



# Farmington Canal Heritage Trail Gap Closure and CT*fastrak* Study

December 18, 2017

Briefing to Plainville Town Council



# Agenda for Tonight's Briefing

- Project History / Overview
- Public Engagement Efforts
- Details on Preferred Alignment (Alignment C)
- Schedule Moving Forward





## Project History/Overview

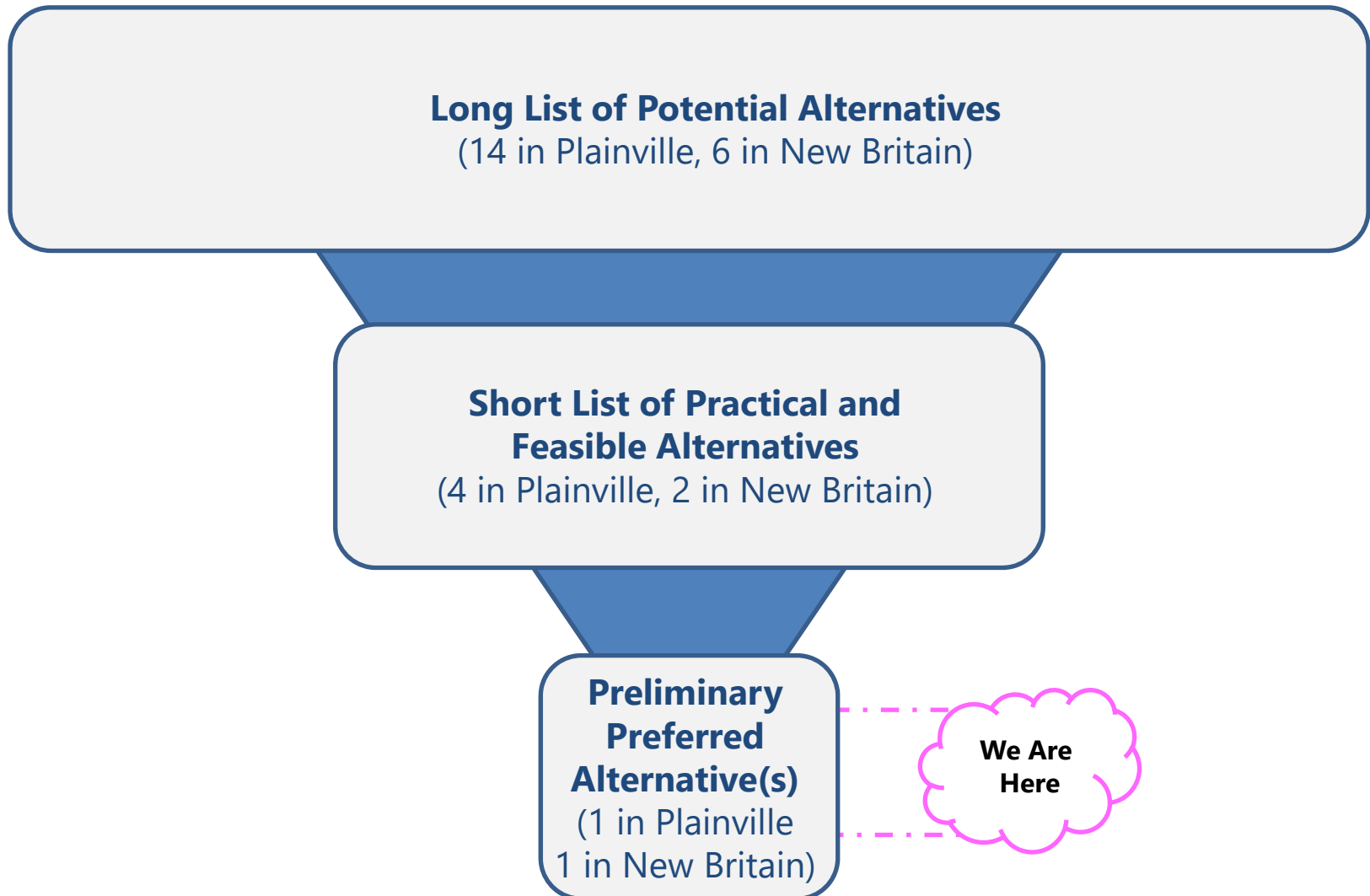


# Vision Statement

"The vision for the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail Gap Closure and CT**fastrak** Connection 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."



# Alternatives Analysis







## Public Engagement Efforts



# Project Steering Committee

- Serves in an advisory role
- Membership includes
  - Capitol Region Council of Governments
  - Town of Plainville
  - Town of Southington
  - City of New Britain
  - CT Department of Transportation
  - Department of Energy & Environmental Protection
  - East Coast Greenway Alliance
  - Plainville Greenway Alliance
  - Farmington Valley Trails Council
  - Plainville-Southington Health District



# Public Meetings

- Community-wide meetings and workshops included
  - July 26, 2016
  - October 3, 2016
  - October 4, 2016
  - October 6, 2016
  - May 22, 2017
  - October 18, 2017
- A public hearing is anticipated for early February, 2018





# Public Outreach (other than meetings)

- ✓ Project newsletters
- ✓ Regularly-updated project website ([www.gapclosurestudy.com](http://www.gapclosurestudy.com))
- ✓ Mobility Tour
- ✓ 2016 Discover New Britain Bike Ride
- ✓ 2016 Cross the State Ride in Plainville
- ✓ Public comment agenda item at all Steering Committee meetings
- ✓ Town Council presentations
- ✓ Regular Town Council updates from Town Manager
- ✓ On-line surveys
- ✓ Booths at New Britain Bike Rodeo
- ✓ Booth at Pumpkin Festival
- ✓ Newspaper articles
- ✓ Active social media presence
- ✓ Information and surveys posted at libraries and Town Hall
- ✓ Flyers and brochures posted throughout town
- ✓ Outreach at Tunxis CC and CCSU



# Public Outreach (support)

- ✓ The majority of comments received have been supportive of the project, including
  - ✓ The alternatives that were identified and looked at
  - ✓ The evaluation criteria that were used to narrow alternatives
  - ✓ The identification of Alignment C as the preferred alignment
  - ✓ The details of Alignment C

*"A lot of thought and planning went into the screening and evaluating steps, including asking for town opinions"*

*"Using actual canal lines is a bonus from a historical perspective"*

*"I believe this is the best possible plan for Plainville. This is not a perfect plan, but it is possible"*

*"I feel that incorporating Downtown into the "Gap" proposal is a good idea, and hopefully will result in positive economic impact for Plainville's businesses"*

*"I'm in favor of heavily weighing "off road" characteristics for that is the safest for young users"*



# Public Outreach (concerns)

- Concerns heard from members of the community in comment forms and at meetings includes
  - Security
  - Property values
  - Privacy
  - Safety
  - Impacts to the environment
  - Engineering concerns
  - Cultural resources and historic preservation
  - Traffic and parking
  - Property impacts



*"Done in a bubble, not enough public notice/participation"*

*"My concern is that residents will have their properties affected"*

*"Concerns about safety and liability"*

# Public Comments Informed The Alignment

- The technical team considered public comments when preparing the preliminary preferred alignment in Summer 2017, and in revising the alignment following the October community meeting.







