation summary is illustrated in the graphic below in relation to the criteria weighting. As can be seen, Alignment C in Plainville north of downtown and Alignment B/C in Plainville south of downtown score highest, followed by Alignment D.



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Evaluation Results Matrix – Connection to CTfastrak Alignments

Category	Alignment E	Alignment F
	New Britain	
Off-Road Percentage	92%	25.00%
1. Connectivity	Alignment with a greater number of people and recreational amenities within proximity to the trail is more favorable.	
Population	Pros: Good proximity to residential areas and amenities like bus stops, the Plainville Indoor Sports Arena and New Britain YMCA.	Pros: Good proximity to residential areas and amenities like bus stops, the Plainville Indoor Sports Arena and New Britain YMCA.
Amenities	Cons: Limited connectivity at Tilcon.	Cons: Limited connectivity at Tilcon.
2. Safety	Alignment with lower potential for vehicular conflicts is more favorable.	
Driveways	Pros: Lower number of driveways and intersections.	Pros: N/A
Intersecting Traffic	Cons: N/A	Cons: High number of driveways and intersections, including potential bus conflicts. Safety concerns along length of alignment, particularly at Tilcon
Traffic Stress/LTS		
3. Security	Alignment with greater proximity to access/egress points is more favorable.	
Accessibility	Pros: Moderate and uniform potential for access/ egress along length. Cons: Limited access at Tilcon.	Pros: Moderate and uniform potential for access/ egress along length. Cons: Limited access at Tilcon.
4. Right-of-Way	Alignment that minimizes complex right-of-way arrangements and minimizes impacts to the community is more favorable.	
Property Acquisition	Pros: Trail overlaps with ConnDOT and 4 private owners.	Pros: No major right of way impacts.
Constructability	Cons: Has the most right of way impacts. Potential construction issues along highway wall. Road diet required in Plainville.	Cons: Road diet required in Plainville.
5. Environmental	Alignment that has fewer regulatory hurdles and minimizes potential impacts to natural resources is more favorable.	
Wetlands	Pros: Minimal potential for environmental impacts.	Pros: Minimal potential for environmental impacts.
Floodplain		
Wildlife		
Hazardous Materials	Cons: Potential for hazmat locations at Tilcon.	Cons: Potential for hazmat locations at Tilcon.
Regulatory Reviews		
6. Cost	Alignments with fewer major cost elements are more favorable.	
Estimated Costs	\$11-12 million	\$6-7 million

Weighted Evaluation Results – Connection to CTfastrak Alignments

The evaluation summary is illustrated in the graphic below in relation to the criteria weighting. As can be seen below, Alignment E performs better than Alignment F in many of the criteria categories, including the two highest weighted categories of Facility Type and Safety.



Staff Recommendation and Next Steps

The staff recommendation is to move forward with Alignment C north of downtown Plainville and Alignment B/C south of downtown Plainville, for the following reasons:

- These alignments perform best in relation to the highest weighted criteria, including off-road percentage and safety
- They do not perform poorly in relation to any of the evaluation criteria
- They appear to be implementable alignments in relation to constructability, permitability, and cost

Between Plainville and New Britain Alignment E is recommended as the preferred alternative, for the following reasons:

- It performs much higher in relation to off-road percentage and safety than Alignment F
- It appears to be implementable in relation to constructability, permitability, and cost

These staff recommendations will be discussed with the Steering Committee and the Technical Team in July 2017 and with the communities of Plainville and New Britain in late summer 2017.



