

To: CRCOG Transportation Committee (acting as Policy Board)
From: Rob Aloise, Director of Transportation Planning
 Cara Radzins, Principal Transit Planner
Date: July 12, 2019
Subject: Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program Project Rankings

Recently, eight (8) CRCOG candidate projects were received in response to a solicitation for FFY2021-2025 Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program funding. CRCOG staff selected a short-list of five (5) projects, which were presented at a Subcommittee meeting on June 3rd. Attending members of the Transportation Committee ranked the projects from 1 through 5, with 1 being the best; then completed an additional vote to select between tied projects from Hartford and Simsbury. The Simsbury project received more votes and was therefore granted the higher priority position. The meeting resulted in the following CRCOG project priority order (average rankings): **1. New Britain (2.25); 2. Mansfield (2.50); 3. Simsbury (3.25); 4. Hartford (3.25); 5. Enfield (3.75)**

As previously discussed, it was agreed that the recommended Hartford Transportation Management Area (TMA) projects submitted to CTDOT would include the top three (3) from CRCOG, and that RiverCOG and NVCOG would collaborate to select a project of comparable size, for a total of four (4) projects. NVCOG and RiverCOG have selected the Naugatuck River Greenway project in Thomaston as their top priority, ahead of the Newfield-North End Connector Trail project in Middletown. Per previous Transportation Committee approval, CRCOG staff coordinated with NVCOG and RiverCOG staff to prioritize their top project against the top three (3) CRCOG projects. Based on this review, staff recommends that the Naugatuck River Greenway project in Thomaston receive the third position on the Hartford TMA’s priority project list. It is further recommended that the remaining short-listed projects from CRCOG and NVCOG/RiverCOG be submitted to CTDOT as contingency projects, available if another project cannot advance, or if unexpected additional TA Set-Aside funding is provided for FY2021-2025. Summarized below is the resulting recommended priority list for the Hartford TMA:

Priority	Town	Project	Total \$	Federal \$	Cumulative Federal \$
RECOMMENDED for Endorsement (project summaries attached)					
1	New Britain (CRCOG)	The Beeline Trail (Phase 1)	\$1,770,080	\$1,416,064	\$1,416,064
2	Mansfield (CRCOG)	Downtown Pedestrian Loop Closure	\$2,017,500	\$1,614,000	\$3,030,064
3	Thomaston (NVCOG)	Naugatuck River Greenway – East Main to Route 109	\$2,014,500	\$1,611,600	\$4,641,664
4	Simsbury (CRCOG)	Tarriffville Connection – Farmington Canal Heritage Trail to Curtiss Park	\$1,978,430	\$1,582,744	\$6,224,408
Estimated Available Funding					\$6,355,510

Priority	Town	Project	Total \$	Federal \$	Cumulative Federal \$
Recommended CONTINGENCY Projects (<i>project summaries attached</i>)					
Contingency 1 for Projects 1, 2, or 4	Hartford (CRCOG)	Hartford - Windsor Riverwalk Extension (Final Section)	\$1,994,000	\$1,595,200	\$1,595,200
Contingency 2 for Projects 1, 2, or 4	Enfield (CRCOG)	Town Farms Road Multi-Use Path	\$1,501,500	\$1,201,200	\$2,796,400
Contingency For Project 3	Middletown (RiverCOG)	Newfield-North End Connector Trail	\$1,409,00	\$1,127,200	\$3,923,600

Selection of the above recommended projects (1 through 4) and their corresponding federal shares would result in the approval of \$6,224,408 of federal funding, which is consistent with the estimated \$6,355,510 in anticipated TA Set-Aside funding. While this solicitation assumes continuation of current eligibility requirements and funding levels, future legislation may impact which and how many projects can be initiated. This priority ranking may be modified by mutual consent of the Hartford TMA MPOs if the actual appropriation of TA Set-Aside funds to the Hartford TMA is different from the currently anticipated funding level.

CRCOG staff recommends Transportation Committee (acting as Policy Board) endorsement and approval of the four recommended projects and their ranking as well as the recommended contingency projects at the meeting on July 22, 2019.

***Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program
Summary of Recommended Projects – July 12, 2019***

The following summaries describe the four (4) prioritized projects and three (3) contingency projects that are recommended for submission to CTDOT for TA Set-Aside funding for FFY2021-2025.

Note: CRCOG staff has made every effort to accurately summarize the primary components for each project.

RECOMMENDED for Endorsement

1. New Britain: The Beeline Trail (Phase 1)

Fed. Share Cost Estimate: \$1,416,064

The project involves the design and construction of the first phase of the Beeline Trail. The alignment for this multi-use trail was developed as part of CRCOG’s Gap Closure Study, which was completed in 2018. When it’s fully constructed, the Beeline Trail will close the 4.9 mile gap between the FCHT in downtown Plainville and the 5.5 mile multi-use trail located adjacent to CTfastrak. The first phase of the Beeline Trail is 4,050’ in length and involves constructing a multi-use trail from Columbus Boulevard (near the downtown NB CTfastrak Station) west to West Main Street (S.R. 555). This section of the trail includes 1,850’ of roadside multi-use trail and 2,200’ of dedicated off-road multi-use trail which would be constructed primarily on state owned right-of-way. The trail would be a minimum of 10’ wide, and its construction would require the construction of a number of retaining walls due to grading and topographical constraints.

The Beeline Trail project serves a multitude of needs and will serve a large and ethnically diverse population. New Britain is classified by Connecticut’s Office of Policy and Management as an economically distressed and environmental justice community, and has one of the lowest per capita income levels in the state. Related to this the percentage car ownership is as low as 30% in some of the City’s larger and more impoverished neighborhoods. Recognizing the need to accommodate lower cost forms of transportation in 2013 the City completed a City-wide Bicycle Connectivity Plan, and since 2013 has completed the initial installation of its “on-road” bicycle network which now consists of over 30 miles of bike lanes that essentially provides “on-road” bicycle connectivity through-out the city. The construction of the Beeline Trail in New Britain in combination with the 5.5 mile CTfastrak multi-use trail and the City’s 3.25 mile Stanley Loop Trail (scheduled to be completed in 2020) would establish a strong network of off-road trails around New Britain.

2. Mansfield: Downtown Pedestrian Loop Closure

Fed. Share Cost Estimate: \$1,614,000

The project consists of the construction of the remaining two segments of Trail in a large loop which encompasses the Storrs area. Both locations propose an 8’ wide bituminous concrete multi-use trail connecting to existing walkways and multi-use trails. This funding will fulfill the vision to provide safe travel through the busy area in and around Downtown Storrs, University of Connecticut, E.O. Smith High School, Four Corners Area, and surrounding points of interest.

This project consists of two interconnected locations that lack an off-road multi-use trail. Location #1 is a proposed multi-use trail from the existing 5’ wide sidewalk at the Maple Road intersection, along Route

275 – South Eagleville Road, connecting to the existing 8’ multi-use trail at the intersection of Separatist Road. Location #2 is a proposed multi-use trail starting at the terminus of an existing 8’ wide multi-use trail at the intersection of Separatist Road and Hunting Lodge Road Extension, traveling along the edge of Hunting Lodge Road Extension, and terminating at the intersection with North Eagleville Road. At this intersection, the trail will connect with: an existing walk east toward the University; west toward housing units; and an 8’ wide multi-use trail north toward housing units and student housing.

The existing portions of this walk and trail system see a fairly high volume of commuters, joggers, walkers, bikers, wheelchairs, and destination users. However, these two locations remain breaks in this walk/trail loop, preventing the full extent of its usefulness. These two locations force users into the shoulder of the road. Location #1 has a very high volume of vehicles; though the shoulder is 4’-5’ wide the speed of the vehicles makes its use somewhat dangerous. Location #2 also has a very high volume of vehicles, the road is narrow, and there is no shoulder stripe. These conditions, combined with a narrow road section at a drainage culvert, force people to walk on front lawns.