## Walk Through of Alignment C

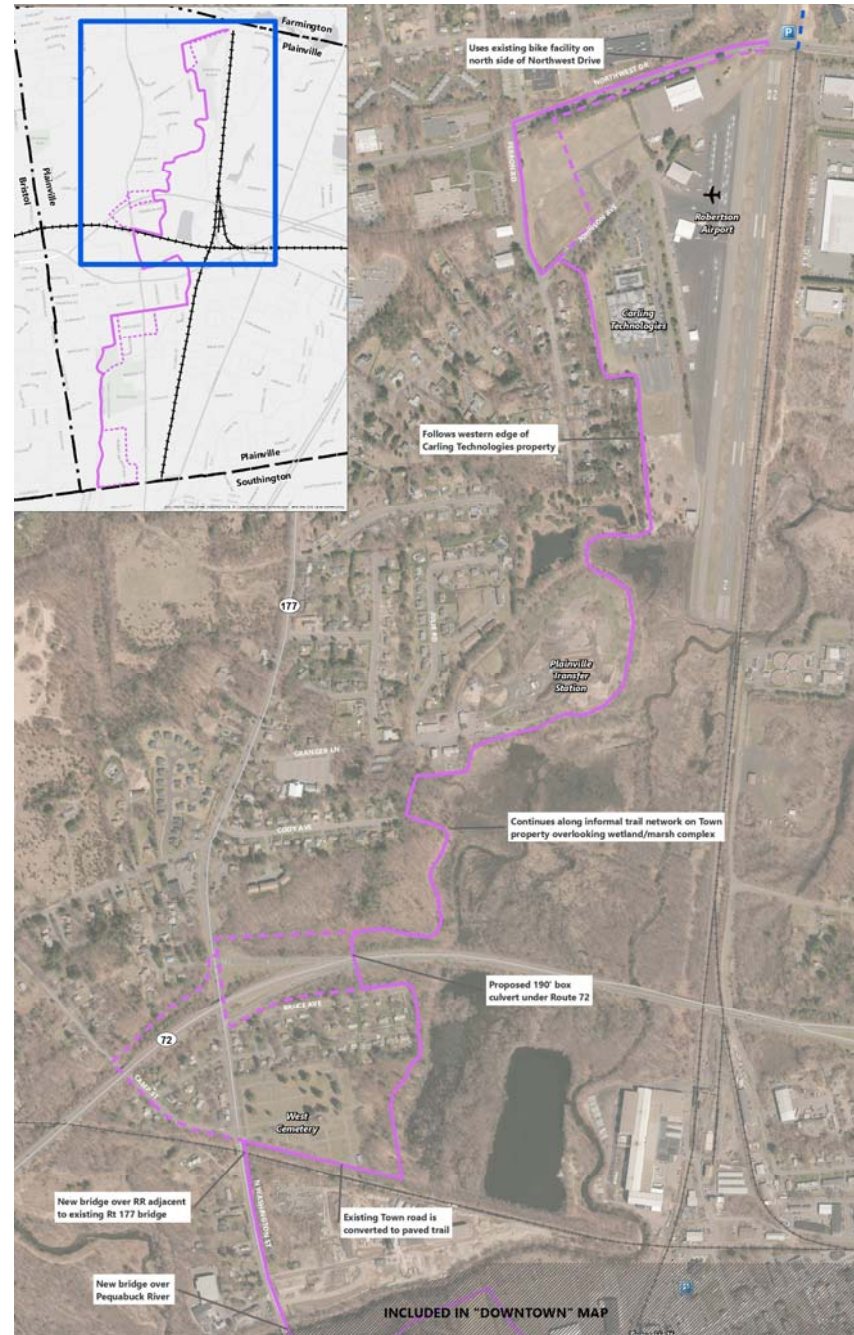
# Overview of Alignment C

- Alignment C is:
  - Approximately 5.3 miles in length
  - Between 10' and 12' in width
  - Up to 98% off-road





