



TARIFFVILLE GREENWAY OVER THE WILD & SCENIC FARMINGTON RIVER

# TOWN OF SIMSBURY RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

January 2024

 CAPITOL REGION  
**EAST COAST  
GREENWAY STUDY**  
SIMSBURY — BLOOMFIELD — HARTFORD — EAST HARTFORD

**CRCOG**  
CAPITOL REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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studio

 **vhb**

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The Project Team wishes to acknowledge the following agencies who provided representation to the project consultant team and Advisory Committee.

- Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG)
- Town of Simsbury
- City of Hartford
- Town of East Hartford
- Town of Bloomfield
- Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)
- Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECGA)
- Riverfront Recapture
- The iQuilt Partnership (iQuilt)
- FHI Studio (consultant team lead)
- VHB (sub-consultant / Simsbury task lead)
- E-Consult Solutions (sub-consultant)

This report is prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation (including its participating agencies) and the Connecticut Department of Transportation. The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the Capitol Region Council of Governments and do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Connecticut Department of Transportation and/or the U.S. Department of Transportation.

*Prepared By*



*In Coordination With*



*Consultant Team Lead*



*Simsbury Task Lead & Sub-Consultant Team Member*





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# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to identify a preferred alignment for the gap in the East Coast Greenway (ECG) through the Town of Simsbury using a collaborative process informed by coordination with Town officials, stakeholder involvement, and public engagement. This report is part of the larger Capitol Region East Coast Greenway Study (CRECG) which encompasses a project area in the municipalities of Bloomfield, Hartford, and East Hartford, in addition to the gap in Simsbury. This gap is roughly 12-mile in length and is the last gap in the East Coast Greenway within the region with an unidentified alignment.

This study evaluates a list of potential alternatives on a planning level, based on a quantitative evaluation methodology to analyze alternatives, and through qualitative input from the project team, stakeholders, and the public. It **ultimately recommends a greenway alignment that has been endorsed by Simsbury Board of Selectmen** and will be further developed during the design development process.

Rather than propose a detailed design, this planning study aims to establish a framework for the future design process by highlighting the challenges and opportunities associated with the preferred alignment. This valuable insight will offer guidance for the subsequent phases of project development.

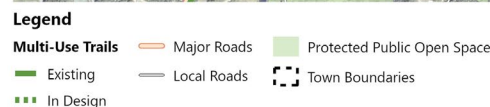
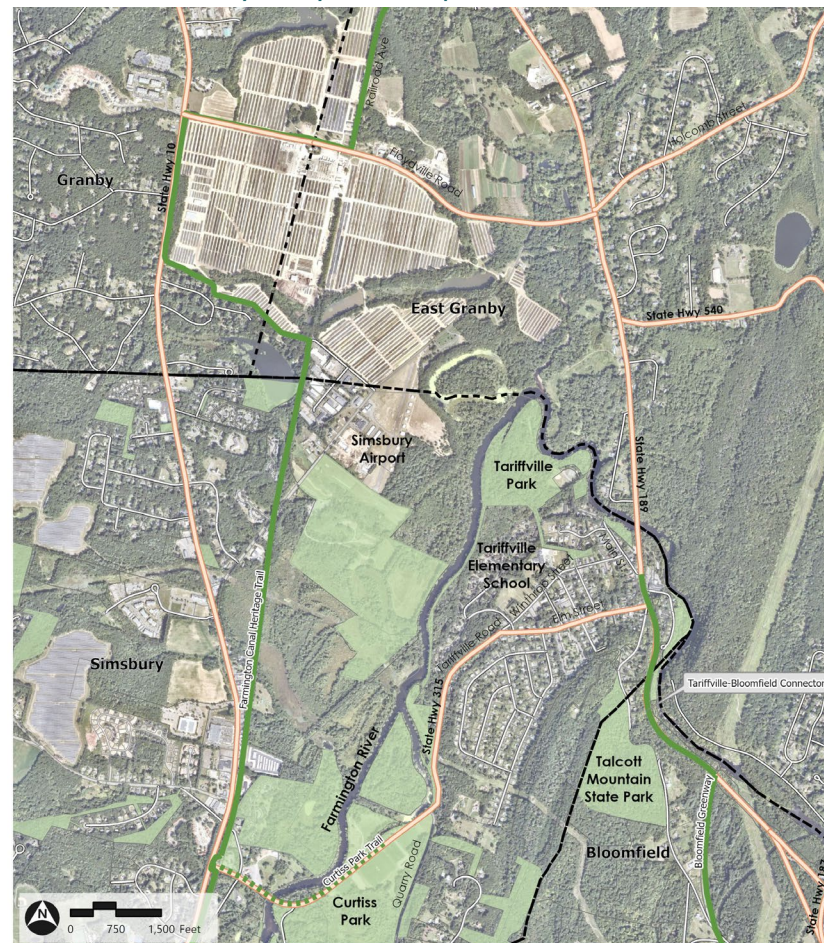
### Study Area

