



CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY

SIMSBURY — BLOOMFIELD — HARTFORD — EAST HARTFORD

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #3 MINUTES

June 27, 2023 | 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Virtual Meeting - This meeting was recorded.

DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED

Attendance

Name	Organization
Michael Cipriano	CRCOG
Caitlin Palmer	CRCOG
Parker Sorenson	FHI Studio
Rory Jacobson	FHI Studio
Laura Nagle	FHI Studio
Phil Goff	VHB
Grace Yi	City of Hartford
Kevin Gough	Town of Bloomfield
Jonathan Thiesse	Town of Bloomfield
Doug Wilson	Town of East Hartford
Adam Kessler	Town of Simsbury
Kevin Tedesco	Town of Simsbury
Grayson Wright	CTDOT Policy and Planning
Ed Sabourin	CTDOT Project Development Unit
Andrew Correia	CTDOT Project Development Unit
Michael Disla-Suarez	CTDOT Traffic Engineering
Fred Kulakowski	CTDOT Traffic Engineering
Scott Bushee	CTDOT State Highway Design
Kimberly Bradley	CT DEEP
Martha Conneely	Riverfront Recapture Park Development Manager
Bruce Donald	East Coast Greenway Alliance / CT Greenways Council

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.crcoq.org

1. Project Updates (2:10)

Parker Sorenson opened the meeting and provided an update on the recent pop-up events that took place over the Juneteenth (June 17th and 18th) weekend in the Towns of East Hartford and Bloomfield.



2. Simsbury Update (6:03)

Phil Goff who provided an overview of work that was completed in Simsbury. Overall, there is support for the potential use of the former rail line west of the Farmington River. Alignment options were studied, and additional routes were discussed. Screening criteria were established and included conditions for off-road, traffic safety, connectivity, right-of-way, environment, and economic opportunity. An evaluation matrix was developed. Alternative 2 scored the highest; it utilizes the existing rail corridor west of the Farmington River. Remaining tasks include refining the preferred alignment, meeting with the Town of Simsbury and the Governor's Bridge Condo Association Board of Directors, and a draft report and final presentation.

Bruce Donald asked about the trail through Curtis Park. Has the Town of Simsbury discussed this at all, it could impact this alignment?

Adam Kessler said that the Town is still interested in building the trail connection through Curtis Park and hopes to do so regardless of what results from this study.

3. Griffin Line Update (16:47)

Parker provided an update on the Griffin Line alignment, explaining that independent gaps will be screened. This allows the team to separately screen Bloomfield north (Day Hill Rd to Bloomfield center), the Hartford-Bloomfield gaps (Bloomfield center to downtown Hartford), and the East Hartford gap. Overall, there are many complexities in this corridor and several alignments will be evaluated. A full conceptual plan of the Griffin Line between Edwards Street and Route 44, as well as Park Avenue, will be developed. For the Hartford-Bloomfield gap, the project team anticipates that the shortlist will include the best Griffin Line option and the next best alternative. Caitlin Palmer added that towns may pursue the Griffin Line regardless of what results from this study.

Jonathan Thiesse asked about encroaching into the floodway if the rail line was utilized. He believes this will be an environmental issue for permitting, scheduling, and funding. He also asked about the crossings with existing roadways, as there are high traffic volumes on the roadways that cross the rail corridor. Parker said they will take a revised look at these factors, and a hybrid option may be developed.

Kevin Gough said Cottage Grove crossing would be challenging. Crossing through an existing signal at Copaco Shopping Center may make sense, but these could create other challenges. Parker said that these other options will be explored, and this will help to understand how Griffin Line scores in comparison to other options.

4. Public Outreach (27:05)

Parker provided an overview of public outreach events, email list signups, and public comments received so far. Parker discussed takeaways from the three workshops that took place in East Hartford, Hartford, and Bloomfield. He reviewed a sampling of comments that were received during the process and results from the dot exercises that ranked the preferred trail types by municipality.

Future pop-up events, stakeholder meetings, and walk audits will be scheduled once visualizations for the shortlist alternatives are completed. It is anticipated there will be two 2 pop-ups per Town.

5. Screening Prioritization (34:05)

Parker reviewed the takeaways from the Advisory Committee screening criteria survey results, emphasizing that the results of the advisory committee closely mirrored the public results. The results from both the advisory committee



and the public informed the Project team's proposed screening criteria. The proposed framework divides criteria into three weighted tiers. Parker reviewed the scoring and elements evaluated for each criterion.

Caitlin asked if aesthetics is included in the screening criteria. The difference between a utilitarian side path or an attractive trail that may become a destination itself should be considered. This is also true if a path goes through a park or if a side path may be designed to look park-like. Parker said aesthetics has been incorporated into the personal security criterion. The aesthetics scoring is subjective, but it may differentiate between design choices.

Kevin Gough asked about commenting on the presentation and what the process for feedback and finalizing the criteria was. Parker said Advisory Committee members can send comments and feedback to the project team. More detailed information will also be given to the Advisory Committee regarding the criteria and ranking. In August, the screening process and results will be discussed in further detail.

Kimberly Bradley was concerned about the environment criterion being ranked in the second tier, especially when environmental constraints will heavily impact the permitting process. Parker responded more consideration will be given to the elements within the environment criterion.

Caitlin asked why the hazardous material locations were removed. Parker explained that this was due to limitations with existing available data.

6. Other Updates (52:36)

Parker reported discussions with large landowners and stakeholders about potential alignments and their impacts have been ongoing. These discussions will help inform the screening process and overall feedback for alignments.

7. Next Steps (53:56)

Parker noted the next Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, August 16th.

8. Public Comment (54:35)

No one chose to speak.

Meeting ended 55:30.