# Alignment C – North





Plainville Trail Study  
Plainville, CT | Client

Photo 2-Before  
Wetland Trail

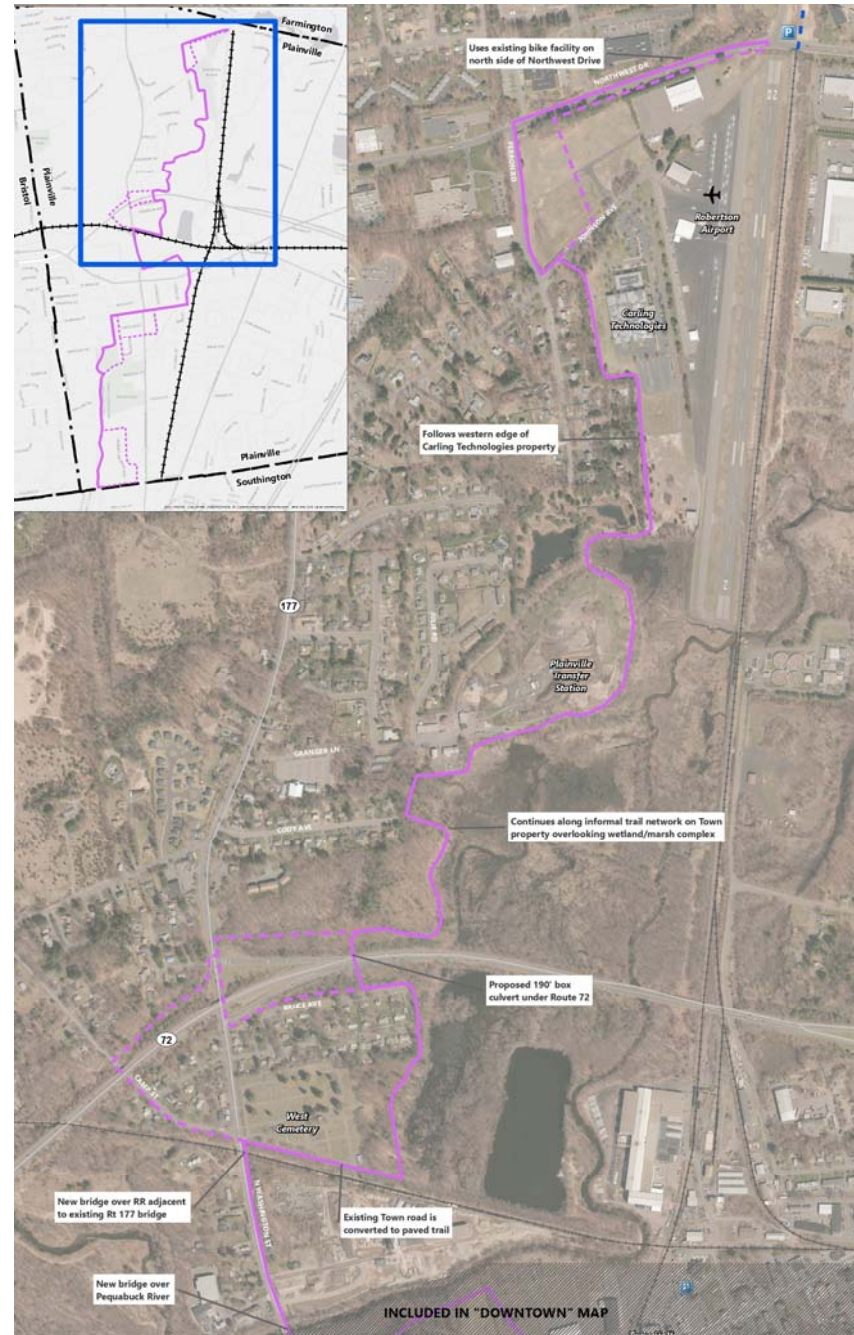




Plainville Trail Study  
Plainville, CT | Client

Photo 2-After  
Wetland Trail

# Alignment C – North







**Plainville Trail Study**  
Plainville, CT | Client

**Photo 1-Before**  
Woodland Trail



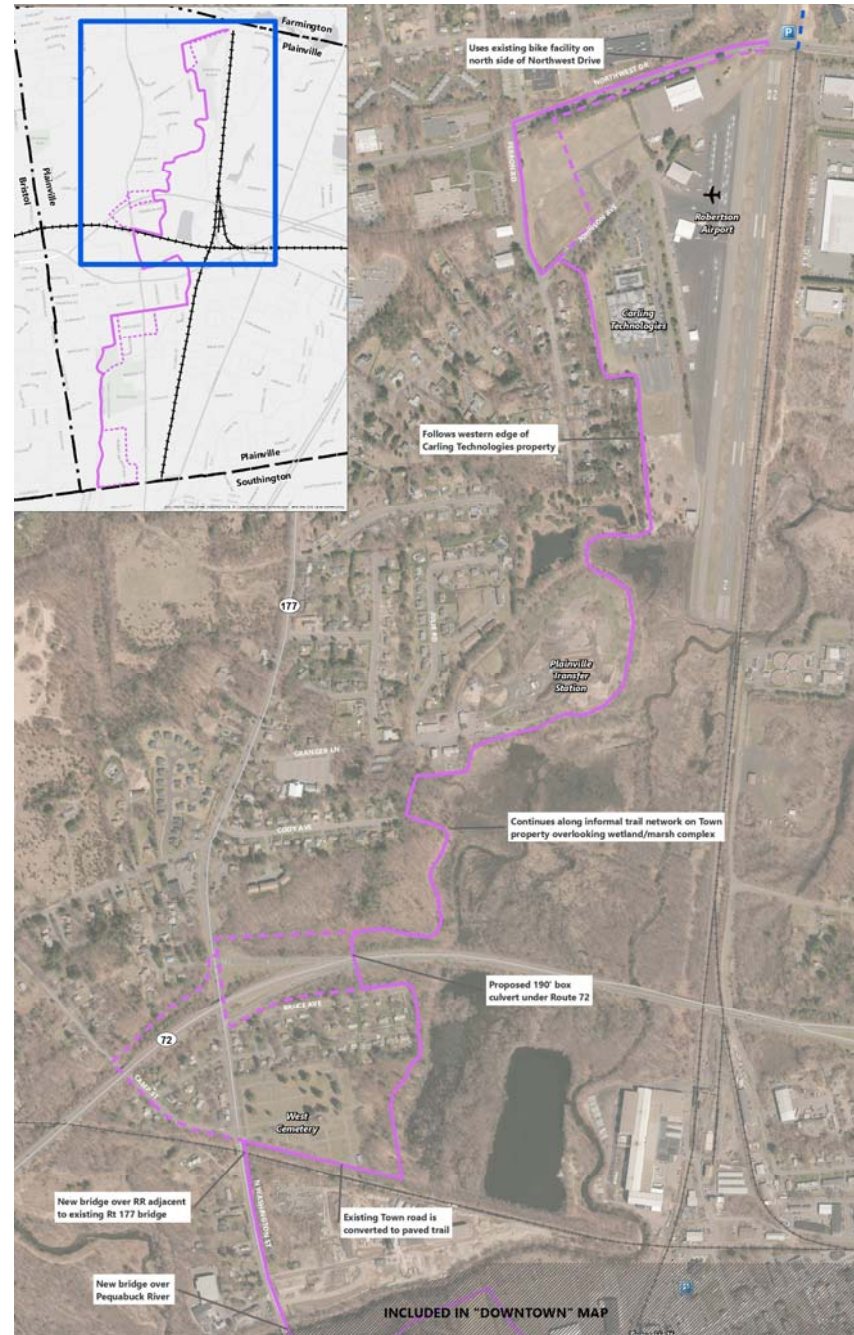


Plainville Trail Study  
Plainville, CT | Client

Photo 1-After  