Gap Closure Trail Study

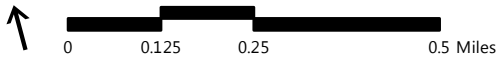
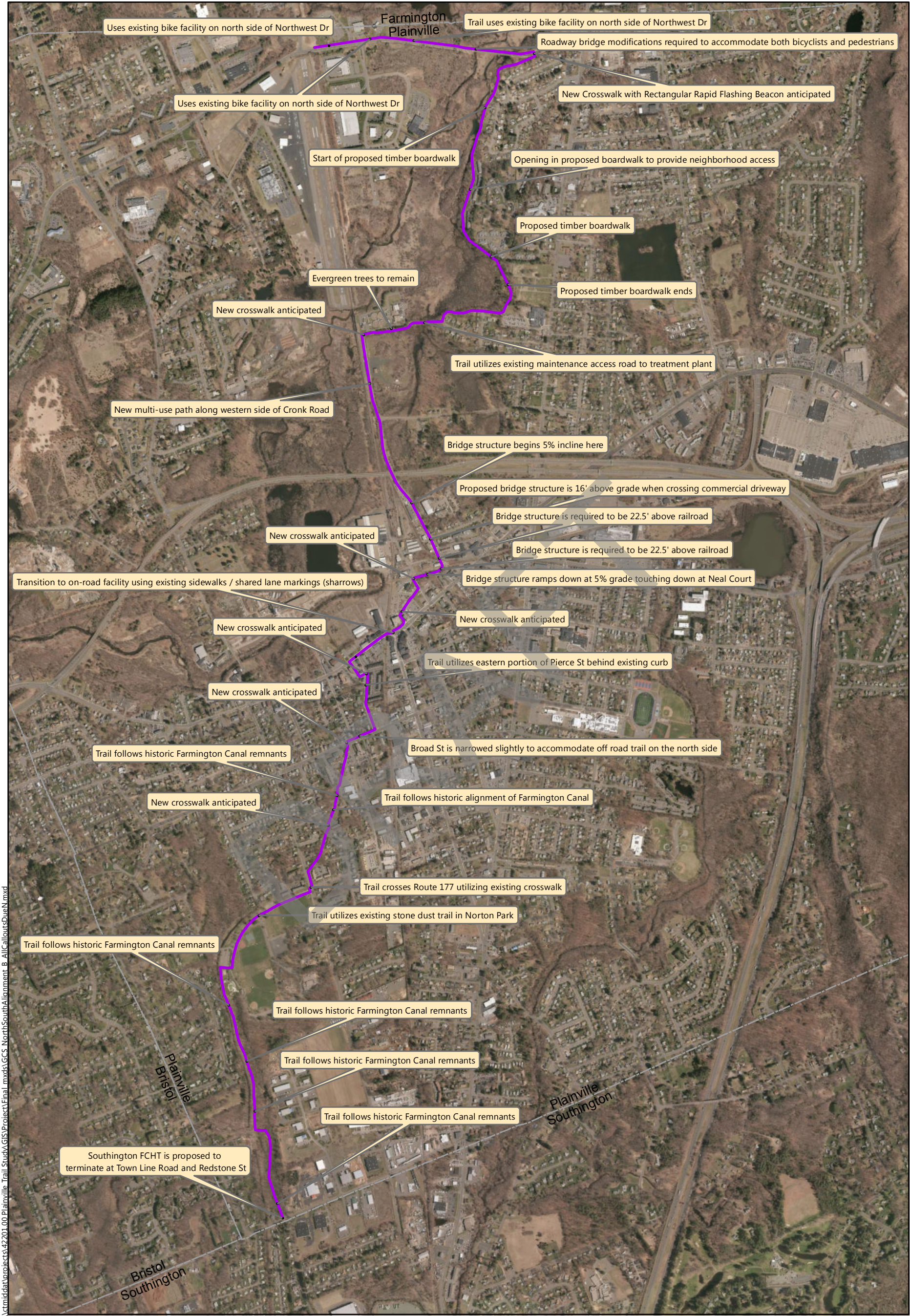
Hartford County, CT

Project Statistics

Alignment A - 4.5 Miles

Alignment A is a proposed:

- 4.5 miles long,
- 61% on-road, a combination of sidewalks, bike lanes and shared marking,
- 39% off-road, 10-12' wide bituminous muliti-use trail.



Alignment B - 4.82 Miles - 91% Off Road

Disclaimer: The alignment shown is preliminary and for planning purposes only. Alignments are subject to change as the planning study progresses.

Gap Closure Trail Study | Hartford County, CT

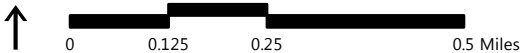
Project Statistics

Alignment C is a proposed:

- 4.82 miles long,
- 12' wide,
- bituminous,
- 91% off road,

Alignment B - 4.82 Miles

Source Information:
Map and Geographic Information Center -
University of Connecticut, US Census Bureau



Alignment C - 4.74 Miles - 100% Off Road

Disclaimer: The alignment shown is preliminary and for planning purposes only. Alignments are subject to change as the planning study progresses.

