

Regional Naugatuck River Greenway Routing Study

Technical Memo #2: Opportunities and Challenges



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Prepared for the:
Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley (COGCNV)



Council of Governments
Central Naugatuck Valley

Regional Naugatuck River Greenway Routing Study



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1. Overview

This draft Technical Memorandum outlines the environmental, property and connectivity opportunities and challenges along the 22-mile Regional Naugatuck River Greenway Routing Study corridor. It is the second in a series of technical memoranda that will lead to the drafting of the final plan report.



Naugatuck State Forest looking from the former Route 8 road bed, now a blue-blazed hiking trail

This memorandum outlines many of the features that will need to be understood in order to develop a comprehensive recommendation for a preferred alignment for the proposed greenway trail. These features include elements that were gathered from on-the-ground field work, site walks, meetings with stakeholders in the four municipalities, aerial mapping and GIS information provided by the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley (COGCNV).

Of particular emphasis are the small number of current connections along the potential greenway route and the far more numerous gaps that will need to be linked to create a continuous trail connecting Thomaston to Watertown to Waterbury to Naugatuck and to Beacon Falls. These connections and gaps are described in both narrative form and a series of maps that illustrate:

- A land-parcel inventory, including property ownership issues
- Portions of the river corridor which currently contain a greenway-like path or trail, those that are currently on the drawing boards and those in which no routing option currently exists (see also Technical Memo #1 maps)
- The proximity of gaps and well connected areas to existing amenities and other destinations (see also Technical Memo #1 maps)
- Environmental constraints such as flooding issues, wetlands, steep slopes and brownfield sites
- Obstacles—such as rail lines and highways—to a continuous greenway

In addition, this memorandum will describe safety and security issues, permitting requirements, construction feasibility and cost, and community input.

2. Land Parcel Inventory/Property Ownership/Landowner Outreach

The parcels falling within or adjacent to the study area boundary described in Technical Memorandum #1 have been identified and listed in an electronic database provided as a separate appendix to this memorandum. The purpose of the database is to facilitate direct mailings to interested property owners. The database is in Microsoft® Office Excel format. The database can be refined if targeted mailing lists are desired during the course of the study (e.g., to prepare a mailing for a certain neighborhood or along a specific alternate route) using our GIS system.

A short summary for each municipality is below:

Thomaston

A total of __ (tbd) parcels have been identified within the study corridor. Key parcels of public land within the corridor include:

- US Army Corp of Engineer's land surrounding Thomaston Dam
- Thomaston Fire Station
- Route 8 / Rail line property
- ConnDOT facility (along South Main) and salt shed
- Mattatuck State Forest

Watertown

A total of __ (tbd) parcels have been identified within the study corridor. Key parcels of public land within the corridor include:

- Former drive-in theater and proposed ConnDOT bus maintenance facility parcels on Frost Bridge Road
- Route 8 / Rail line property from Frost Bridge Road to York Road

Naugatuck

A total of __ (tbd) parcels have been identified within the study corridor. Key parcels of public land within the corridor include:

- Rail corridor between Bristol Street (Waterbury) and the General Pulaski foot bridge
- Linden Park
- Breen Field
- Portions of the former Uniroyal site (in negotiation)
- Naugatuck State Forest

Beacon Falls

A total of ___ (tbd) parcels have been identified within the study corridor. Key parcels of public lands within the corridor include

- Rail corridor (various segments within town limits)
- Riverbend Park
- Volunteer Park
- O&G Trail
- Toby's Pond and Recreational Park

3. Obstacles to Accessibility and Connectivity (Gap Analysis)

Throughout the entire 22-mile corridor, a number of obstacles to accessibility and connectivity exist for anyone wishing to walk, run, bike or ski from the north end of Thomaston to the south end of Beacon Falls. In addition, constraints exist for those wishing to take transit or drive to the river and find parking and a trailhead for any type of recreation.