**3. Thomaston: Naugatuck River Greenway –
East Main to Route 109**

Fed. Share Cost Estimate: \$ 1,611,600

The proposed project is part of the planned 44-mile Naugatuck River Greenway (NRG) Trail. This section of the NRG will provide access directly to Downtown Thomaston, linking East Main Street (Route 222) and Watertown Road (Route 109) with on-road pedestrian and bicycle improvements and the construction of a paved multi-use trail. From North to South, the proposed project will make mostly on-road improvements to Elm Street, a local road, that will likely consist of either bike lanes or sharrows, along with some traffic calming features and minor sidewalk improvements. A paved, road-separated, bi-directional multiuse trail will begin at the intersection of Maple and Elm Streets running southeast along Maple Street, then turning slightly south then southwest to follow along the rear of the Seth Thomas factory complex parking lot. The trail will cross Northfield Brook on a new pedestrian span or culvert and follow behind businesses and the Thomaston Firehouse at the top of the west bank of the Naugatuck River. A trailhead is proposed behind the CTDOT District IV office on McMahan Drive to take advantage of an underutilized state-owned parking area. The trail will continue between businesses and the River, turning west to meet South Main Street at the Route 8 Exit 38 off-ramp.

In total, the proposed project will construct approximately 4,500 feet of 12’-wide paved multiuse trail and make bicycle and pedestrian improvements to approximately 2,000 feet of Elm Street. With the town expected to use a recent Community Connectivity grant award to fill sidewalk gaps along South Main Street (Route 252), this trail will allow for a more than 2-mile continuous pedestrian loop in downtown. The new trail will provide residents and visitors an active transportation corridor in proximity to the Naugatuck River. The purpose of this project is to extend the popular existing sections of the NRG Trail and continue efforts to realize the completion of the entire trail from Torrington to Derby. Several other NRG Trail projects are underway, including sections in Torrington, Watertown, Waterbury, Naugatuck, and Ansonia. This project will add to the total length of completed trail sections and will provide a real transportation alternative for safe, active travel. A recently completed economic impact study by the NVCOG concluded substantial economic, health, and quality of life benefits will be realized from the construction of the NRG Trail.

**4. Simsbury: Tarriffville Connection – Farmington
Canal Heritage Trail to Curtiss Park**

Fed. Share Cost Estimate: \$1,582,744

This 0.7 mile segment of trail will create an off-road route of approximately 1.8 miles from Simsbury center to Curtiss and Pattison Parks. These parks provide access to the Farmington River and include several sports fields. Additionally, the proposed trail is one of three multi-use trail segments known as the Tariffville Connection that will connect the FCHT to Tariffville, a village of Simsbury, and continue to the neighboring Town of Bloomfield. Once completed in its entirety, the Tariffville Connection will link the center of Town with the village of Tariffville by a five-mile off-road multi-use path. The eastern most segment linking Tariffville to Bloomfield is currently in final design and scheduled to be completed in 2020. This multi-use trail will connect to a multi-use trail section currently under construction in Bloomfield and scheduled for completion in 2019. As noted in the 2015 Capitol Region Transportation Plan, the Tariffville Connection is a key part of “Linking the Two Interregional Greenways.” Upon completion of the Tariffville Connection, linkages will be provided from the FCHT, to the west, and to the Charter Oak Greenway, to the east.

Combined with the trail sections in Bloomfield, the Tariffville Connection will link the FCHT to Bloomfield’s Griffin Corporate Park as well as on-road and off-road bicycle routes serving the industrial areas along the Day Hill Road corridor in Windsor and northwest Bloomfield. From a regional standpoint, this route is planned to continue from Bloomfield into Hartford serving as an off-road segment of the East Coast Greenway (ECG). Traveling on Hartford Road by bicycle is not ideal due to the grades, vehicle volume and speed. The subject project is an important start to establishing a safer route for the ECG between Simsbury and Hartford. In the short-term, the subject project represents a key connection from the FCHT and Simsbury Center to Curtiss and Pattison Parks. In the long-term, the Tariffville Connection provides an energy saving, alternative means of transportation linking the Villages of Weatogue, Simsbury and Tariffville. The Village of Tariffville, a National Register Place, is at the junction of the proposed trail, the Metacomet Hiking Trail, and the Farmington River gorge.