Woodland Trail



# Alignment C – North





EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Culvert at RT 72





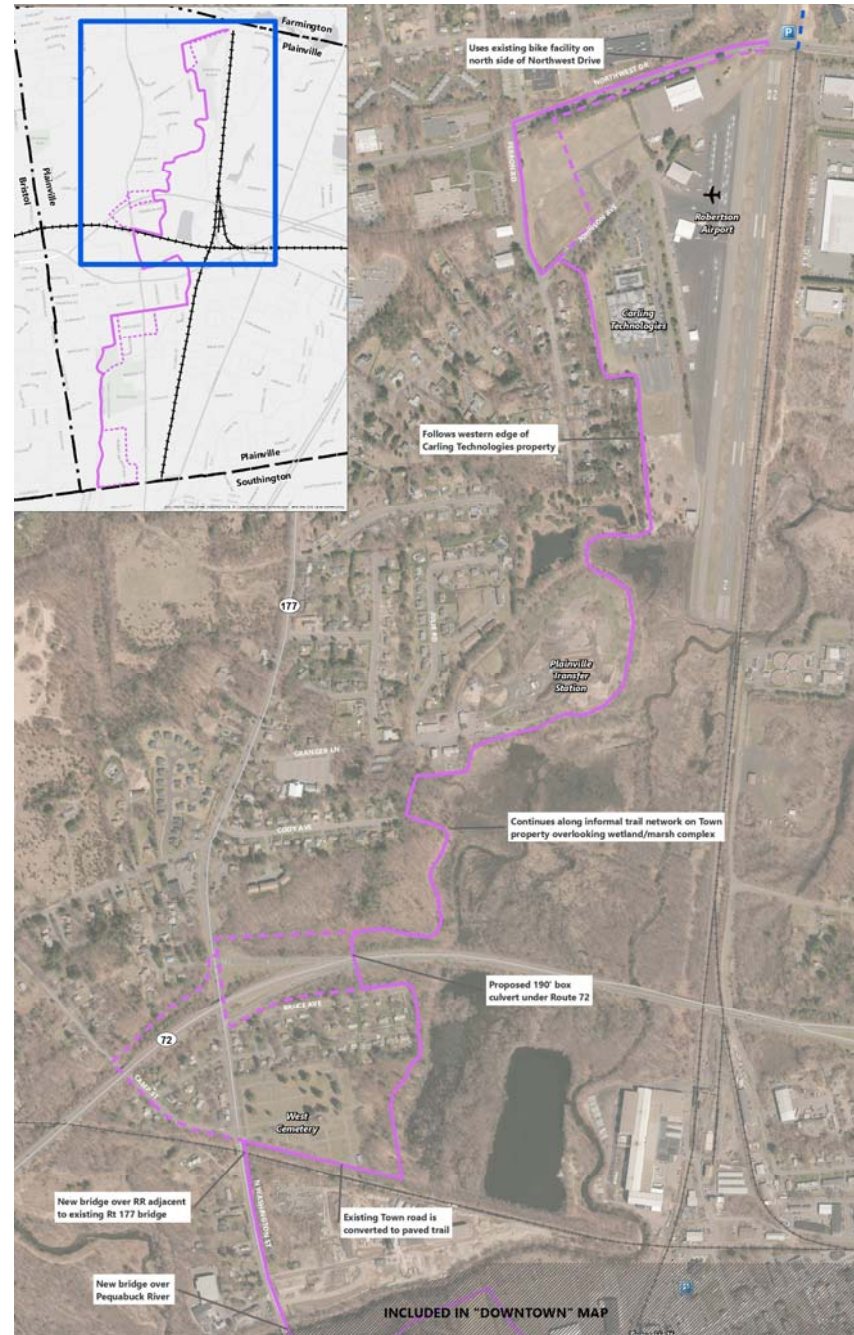
AFTER

## Culvert at RT 72



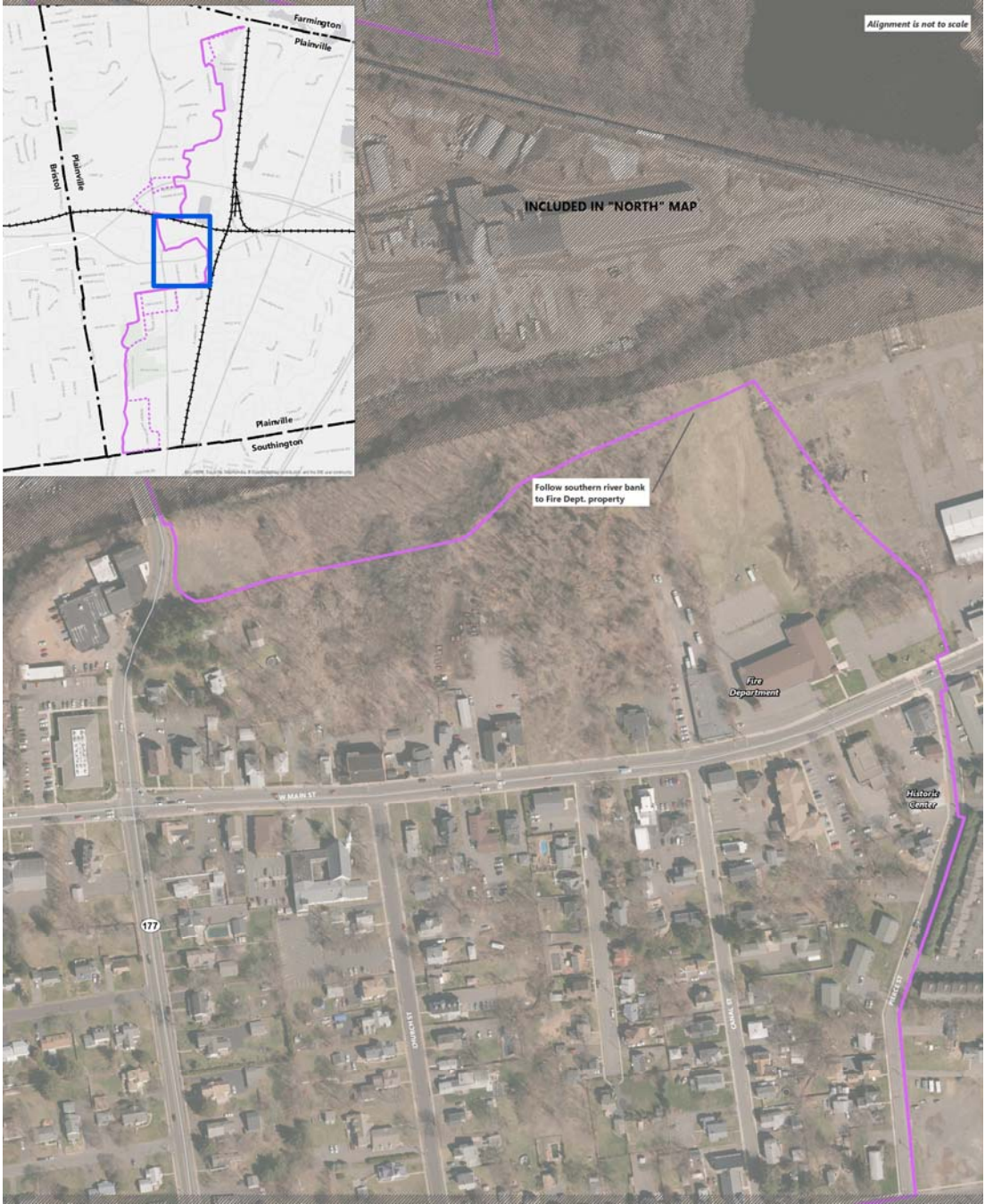


# Alignment C – North

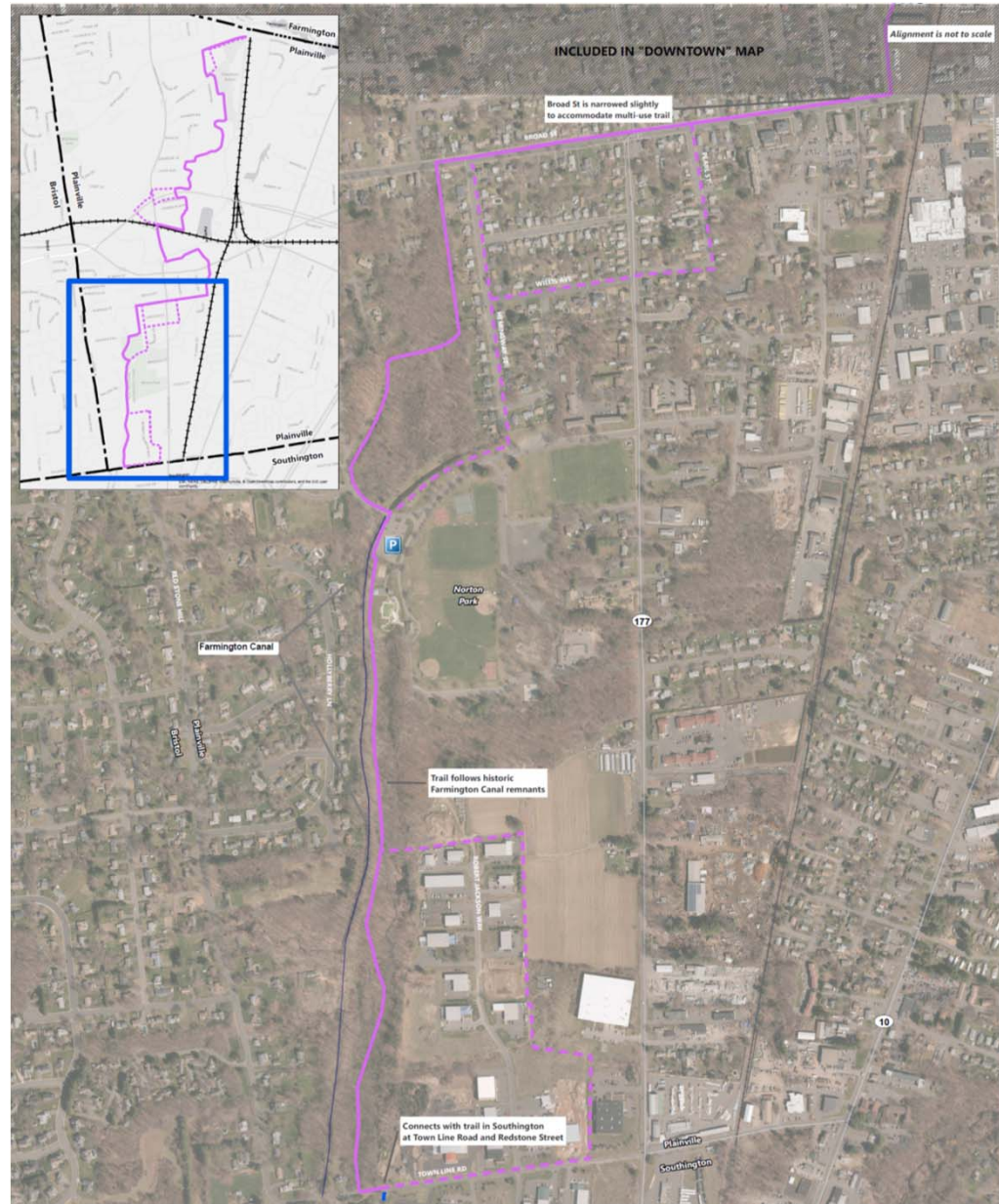




## Alignment C – Downtown



# Alignment C – South





EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Broad near RT 177