For the municipalities that are the focus of this study, these obstacles are outlined below. Also note, that much of what is described below is illustrated in the Potential Greenway Routing Analysis maps at the end of Technical Memo #1.

Thomaston

Access to the federal lands within the Thomaston Dam area exists for motorists and cyclists. Parking lots and other amenities exist at the west end of the dam's access road as well in addition to the Vista Picnic Area along Rte. 222. From the latter, it is possible to walk along a series of informal trails along the east bank of the river between the picnic area and the Hill Road bridge. Access downriver from this area is difficult on foot or bike on either riverbank because of private property, the Rte. 8 interchange and the rail line. There is only one legal river access point between Rte. 222 and the East Main bridge via Railroad Street Annex. An unused access road through the Plume & Atwood site, as well as the nearby rail line, provides some opportunity for access in the future.

South of the East Main Street bridge, steep slopes and private property creates obstacles to access immediately adjacent to the river. An alternate route on a parallel, public right of way (ROW) is likely in this area, potentially tying into the Clock Walk in downtown Thomaston. The east bank of the river from here to the Reynolds Bridge is constrained by the close proximity of the rail line, Rte. 8 and the Naugatuck River. The west bank does offer some opportunities for connectivity but some obstacles are present including private property along the river, South Main Street's narrow ROW and the on/off ramps for Rte. 8. Running south from this location, some Rail with Trail access is possible on the east bank while on the west, a greenway trail may not be possible along the river but along the Reynolds Bridge Road ROW instead.

Watertown

A potential greenway trail along the river corridor is likely in Watertown as an existing and underutilized dirt access road runs parallel to Rte. 8 for over two miles. Currently, the access road is used occasionally by dirt bikes and all-terrain vehicles, so decisions will need to be made in the future with regards to which users—motorized, non-motorized or both—have the right to use the greenway trail. This dirt access road terminates at Frost Bridge Road, and the rail line continues south to Waterbury in a relatively-wide right of way with an adjacent shoulder that could potentially accommodate a trail. While this corridor could work well for a linear greenway trail, the presence of Rte. 8 to the west makes connections to neighborhoods in Watertown very difficult.

On the opposite side of the river from the Reynolds Bridge to the Frost Bridge (Town of Thomaston property), potential access for non-motorized users is significantly constrained. For much of this stretch, either Waterbury Road or the rail line (or both) lie very close to the river's east bank. In some spots, the road pulls away from the river and provides access for those on foot, particularly the Whitestone Cliff Trail as it passes over Frost Bridge and turns to the north before passing under Waterbury Road. South of the Frost Bridge, Waterbury Road continues very close to the river and precludes a fully accessible, multi-use path from the bridge to the Waterbury line (though a narrower hiking trail may be possible).

Naugatuck

From the Waterbury line, few constraints exist for any mode along Platts Mill Road. Located here is a small paddlecraft boat launch that includes a small parking area and beach-like areas along the river. Downriver from the road's intersection with South Main Street, portions of Rte. 8 pass very close to the river's east bank, precluding access until the north end of Linden Park. On the west side, an active rail line runs along the river from the Borough Line to East Main Street where it passes overhead on a trestle, letting all forms of traffic pass underneath. Long stretches of the rail line include a wide shoulder or a separated dirt access road for service vehicles, however. This offers some potential for connectivity in the future.

Immediately south of downtown Naugatuck, private property along the river or the rail line creates obstacles to river access on both sides. However, an alternate route could be to utilize the South Main Extension ROW to clear the private properties on the east side in order to access Breen Field, a public park. Access through the park works well for all modes until the south end where Rte. 8 cantilevers out over or immediately adjacent to the river. Along the east bank, this condition creates a continuous obstacle to riverside access for a two-mile stretch until Rte. 8 crosses over the river near downtown Beacon Falls. On the west bank, the obstacles created by the rail line continues to the Naugatuck State Forest, but access for vehicles, bikes and pedestrians is limited but physically possible on a pair of steep underpasses below the rail line on the former Naugatuck Chemical/Uniroyal site.