Gap Closure Trail Study | Hartford County, CT

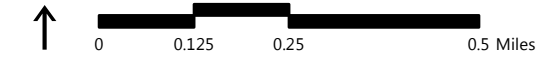
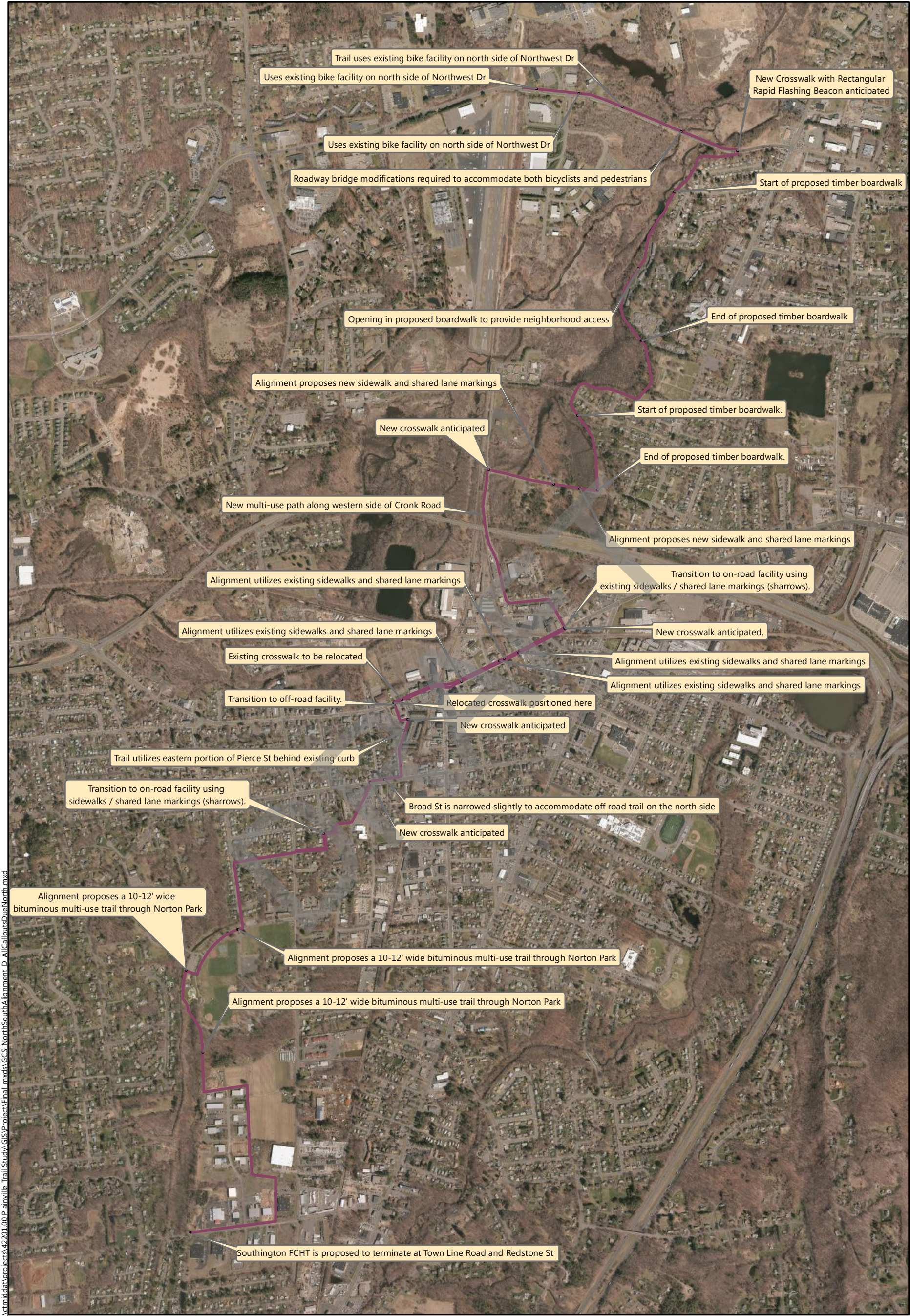
Project Statistics

Alignment C is a proposed:

- 4.74 miles long,
- 10-12' wide,
- bituminous,
- 100% off road.

Alignment C - 4.74 Miles

Source Information:
Map and Geographic Information Center -
University of Connecticut, US Census Bureau



Alignment D = 5.63 Miles

Disclaimer: The alignment shown is preliminary and for planning purposes only. Alignments are subject to change as the planning study progresses.