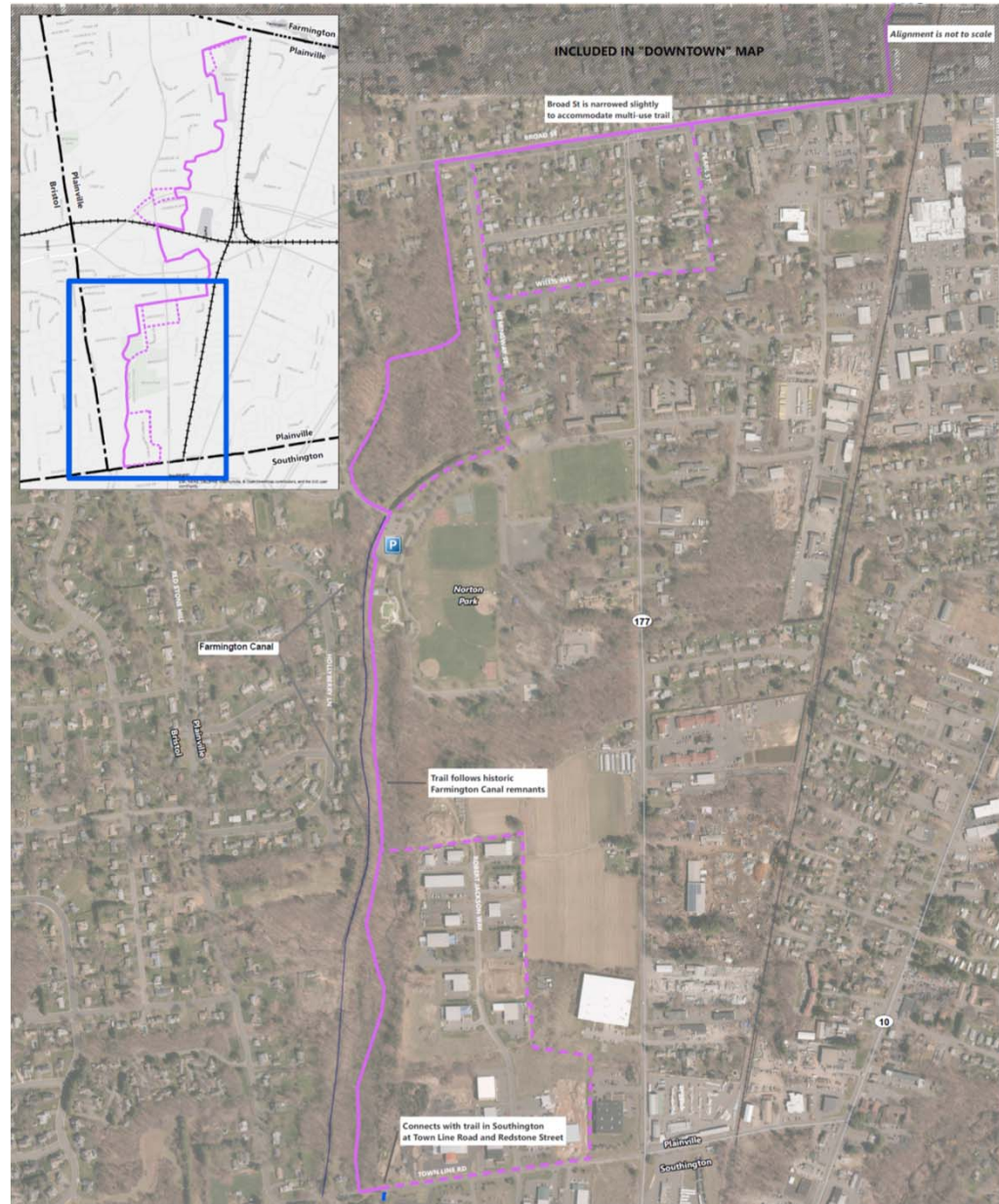
AFTER

## Side Path Concept – North Side (other options exist)





# Alignment C – South







Before

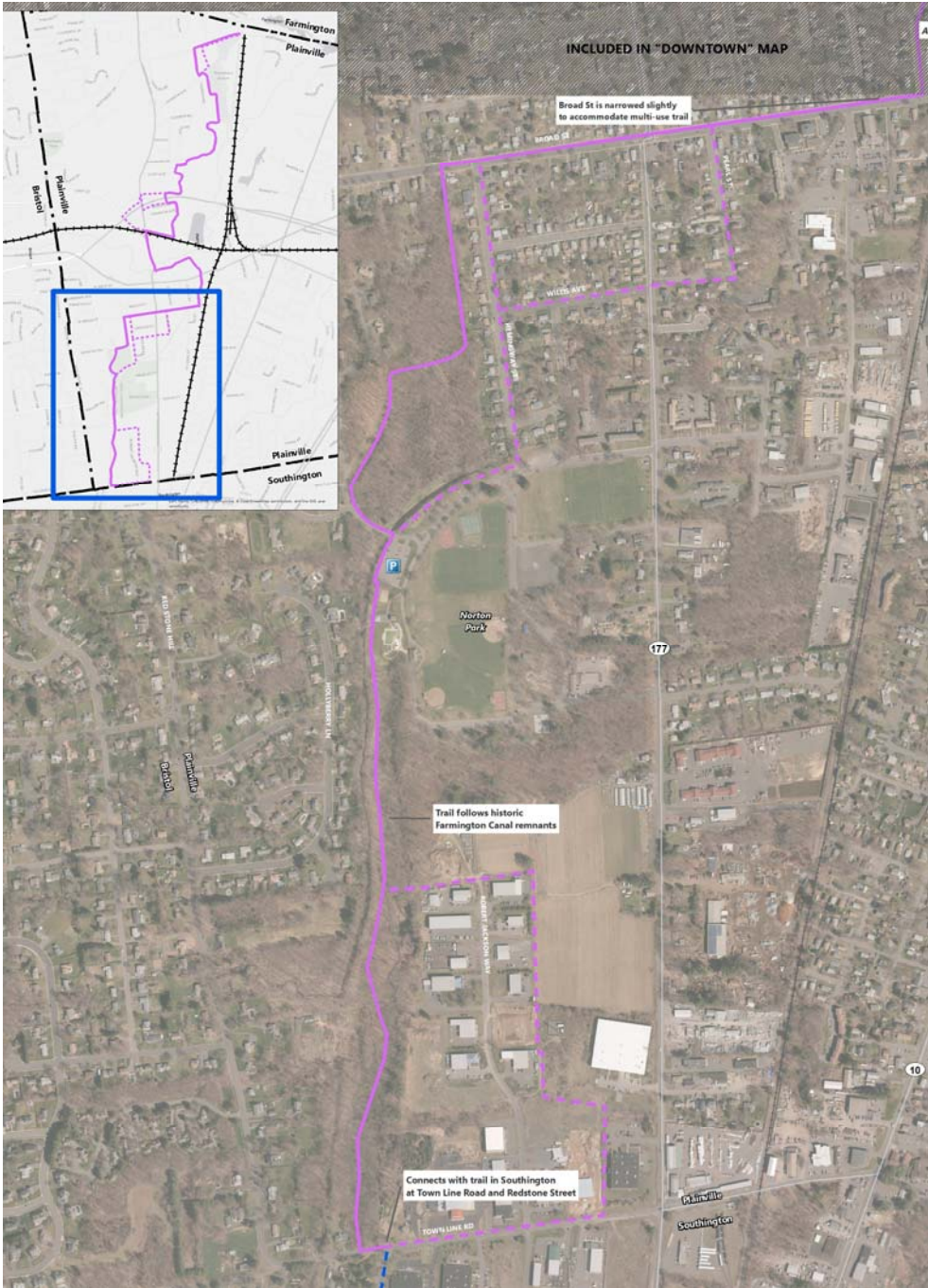




After



## Alignment C – South





# Alignment C Statistics

- Alignment C performed best for
  - Amount of the trail considered off road (up to 98%)
  - Minimized conflict points with cars, non-trail users (road crossings and driveways)
  - Environmental impacts minimized
  - Connectivity
  - Stays outside of Tomasso Nature Park
  - Minimizes right-of-way impacts to residents/businesses







Schedule Moving Forward



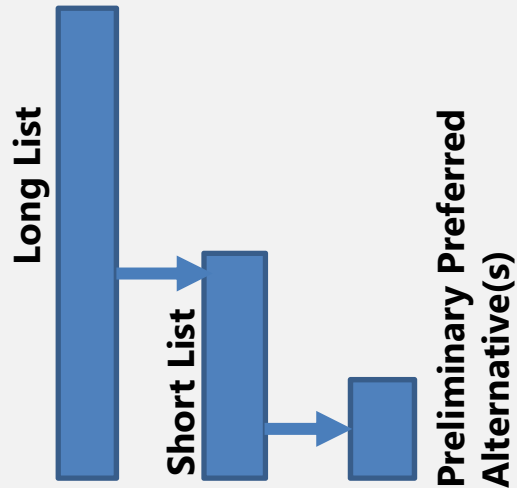
# What Happens Next

- Listen and gather feedback from the Town Council and the public
- Continue to draft Final Report
  - Phasing
  - Funding
- It is possible that part of an alignment will be on road in the short term while longer term funding is compiled to make it off road