Beacon Falls

Within the Naugatuck State Forest, the narrow slice of land adjacent to the river is dominated by transportation infrastructure, mitigating pedestrian or bike access to the river. This long gap runs for the length of the State Forest on the east side but parallel access for non-motorized users is possible along the existing road bed of the former Rte. 8 alignment,

currently sitting to the east of Rte. 8. The road bed allows hiking and mountain bike connectivity to a network of old logging roads and blue-blazed hiking trails in the state forest. A similar network exists on the west side of the river and High Rock Road—a public ROW adjacent to the rail tracks—provides access to and from Beacon Falls for motorists, walkers and cyclists. Though High Rock Road is a dead end, walkers and cyclists are able to pass through the Jersey barriers and continue to the west along Black Forest Road, eventually connecting back to Naugatuck.

Obstacles to river access and connectivity continue within Beacon Falls proper, though some portions of the river are accessible to the community. Old Route 8 on the east bank provides access along a brick-paver sidewalk from Volunteer Park to Veterans Park. South of the Depot Street Bridge, a relatively narrow shoulder of the four-lane road may soon be transformed into a greenway link within the ROW from the bridge to the intersection with Route 42. South of this spot, traffic picks up significantly and Old Route 8 becomes a more significant obstacle for non-motorized movement along the river or from adjacent neighborhood to the northeast. On the west bank of the river across from the center of Beacon Falls, numerous privately-owned parcels will limit connectivity other than along Railroad Avenue. This street brings motorists and hikers to the small parking area that serves the existing hiking trail near the river through property owned by O & G Industries. This ½ mile long path ends where the existing rail line runs adjacent to the river. Downriver from that spot, the rail line does create an obstacle to river access, but the north entry to Toby's Pond and Recreational Park provides access for the entire community (though for limited hours). From Riverbend Park on the east bank south to the Town Line, a collection of homes and other private property as well as the Route 8 alignment presents an obstacle to river access.

4. Construction Feasibility and Cost

On October 19 and 20, 2009, the study team conducted extensive site walks throughout the greenway corridor. Based on observations made during the walks, as well as map reconnaissance of the area and stakeholder meetings, we see no insurmountable obstacles to the creation of the envisioned greenway system.

This is not to suggest that significant challenges don't exist; they certainly do. However, the challenges that do exist can be overcome using customary greenway construction materials and methods. For example, by carefully selecting bridge locations for the various required river crossings, pre-fabricated pedestrian bridges can be used.

Costs for a greenway trail along the Naugatuck River, as with most greenway projects, will be largely driven by the requirements of structural components (e.g., bridges, pile-supported walkways, etc.). Completing the entire corridor will require several river and rail-line crossings. Off-setting the costs of these components are long stretches of comparatively inexpensive trail that can be constructed on existing grade.

A detailed construction cost estimate cannot be produced until a conceptual greenway alignment is selected. However, experience on other greenway projects can be used to infer a planning level estimate of expected construction cost. For a "typical" greenway with conventional structure types in a rural setting, expected greenway construction costs range from \$0.75 to \$1.25 million per mile. Obviously, many factors will affect final cost including construction materials, commodity prices, property impacts of the selected alignment and other undetermined issues.

Thomaston

Key factors expected to affect construction costs in the Town of Thomaston are the one or more required rail crossings and possible improvements to the East Main Bridge.

Watertown

Within the Town of Watertown, the anticipated use of the existing Mattatuck Trail alignment and an existing railroad maintenance access drive will greatly simplify construction and lower construction costs. The most expensive components are anticipated to be a potential elevated rail crossing at the northern end of the former drive-in movie site and a river crossing which will connect the trail to the proposed Waterbury Greenway terminus on the east bank of the river.

Naugatuck

The trail through the Borough of Naugatuck is expected to capitalize on several linear assets including an existing rail bed, Linden Park and the former Uniroyal site. These relatively low-cost segments will offset the much more expensive river and rail crossings that will be required. Utilizing the available rail bed will likely require the construction of pile-supported approach ramps at select locations.