Gap Closure Trail Study

Hartford County, CT

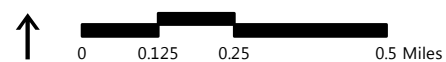
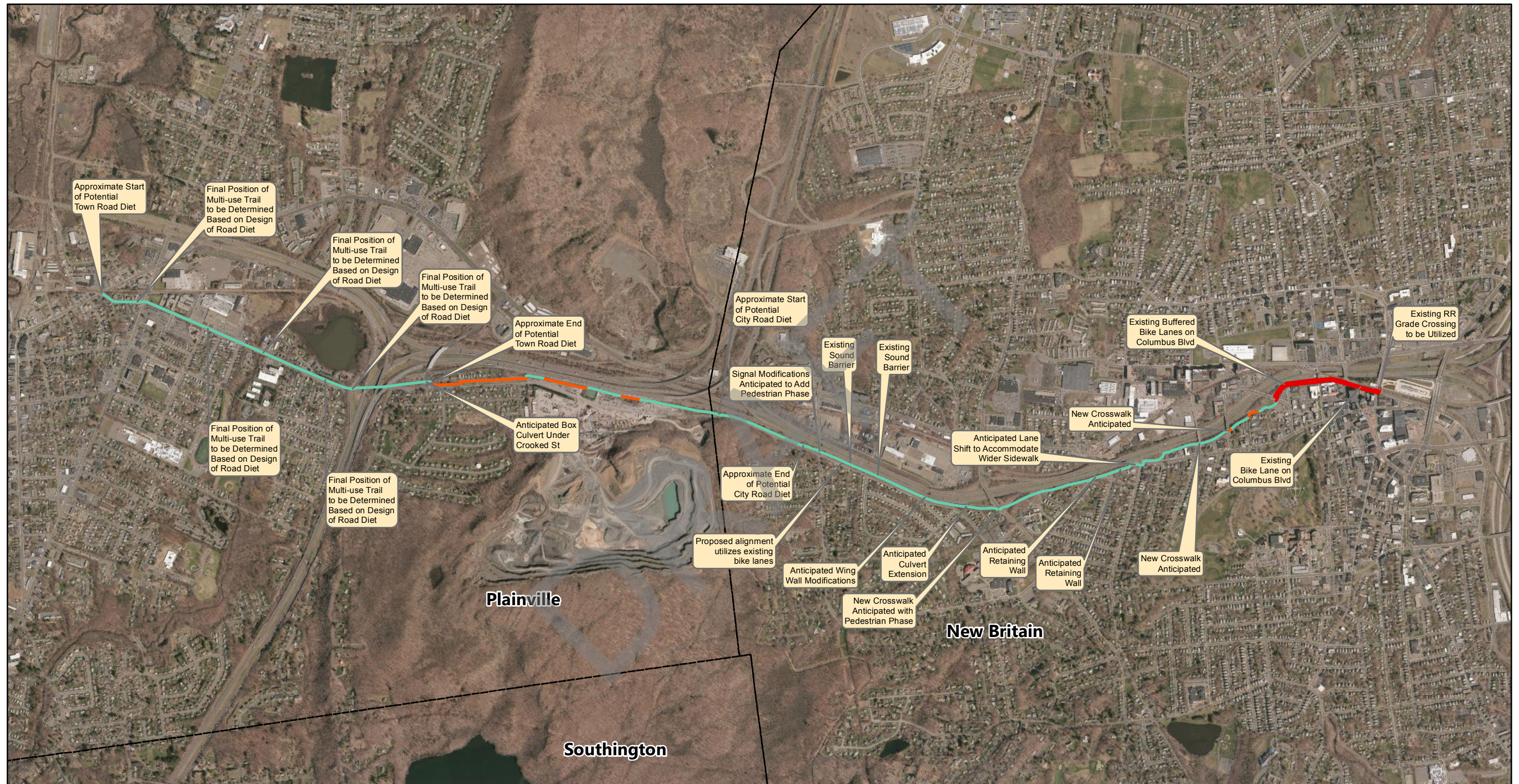
Project Statistics

Alignment D is a proposed:

- 5.63 miles long,
- 12' wide,
- 84% off road.

Alignment D - 5.63 Miles

Source Information:
Map and Geographic Information Center -
University of Connecticut, US Census Bureau



- 3.24 Miles On DOT Property
- 1.25 Miles On Non-DOT Property
- Bike Lanes

Disclaimer: The alignment shown is preliminary and for planning purposes only. Alignments are subject to change as the planning study progresses.

Gap Closure Trail Study

Project Statistics

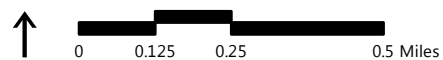
Alignment E is a proposed:

- 4.49 miles long,
- 10-12' wide,
- bituminous,
- 92% off road,
- 72% on DOT property

Hartford County, CT

Alignment E - 4.49 Miles

Source Information:
Map and Geographic Information Center -
University of Connecticut, US Census Bureau



— Alignment F - 4.4 miles - 25% off-road

Disclaimer: The alignment shown is preliminary and for planning purposes only. Alignments are subject to change as the planning study progresses.

Gap Closure Trail Study

Project Statistics

Alignment F is a proposed:

- 4.4 miles long,
- 12' wide,
- bituminous,
- ??% off road,
- 0% on DOT property

Hartford County, CT

Alignment F - 4.4 Miles

Source Information:

Map and Geographic Information Center -
University of Connecticut, US Census Bureau