Recommended CONTINGENCY Projects

**Hartford: Hartford – Windsor Riverwalk Extension
The Final Section**

Fed. Share Cost Estimate: \$1,595,200

This project proposes the construction of a 2,250’ linear section of the existing and under design Riverwalk multi-use trail along the Connecticut River, which follows seven miles of shoreline in Hartford and Windsor. This project represents the final piece of the trail. The Riverwalk will be 12’ wide and paved, accommodating bicyclists, walkers, runners, and the mobility impaired. Funding for planning and permitting this section of the Riverwalk has already been secured and will be completed within the next year.

The Hartford-Windsor Riverwalk Extension has been prioritized in every relevant planning study completed in the last twenty years. For example, the Regional Bicycle Plan periodically updated by the Capitol Region Council of Governments, included the extension in its 2000, 2008, and 2015 editions. In addition, the city’s comprehensive plan for development, “One City One Plan” (2010), designated the area covered by the extension as park space in its future land use map, in the context of regional bicycle and pedestrian network connectivity. When it is connected to the existing Windsor Riverwalk, which extends from the Bissell Bridge to just north of the Hartford/Windsor line, the extension will provide a significant

commuter route for bicyclists, as well as recreational opportunities for all those coming from the northern and northeastern suburbs of Hartford, the center of Windsor and across the river in South Windsor.

The extension will also have a significant positive impact on the underserved urban community adjacent to the trail head on Meadow Road, creating new recreation opportunities for residents of the North End of Hartford. This area was designated as a federal Promise Zone in 2015 – an economically distressed area where there are significant needs and opportunities for transformation. The North End is also notable for its health disparities.

Enfield: Town Farms Road Multi-Use Path

Fed. Share Cost Estimate: \$1,201,200

The project will entail the engineering and construction of a 3,865’ long, 10’ wide multi-use path adjacent to Town Farm Road, providing improved access for a variety of recreational uses as well as connectivity to the extensive bicycle and pedestrian network, existing and planned, in Enfield. An existing multi-use path begins at the intersection of Raffia Road and Post Office Road and continues east along Post Office Road/Town Farm Road to its intersection of Abbe Road. The project will extend the path along Town Farm Road to the intersection with Broad Brook Road (State Route 191) where it will tie into the existing shared use lanes (sharrows) on Fletcher Road.

This project is a critical link to helping the Town of Enfield achieve its bicycle and pedestrian connectivity goals identified in its Complete Streets Policy. This segment of multi-use path is the last remaining link to connect Route 5 to the Town line. Shared-Use Lanes (sharrows) exist on Post Office Road from Route 5 to Raffia Rd, at which point the Statewide Multi-Use Trails System path begins at the intersection of Raffia Rd and Post Office Road/Town Farm Road and ends at the intersection of Town Farm Road and Abbe Road. Sharrows are also present on Fletcher Road from Broad Brook Road to the Town Line. This project is part of Phase 2 of 4 in the Town’s Complete Streets plan and will connect the missing link from Abbe Road to Broad Brook Road to complete connectivity of a 4.3-mile corridor in the Town’s bicycle and pedestrian network. This link will also help the Town achieve its goal to connect the missing links in the Statewide Multi-Use Trails System throughout the Town.

Middletown: Newfield-North End Connector Trail

Fed. Share Cost Estimate: \$1,127,200

In order to connect the Westlake and Mattabesset Trail and its high-density residential neighborhoods and Interstate Trade Area with the urban transportation centers of downtown Middletown and downtown Middletown businesses, medical services, etc., the City has funded the “Newfield Corridor Trail.” This trail extends the Mattabesset Bike path southward, connecting the high-density Westfield-Westlake-Riverbend area with three schools and continuing south to Veterans Park. The final segment of this Westlake to downtown bicycle and pedestrian access requires the project described here: a trail or route from the Newfield Corridor Trail to the downtown area and to the Arrigoni Bridge.

Entirely within the City of Middletown, this 1.5-mile multi-use trail/on-road bike route will connect the Newfield Corridor Multi-use Trail, (already funded at \$4 million by the City of Middletown) with the North End of Middletown and the on-ramp of the Arrigoni Bridge. The portion of this trail proposed for funding is Phase I and is approximately 0.9 miles in length. A significant portion of this route will utilize the Genesee and Wyoming (formerly Providence and Worcester) Railroad right-of-way that crosses the Coginchaug River near the intersection of North Main Street and Johnson Street.