Beacon Falls

The Beacon Falls portion of the greenway is anticipated to utilize either the abandoned Rte. 8 roadbed, or the existing rail bed used by the Metro-North railway. Use of the abandoned road would decrease construction cost, but would require two additional river crossings. During the planning process, a more detailed analysis of the relative costs of each option should be performed.

5. Environmental Constraints

Land use within the Greenway Corridor Boundary varies from densely developed industrial and mixed commercial/residential to sparsely developed rural areas to undeveloped forestland. Each of the various land uses brings its own set of environmental challenges.

In highly urbanized environments, it is not uncommon for historic releases of oils or hazardous materials to have degraded environmental conditions. In addition, historic development frequently included use of urban fill materials (e.g., brick, block, and asphalt within a soil and ash matrix). Due to the presence of ash and asphalt within the urban fill, it is common to find pollutants such as heavy metals and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons within urban fill materials. These concerns will likely complicate the acquisition of parcels for greenway development.

Constructing portions of the greenway may require disturbing polluted soil. Special consideration should be given to the following:

- *Soil disposal:* If excess soil is generated during the construction of the trail, it may require special handling and disposal due to the presence of pollutants. We recommend that the trail be designed in a manner to reduce the amount of excess soil generated during the project to mitigate the potential for excessive costs associated with polluted soil disposal.
- *Potential for exposure:* Although it is likely the greenway will be paved, thereby mitigating the potential for users to come into contact with pollutants directly beneath the trail, soil located along the shoulders of the trail could be providing a potential exposure pathway. Surficial soil quality testing may reveal these conditions and permit the designer to incorporate mitigating measures (e.g., separation fabrics, clean fill, etc.).

In less developed areas, environmental constraints relate less to mitigating man-made contamination and more to protecting and managing natural resources. Sensitive resources include: wetlands, flood plains, endangered or threatened species habitat, steep slopes or erosive soils and archeological resources. Where the greenway is proposed to cross an area identified as potential endangered or threatened species habitat, a review by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP) should be undertaken early in the design process. CTDEP will advise the municipality on appropriate measures to protect the critical habitat.

Thomaston

The greenway in Thomaston will pass through at least one and possibly two areas known to be potential endangered-species habitat. In addition, a river crossing or two is possible, which will potentially impact wetlands and floodplains.

Watertown

A key environmental constraint within Watertown will be the traversing of a potential endangered species habitat area. Portions of the trail are also likely to lie within the designated floodplain.

Naugatuck

The trail through Naugatuck is anticipated to require significant work within a designated floodplain. In addition, a river crossing will potentially impact the regulatory floodway. At the southern end of the trail, the greenway will cross a potential endangered or threatened species habitat.

Beacon Falls

Although extremely steep slopes and narrow bottomlands are pervasive throughout the valley, nowhere is this more prominent than in the Town of Beacon Falls. Traversing these steep slopes makes it somewhat more challenging to construct an accessible trail. In some areas, the use of retaining walls and/or pile supported structures may be necessary to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Within Beacon Falls, the greenway is expected to pass through three areas of endangered or threatened species habitat.

6. Safety and Security

Trail safety is a major concern of both trail users and those whose property is adjacent to a greenway trail. Creating a safe trail environment goes beyond design and law enforcement and should involve the entire community. The most effective and most visible deterrent to illegal activity on the Naugatuck River Greenway Trail will be the presence of legitimate trail users. Getting as many “eyes on the trail” as possible is a key deterrent to undesirable activity. There are several components to accomplishing this:

Provide good access to the trail

Access ranges from providing conveniently-located trailheads along the Greenway, to encouraging the construction of sidewalks to accommodate access from public and private parcels adjacent to the trail. Access points should be inviting and signed so as to welcome the public onto the trail.