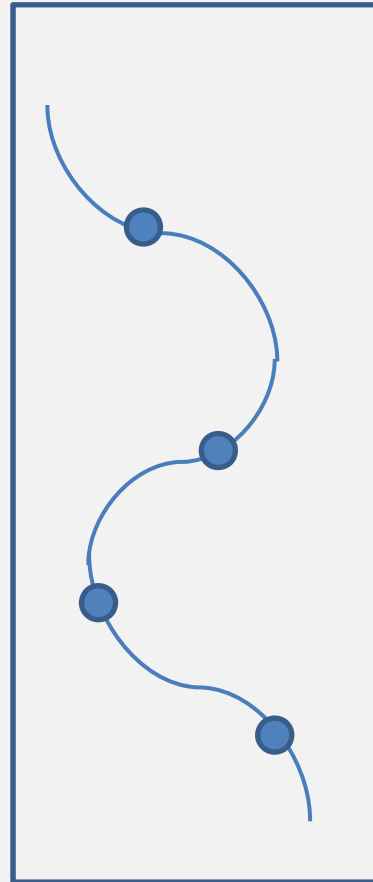
# Our Workplan

## Phase 1: Identify Alternative(s)



**Spring/Summer 2017**  
**COMPLETED**

## Phase 2: Refine Alternative(s)

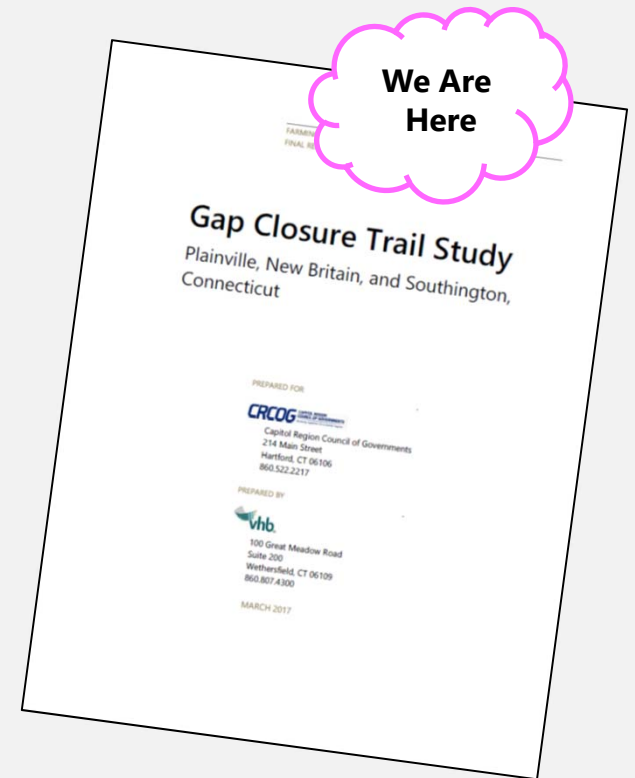


Alignment is for illustrative purposes only.

**Fall/Winter 2017**  
**COMPLETED**

## Phase 3: Prepare Concept Plan

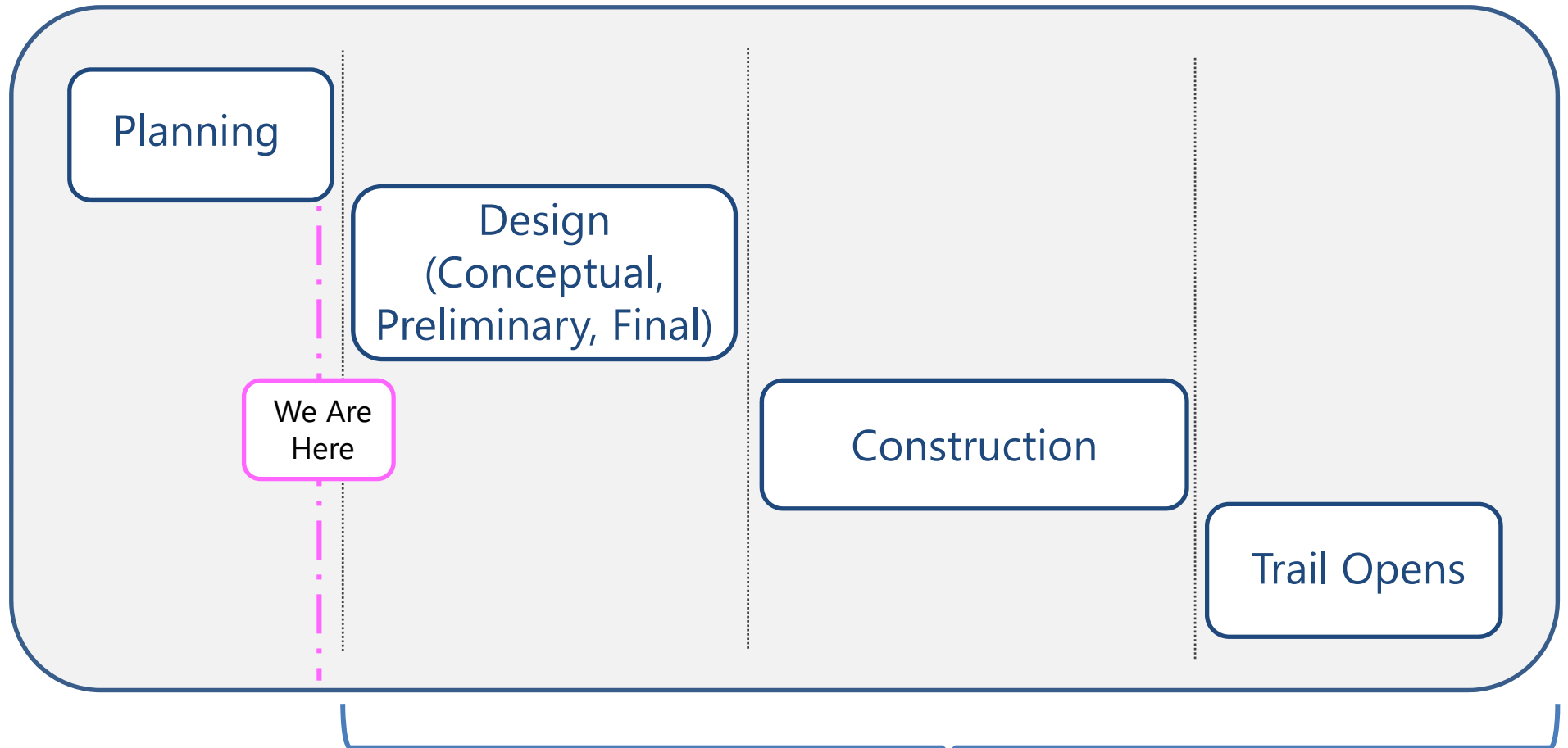
Make an alignment recommendation to Town Council



**Winter 2017/2018**



# This Project is in the Planning Phase



Future phases will depend on Town Council endorsement and funding availability

# Thank you!

**Tim Malone** | Capitol Region Council of Governments  
Project Manager | [tmalone@crcog.org](mailto:tmalone@crcog.org) | 860.724.4221

