



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY

SIMSBURY — BLOOMFIELD — HARTFORD — EAST HARTFORD

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #4 MINUTES

August 16, 2023 | 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

*Virtual Meeting - This meeting was recorded.*

**DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED**

### Attendance

Name	Organization
Mike Cipriano	CRCOG
Caitlin Palmer	CRCOG
Parker Sorenson	FHI Studio
Rory Jacobson	FHI Studio
Laura Nagle	FHI Studio
Phil Goff	VHB
Mark Jewell	VHB
Dan Amstutz	VHB
Kevin Gough	Town of Bloomfield
Jonathan Thiesse	Town of Bloomfield
Owen Deutsch	City of Hartford
Grace Yi	City of Hartford
Eileen Buckheit	Town of East Hartford
Adam Kessler	Town of Simsbury
Tom Roy	Town of Simsbury
Kevin Tedesco	Town of Simsbury
Bruce Donald	East Coast Greenway Alliance / CT Greenways Council
Stephen Hall	CTDOT
Ed Sabourin	CTDOT
Andrew Correia	CTDOT
Michael Disla-Suarez	CTDOT
Scott Bushee	CTDOT
Kim Bradley	CT DEEP
Mike Zaleski	Riverfront Recapture
Martha Conneely	Riverfront Recapture

*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](http://www.crcoq.org)*



## 1. Project Updates (0:24)

Parker Sorenson opened the meeting, presented the agenda, and provided a schedule update. The November Advisory Committee Meeting has been rescheduled to October and December. There have been ongoing stakeholder meetings about potential trail alignments in East Hartford, Hartford, and Bloomfield.

## 2. Public Outreach Update (3:40)

Parker reviewed the in-person outreach attendance, email list sign-ups, and online comment submissions to date. Future engagement events include more stakeholder meetings, community pop-ups, and an updated newsletter. Final public meetings and town council meetings are anticipated during the winter.

## 3. Simsbury Update (5:26)

Phil Goff shared construction has begun on Route 189 for the Tariffville Connector Trail. A final milestone presentation about the East Coast Greenway gap closure is scheduled for the Select Board meeting in September.

Phil reviewed the screening criteria, evaluation matrix, and scoring summary for Simsbury. Alternative 2 scored the highest with 129 points. The preliminary preferred corridor is based on Alternative 2. This option lies on an old rail embankment that is elevated about four or five feet above the wetlands that lie adjacent to it. There are minimal impacts to cultural resources and right-of-way. There are design considerations to further explore its proximity to condominium buildings and minimize environmental impacts. Potential backup corridors will be presented to the Select Board in September, as well. Stakeholder meetings were held in July to review potential alignments.

The remaining tasks in Simsbury include the Select Board meeting, refinement of the preliminary preferred alignment, and the draft and final report.

## 4. East Hartford Screening Results (14:30)

Parker discussed the screening criteria and methodology to be used in East Hartford, Hartford, and Bloomfield. Three independent gaps will be evaluated and scored. The first gap is between Founders Bridge and Simmons Road in East Hartford. The second gap is between downtown Hartford and Bloomfield Center. The third gap is north of Bloomfield Center. The screening criteria will be consistent through the main study area with a more detailed scoring rubric specific to each gap based on staff coordination and public input.

Parker presented an overview map of the 22 alignments evaluated for the gap in East Hartford. The 22 alignments are categorized within several segments (North, Central, and South). The Excel files containing the evaluation process and scores will be shared with the Advisory Committee for review. The top 5 alignments and their scores were discussed in more detail. Parker also reviewed the scores of a Hockanum River alignment and Silver Lane side path alignment for comparison between the top-scoring and other results. The recommended shortlist for further evaluation includes the Silver Lane alignments and southern route alignments that comprise the top 5 scores. Shortlist does not indicate a preferred alternative. Shortlist selection will include further evaluation including conceptual alignments, cross sections, and 3D visualizations as needed. Additional stakeholder engagement and site visits will be conducted to review the shortlist.

## 5. Bloomfield Screening Results (39:31)

Mark Jewell presented the Bloomfield alignment scoring summary across several maps. There are 10 alignments categorized within Bloomfield North and Bloomfield Center segments. The score for the S2 alignment within Bloomfield Center is subject to the ongoing Griffin Line rail-with-trail feasibility study. The Excel files containing the



evaluation process and scores will be shared with the Advisory Committee for review. A simple survey will be included if Advisory Committee members are in favor of assigning the discussed alignments to the shortlist.

## 6. Griffin Line Update (52:22)

Parker shared the Griffin Line will be evaluated as a potential alignment from Albany Ave to Edwards Street. The new task will focus on the technical aspects of rail-with-trail and develop preferred alternative visualizations and conceptual plan. There will be a technical team to coordinate with CTDOT throughout the process and identify key constraints. The project will be based on CTDOT's draft rail-with-trail guidelines. The best Griffin Line option will be included on the Bloomfield Gap shortlist, as well as the next best alternative resulting from the screening analysis.

## 7. Next Steps (56:09)

Parker noted the next Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>.

## 8. Public Comment (56:46)

Kevin Gough asked if the Griffin Line segment is conceptualized as rail-with-trail or a rail conversion. Kevin mentioned it seems like the Griffin Line is abandoned and not used. Mark replied that the Griffin Line is not abandoned because the operator's lease is still active. To date, the right-of-way is currently not available, but the alignment is screened assuming a rail-with-trail option. Coordination with the Town of Bloomfield, CRCOG, and CTDOT Office of Rail is necessary to move forward. Parker added that there is a previous feasibility study published regarding the Griffin Line in Bloomfield, but there has not been a feasibility study completed around Cottage Grove to Hartford. Caitlin Palmer clarified that the rail corridor should be referred to as under-utilized. Jonathan Thiesse agreed that the rail corridor should not be called abandoned.

Kevin commented that there should be consistent policy at the state level between the Offices of Rail and Traffic and logistics centers.

Caitlin closed the meeting by requesting the Advisory Committee's recommendations for 1-on-1 municipal coordination meetings or public engagement opportunities to be scheduled.

**Meeting ended 1:11:18.**