Good visibility from adjacent neighbors

Neighbors adjacent to the trail can potentially provide 24-hour surveillance of the trail and can become an ally to the municipalities’ police departments. Though some screening and setback of the trail may be needed for privacy of adjacent neighbors, complete blocking out of the trail from neighborhood view should be discouraged. This eliminates the potential of neighbors’ “eyes on the trail,” and could result in a “tunnel effect” on the trail.

High level of maintenance

A well maintained trail sends a message that the community cares about the public space. This message alone will discourage undesirable activity along the trail.

Programmed events

Community events along any of the various segments of the Naugatuck River Greenway will help increase public awareness and thereby attract more people to use the trail. Various civic organizations can help organize public events along the trail which will increase support. Events might include a day-long trail clean up or a series of short interpretive walks led by long-time residents or a naturalist.

Community projects

The support generated for the Naugatuck River Greenway could be further capitalized by involving neighbors and friends of the trail in a community project. Ideas for community projects include volunteer planting events, art projects and interpretive research projects. These community projects are the strongest means of creating a sense of ownership along the greenway that is perhaps the strongest single deterrent to undesirable activity along the trail.

Adopt-a-Trail Program

Nearby businesses, community institutions, and residential neighbors often see the benefit of their involvement in the trail development and maintenance. Businesses and developers may view the trail as an integral piece of their site planning and be willing to take on some level of responsibility for the trail as well. Creation of an adopt-a-trail program should be explored to capitalize on this opportunity and build civic pride.

7. Permitting Issues

The construction of the regional greenway along the Naugatuck River will require permits from various agencies. A brief description of each anticipated permit is provided below. It should be noted that each permit may not be required for each individual greenway project.

Municipal Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Permit for Regulated Activities

- Basis:** Delegated authority from the State based on Connecticut General Statutes.
- Threshold:** Any regulated activity within a State regulated wetland, or upland review area. Can also be required if the activity is in an upland area, drains to a regulated wetland area, and/or is deemed to have a potential impact on the wetland.
- Process:** Application must be made to the Municipality and most include a Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Reporting Form. At the first meeting after application is received, it is formally accepted by the Commission. This begins the time periods as defined in the State Statutes. There must be a finding of potential significance. If the proposed activity is deemed to be a potentially significant activity, then a Public Hearing must be held before a decision can be made by the Commission. If the activity is found to have no significant impact, then the Commission may hold a public hearing, if it is found to be in the public good, or may render a decision without holding a hearing. Following the formal publication of the decision, there is a 15-day appeal period.
- Time Line:** Normally takes three to six months, depending on whether a Public Hearing is required. Application must be submitted prior to or concurrent with the Planning and Zoning Permit, if required.

Municipal Planning and Zoning or Municipal Zoning Department Permit (Site Plan Approval)

- Basis:** Local authority granted under Connecticut General Statutes, but based on local bylaws and regulations.
- Threshold:** Any significant earthwork or work requiring a building permit. A Zoning permit may not be required for greenway projects. This should be discussed with each municipality's Planning and Zoning staff once the corridor and proposed construction methods are sufficiently defined.
- Process:** Application is made to the Municipality. At the first meeting after the application is received, it is formally accepted by the Commission. This begins the time periods as defined in the State Statutes and local bylaws. Certain activities require a special permit which requires a Public Hearing and must be held before a decision can be made by the Commission. Also, the Commission cannot make a decision until the Inland Wetlands Commission has made a decision. Following the formal publication of the decision, there is a 15-day appeal period. Plans must normally be approximately 70% construction document level in order to contain sufficient information to gain approvals.
- Time Line:** Normally takes three to six months, following submission, depending on whether a Public Hearing is required. The permit application cannot be submitted prior to the application for Inland Wetlands, although they can be submitted on the same day.

FEMA Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR)

- Basis: Federal law with some review authority delegated to the Municipality.
- Threshold: Any earthwork or construction within a designated flood plain; work over, or in a designated floodway.
- Process: Application is made to FEMA with the concurrence of the Municipality. The application must demonstrate that the water surface elevation is not increased by proposed activities through use of hydraulic modeling software. Following construction, application must be made for a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) depicting actual “as-built” conditions and modeling demonstrating that no increase in water surface elevations will result.
- Time Line: Normally takes 12 to 18 months for CLOMR.