**Theresa Carr** | VHB Consultant Team | [tcarr@vhb.com](mailto:tcarr@vhb.com)

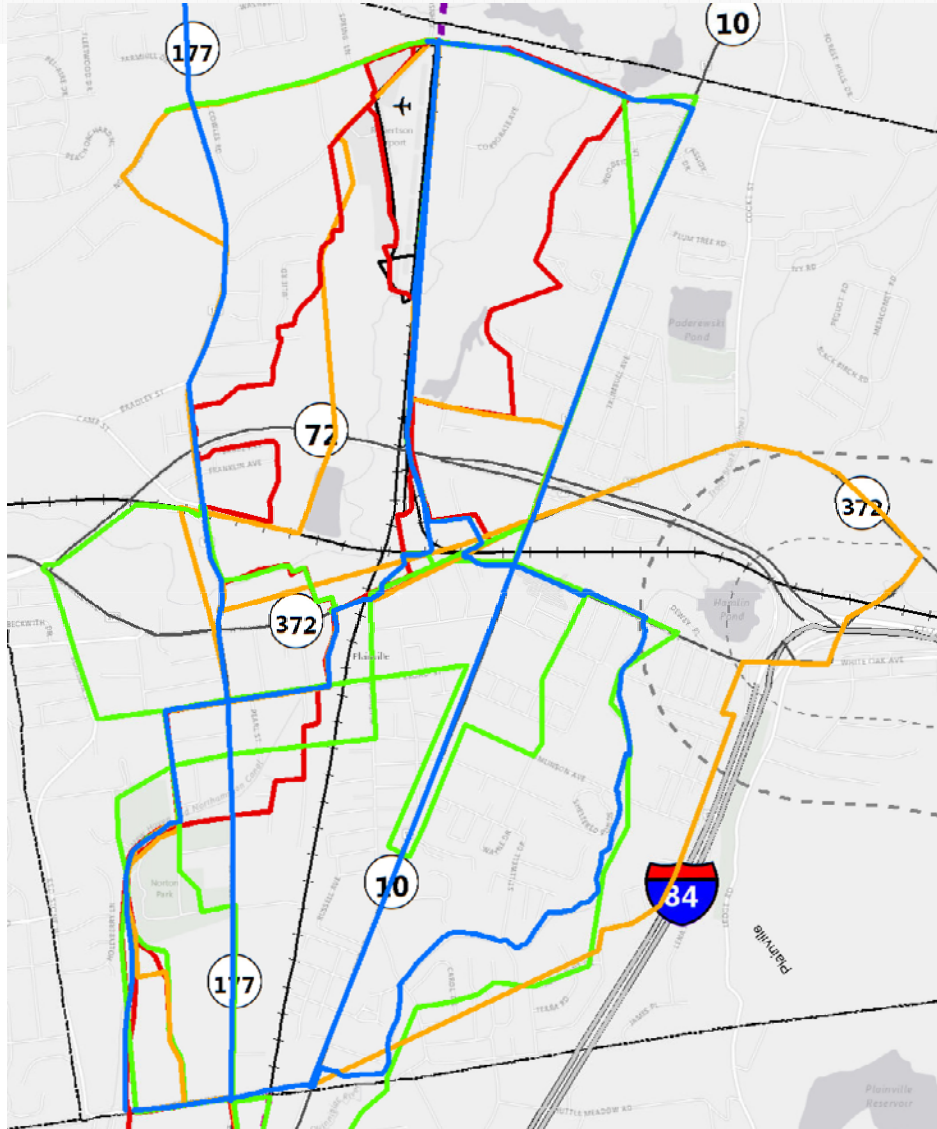
**Mark Jewell** | VHB Consultant Team | [mjewell@vhb.com](mailto:mjewell@vhb.com)



[www.gapclosurestudy.com](http://www.gapclosurestudy.com)

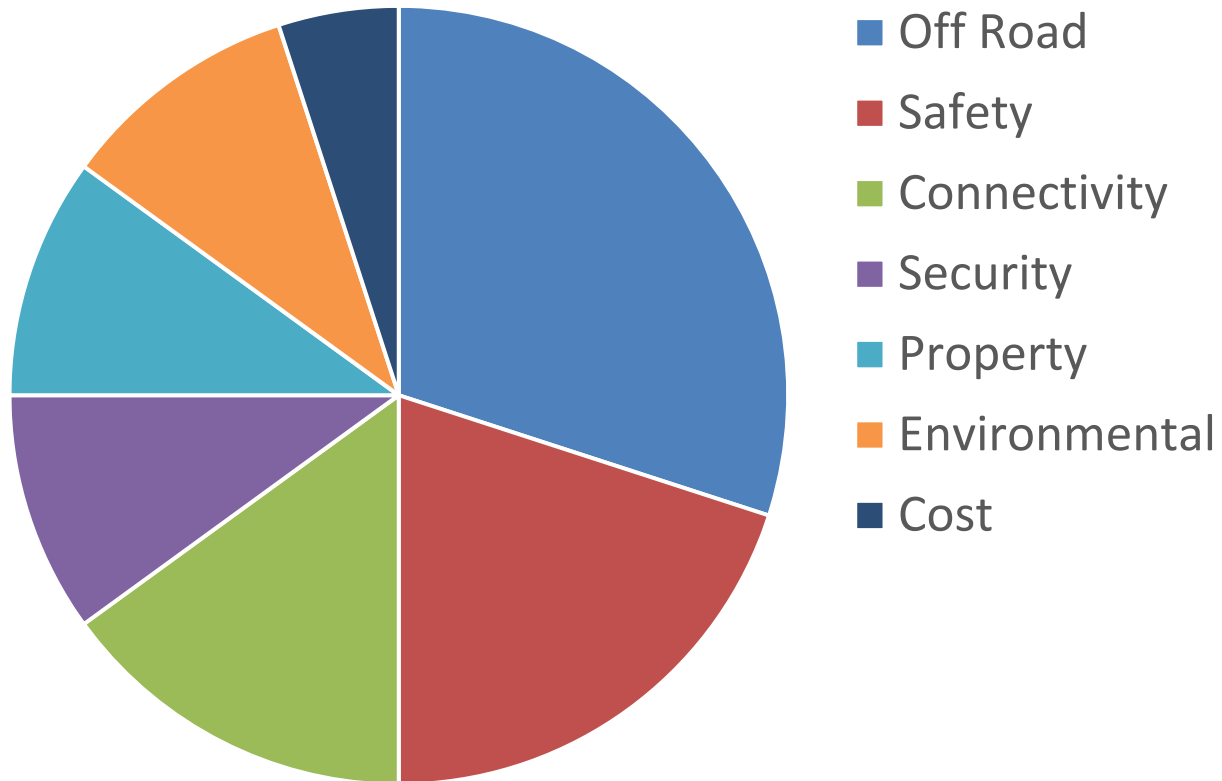


# Long List of Potential Alternatives



- 14 alternatives in total
- Created during fall 2016
  - Charrettes
  - Steering Committee
  - Stakeholder discussions
  - Technical efforts
- Different focal points
  - Shopping
  - Schools
  - Employment
  - Parks/Recreation

# Weighting of Criteria





# Multi-Use trails across New England

