

# Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Minutes

## February 15, 2023 | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

*Meeting Held Remotely Via Zoom*

*DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED*

## Attendance

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| Name | Organization |
| Rob Aloise | CRCOG |
| Michael Cipriano | CRCOG |
| Ryan Faulkner | CRCOG |
| Caitlin Palmer | CRCOG |
| Parker Sorenson | FHI Studio |
| Ken Livingston | FHI Studio |
| Marcy Miller | FHI Studio |
| Rory Jacobson | FHI Studio |
| Kevin Rivera | FHI Studio |
| Phil Goff | VHB |
| Daniel Amstutz | VHB |
| Mark Jewell | VHB |
| Owen Deutsch  | City of Hartford |
| Grace Yi | City of Hartford |
| Jonathan Thiesse | Town of Bloomfield |
| Kevin Gough | Town of Bloomfield – Trails Committee  |
| Eileen Buckheit | Town of East Hartford |
| Doug Wilson | Town of East Hartford |
| Steve Hnatuk | Town of East Hartford |
| Tom Roy | Town of Simsbury |
| Adam Kessler | Town of Simsbury |
| Grayson Wright | CTDOT Policy and Planning |
| Fred Kulakowski | CTDOT Traffic Engineering |
| Jordan Vogt | CTDOT Traffic Operations |
| Marissa Pfaffinger | CTDOT Highway Design |
| Andrew Correia | CTDOT Highway Design |
| Edward Sabourin | CTDOT |
| Kim Bradley | CTDEEP Trails and Greenways Coordinator |
| Marc Nicol | Riverfront Recapture Director of Development |
| Martha Conneely | Riverfront Recapture Park Development Manager |
| Steph Stroud | National Park Service |
| Bruce Donald | East Coast Greenway Alliance / CT Greenways Council |
| Soneill | ??? |

*The record below includes a brief description of each agenda item as well as the timestamp for the beginning of that discussion. The audio recording for this meeting is available at* [*www.crcog.org*](http://www.crcog.org)

## Welcome and Introduction (2:30)

Caitlin Palmer introduced the project and the consultant team. All participants of the meeting gave a brief introduction. Caitlin introduced CRCOG and their role in transportation planning in the region.

## Project Overview (14:00)

Bruce provided an overview of the current status of the East Coast Greenway (ECG) in its entirety along the east coast, in New England, and recent progress on closing the remaining trail gaps in Connecticut. He specifically noted the on-going construction of the Tariffville portions of the trail which will allow the trail to be re-routed via Simsbury and Bloomfield (instead of the current Route 185 on-road route). He noted that the Tarriffville projects are about 2-months ahead of schedule due to the mild winter thus far.

Parker noted that the remaining 10-12 mile gap included in this project presents many opportunities and these will be evaluated during the study. He also gave an overview of project goals and objectives and reiterated that this study will need to be endorsed by all the municipal councils at the conclusion of this study should this continue onto construction.

## Project Branding (29:30)

Parker presented the project branding to be used during this project. The branding is similar to the overall East Coast Greenway logo and the ECG Alliance has seen this.

## Overview of Scope and Schedule (29:58)

Parker reviewed the overall scope and schedule which consists of three major phases 1) Discover, 2) Analyze, and 3) Advance. He noted that we are close to being complete with the existing conditions data collection and will present the findings later in the meeting. Engagement will be present throughout the project but be particularly active during the screening process. The screening process consists of two components, a screening analysis of 6 alternatives per gap, which will be scored, and a shortlist of 2-3 alternatives which will be further evaluated with graphics provided and undergo public outreach.

Phil Goff (VHB) noted that Simsbury portion of this study is well underway and is anticipated to be completed in 6-months’ time. This portion of the study is running independently from the rest of the study as this has different needs and can run faster than the other gaps.

Parker noted that each community has had prior efforts which have suggested potential alignments for the East Coast Greenway throughout the years. He noted that these will be incorporated into this process but we will start fresh through the screening analysis. There is no pre-determined route for any of these gaps. He presented a list of all published prior efforts for each town and agency and requested that any missing studies be delivered to the project team. Bruce noted that there has been a lot of work at the University of Hartford and will provide documents related to their study. Jonathan noted that there is a current LOTCIP project on Park Ave connecting the High School to the town center and can provide that information. He said this may or may not be a part of the final greenway route but that trail provides a valuable connection on its own.

Parker further described examples of the anticipated screening process and examples of products that could be created as part of this project.

## Public Involvement Overview (43:05)

Kevin provided an overview of the public involvement which will occur during this study. There will be a mix of physical in-person components and online components to the public involvement for this study. Parker noted that each community will specifically have one public workshop and one public meeting. The pop-ups are anticipated to take place during the shortlist phase of this project and target communities that could be impacted by the trail route. Kevin noted that we have scoped stakeholder meetings and/or site visits and these can take place on an as-needed basis and the project team will be available as needed. Kevin gave an overview of the public involvement schedule which will include three rounds of public involvement at different stages of the project.

Caitlin gave an overview of the findings of the Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) memo. The results found that areas in Bloomfield, Hartford, and East Hartford met the criteria for a Primary EJ Target Area. The language findings found that Spanish is a primary EJ target language and that Portuguese is a secondary EJ target language. The Portuguese area is in the southwest part of Hartford and may not be directly impacted by proposed ECG routing. The project team will defer to the city in how to handle Portuguese considerations through this project.

## Advisory Committee Role (52:05)

Parker reiterated the advisory committee’s role as the conduit between municipal leadership and staff and the project team. The plan will go to councils for final endorsement. Additionally, the committee will guide technical and public process during the entirety of the project. This could include shaping the screening process for this study but also providing comment to documents prior to these being made public.

Grayson noted that a Pitch Meeting to CTDOT should be included in the study. Project staff indicated that this is included and is identified prior to the finalization of the final report. The timing could be reevaluated in the future to determine when it makes sense to hold this meeting.

## Next Steps (53:06)

Parker continued with an overview of next steps for committee members. Parker noted that proposed March and April meetings are coming quickly and should be identified.

Staff from East Hartford noted that the Raymond Public Library should be considered for the public workshop.

Staff from Riverfront Recapture offered the boathouse as a venue, but this floods during spring time. Parker noted this could be considered as a summer pop-up venue in the future.

Staff from Hartford will get back to the project team. They noted that April will host Earth Day events and could be coordinated with those events. Parker suggested that the venue be located in the North End as most alignment options likely impact this neighborhood.

Staff from Bloomfield noted that the Human Services Building should be considered for the public workshop. This location could be on the trail.

Parker concluded the presentation with an overview of the two online tools completed thus far and asked for Advisory Committee input into these tools.

## Public Comment (1:07:15)

No one chose to speak.

**Meeting ended 1:07:58**