Stream Channel Encroachment Permit

- Basis: State regulation of specific stream channels as defined by Connecticut General Statutes and DEP Regulations.
- Threshold: Any earthwork within the stream channel encroachment line.
- Process: Application is made to DEP. Application must include hydrologic analysis proving that activity does not negatively impact flood water or impede flow within the channel.
- Time Line: Normally takes six to 12 months depending upon the nature of the proposed construction.

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater and Dewatering Wastewater from Construction Activities

- Basis: Connecticut General Statutes and DEP Regulations.
- Threshold: Compliance with the General Permit is required for all projects that disturb one or more acres of total land area. Projects with five or more total acres of disturbance, regardless of phase must also file a registration with the CIDEP. Projects exceeding 10 acres of total disturbance must obtain an approval of registration, including a detailed review of the required Stormwater Pollution Control Plan. The current re-authorization of the General Permit expires on April 1, 2010. The CIDEP has discussed lowering the threshold for registration to one acre as part of the next re-authorization.
- Process: Application is made to DEP.
- Time Line: Must be submitted at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.

Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) Permit

- Basis: Federal statutes.
- Threshold: There are three categories of ACOE permits based on the total area of disturbance of federally regulated wetlands. The federal definition of wetland is different from the Connecticut definition. Although the limits of both federal and state wetland

tend to be the same, there are sometimes differences. ACOE jurisdiction is triggered by any fill-in, or secondary impact to, a federally regulated wetland. If the ACOE has jurisdiction, then the category of permit is decided based on the total direct and secondary impacts to wetlands. Direct impacts include earthwork operations. Secondary impacts can include changes in drainage patterns or groundwater hydrology, clearing/cutting of vegetation, or alteration of shade patterns.

- Category I General Permit (less than 5,000 square feet of disturbance)
- Category II Programmatic General Permit (PGP) (5,000 square feet to 1 acre of disturbance)
- Category III Individual Permit (one acre, or more, of disturbance)
- Process: For Category I, there is no application required. For Category II and III permits, application is made to the ACOE. Review is conducted jointly by the ACOE and Connecticut DEP (see CT 401 Water Quality Permit). Additional review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and other federal agencies is conducted for Category II and III permits. Category II permits can be changed to Category III if requested by reviewing agencies based on potential impacts of the wetlands or wildlife habitat.
- Time Line: Category II permits normally take six to nine months depending on complexity, quality/function of wetlands, and surrounding habitats. Category III can take one year or more. Category II and III permits cannot be granted until the CT DEP issues a 401 Water Quality Permit.

Connecticut Section 401 Water Quality Certification

- Basis: Federal authority, under the Clean Waters Act, delegated to the State of Connecticut.
- Threshold: Category II or III ACOE Permit, or any State of Connecticut Project.
- Process: Application to ACOE is jointly reviewed by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The DEP often requires additional information to be submitted which is not required by the ACOE.
- Time Line: Normally takes four to six months. This certification must be granted before the ACOE can issue a Category II or III permit.

8. Coordination with Other Studies

Along with the Regional Naugatuck River Greenway Routing Study, a number of other relevant studies have recently been completed or are occurring concurrently. These studies may well have an impact on ultimate routing decisions for the greenway or recommendations from this Study may lead to proposal alterations to the other studies. The other studies include:

- The **I-84/Rte. 8 Interchange Study** is a long-term multi-billion-dollar project initiated by ConnDOT to completely rebuild the “Mix Master” interchange near downtown Waterbury. Options being studied may have an impact on the recommended routing of the Greenway trail through the core of Waterbury but are unlikely to effect the alignment in the four municipalities which are the focus of this Study.
- The **Rte. 8 Study** is an active planning effort that is looking at ways to improve traffic flow and motorist safety at exits 22-30 along Rte. 8 in Seymour, Beacon Falls and Naugatuck. All

design recommendations are being classified as near-, medium- or long-term improvements. Potential projects that are most relevant for this Study include:

- Adding a left-turn pocket to the Depot Street bridge within the existing median along Old Rte. 8 in Beacon Falls
 - Widening a portion of South Main Street near the Maple Street Bridge in Naugatuck that may require ConnDOT obtaining an easement through a number of properties between South Main and the Naugatuck River.
 - Adding a shared-use path adjacent to Rte. 8 along the west bank of the river, just south of Linden Park in Naugatuck
 - Widening the North Main/Union City/City Hill intersection in Naugatuck to improve traffic flow but could make any potential pedestrian or bike connection to the neighborhoods to the east more difficult and possibly more dangerous.
 - Widening the west side of Rte. 8 just north of the Prospect Street Bridge will bring the edge of the highway that much closer to the Naugatuck River, creating an even more difficult pinch point that what occurs today (further precluding an eastbank alignment for the greenway).
- The **Waterbury and New Canaan Branch Lines Feasibility Study** is a current study managed by ConnDOT in cooperation with the South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA), Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency (GBRPA), Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley (COGCNV), the Valley Council of Governments (VCOG), other state, federal, municipal and local stakeholders. The primary purpose is to study improvement opportunities along these two branch lines of Metro-North commuter rail network. When complete, the two-year old study will, according to the project's web site, "identify needs, evaluate alternatives, and define improvements for both corridors."
 - The **Waterbury Naugatuck River Greenway Routing and Feasibility Study** is nearing completion and will be available to the public early next year. The Study recommends a hybrid greenway alignment that utilizes public and private property along the east and west banks of the river, numerous bridges, and a handful of roadway corridors to link difficult-to-bridge gaps along the river. The Study includes numerous loops and spur connections to important nearby destinations, as well as nature trails that run parallel to the wider and paved greenway trail. Recommendations include the connection to the greenway in Naugatuck via a Rail With Trail project along the west bank of the river, beginning at the Bristol Street bridge and running south. At the north end, the Waterbury Greenway is proposed to terminate at the City Line adjacent to Thomaston Avenue with a long-term recommendation for a new bridge to span the river at this location, connecting with another potential Rail with Trail running north to Watertown.

9. Community Input

COGCNV hosted two public workshops on November 17 and 18, 2009 in Naugatuck and Thomaston, respectively. The purpose of the meetings was to gather input from the four communities to assist in determining opportunities and challenges along the corridor and potential routing options for the trail. The meeting on the 17th was focused on the issues and routing in both Naugatuck and Beacon Falls, while the next night, discussion focused on the issues and routing in Watertown and Thomaston.

After welcomes from elected officials, Samuel Gold, COGCNV Project Manager, provided background information on the project, as well as the vision and benefits of a greenway in the corridor. Local politicians and local greenway experts then provided insights on the status of local greenway planning. Many of the workshop participants were excited and eager about the upcoming routing process.

Jeff Olson of Alta Planning + Design narrated a PowerPoint presentation on “How Greenways are Transforming Communities in Connecticut and Beyond.” Jeff began by providing background information on greenways, such as who uses them, what their benefits are and connections that they can provide. He discussed and encouraged public art and environmental opportunities on greenways. Jeff provided information on national and local examples of greenways and specific components of each. He wrapped up the presentation discussing opportunities and challenges in each of the four municipalities.

A small-group exercise followed the presentation. Using large maps as references, community members were then asked to discuss the following questions and mark up the maps with their suggestions, ideas and concerns.

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

Each meeting wrapped up after the smaller groups reported back to the entire group with their comments on local conditions as well as recommendations for potential routing options and the placement and nature of greenway amenities.

10. Opportunities and Challenges Diagrams

On the following pages are the Opportunities and Challenges Diagrams for each of the four municipalities along the study corridor.