The Simsbury study area includes areas between the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT) and the Tariffville-Bloomfield Connector at the intersection of Route 189 and Main Street in Tariffville (a village of Simsbury, CT). The FCHT provides off-road trail connectivity to New Haven and serves as the north-south spine of the East Coast Greenway through Connecticut, while the recently completed Tariffville-

Bloomfield Connector is also part of the designated East Coast Greenway route.

While the study mostly considers alignment alternatives within Simsbury, some alternatives include alignments within Granby and East Granby as well. Exhibit 1-1 shows the entire study area.

Exhibit 1-1: Simsbury Study Area Map



Source: NearMap, Town of Simsbury, CTDOT

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## Public Outreach

The CRECG Study is led by an Advisory Committee set up to oversee ECG planning in the four Capitol Region study area communities. The Committee consists of the following regional and local agencies:

- Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG)
- Town of Simsbury
- City of Hartford
- Town of East Hartford
- Town of Bloomfield
- Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)
- Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECGA)
- Riverfront Recapture
- The iQuilt Partnership (iQuilt)

In addition, for the Town of Simsbury Study, the project team received input from community members from Simsbury and the region at a March 30, 2023 public meeting at the Tariffville School. Additional outreach included newsletters, an interactive map, and smaller-group meetings with stakeholders. The latter included meetings with:

- The Governors Bridge Condo Association (Town of Simsbury staff only)
- The National Park Service
- Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Committee

Exhibit 1-2: Audience members at the March 30, 2023 community meeting



## Existing Conditions

Existing conditions data was gathered using GIS data (provided by the Town of Simsbury, CRCOG, CTDOT and other statewide resources), a review of current plans and studies, and on-the-ground fieldwork performed by the consultant team. This work was supplemented by discussions throughout the project with town staff, stakeholders, and members of the public.

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 1-3: Aerial view of a portion of the Tariffville neighborhood showing the Farmington River and adjacent condominiums



The existing conditions reviewed for this project generally fall within four categories:

- Transportation facility context that includes trails such as the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT), a network of roadways and sidewalks in Tariffville, the nearby airport, and rail lines (all of which are abandoned).
- Land use context, primarily consisting of open space/parks, a compact residential neighborhood, and the Tariffville Town Center commercial area.
- Environmental context that required the trail routing study to consider the environmental constraints within the study area including:
  - Farmington River Floodway
  - Flood Hazard Areas
  - Wetlands and Other Critical Habitat

- Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic River Designation
- Grades and Elevation
- Nearby related projects, including the recently completed Tariffville-Bloomfield Connector (TBC) and the future Curtiss Park Trail

## Alignments and Evaluation

Exhibit 1-4 illustrates the alignment alternatives to address the gaps in the East Coast Greenway within Simsbury. They were developed and evaluated based on how well they performed against the screening criteria established by the Town of Simsbury and informed by the public and stakeholder meetings. The study resulted in the identification of five primary route alternatives with four additional variations. The alternative ranged from two to six miles in length for a 1.5-mile gap (straight-line distance) from the FCHT to the Bloomfield-Tariffville Connector at Route 189/Main Street.

All alternatives include the same routing for the 2,000-foot distance between Tariffville Park and the TBC trail. This includes a shared use path along a state-owned parcel ("Farmington River Water Access" managed by DEEP) between Route 189 and Main Street Extension. It is anticipated that the trail will be located within the state-owned parcel, but topography constraints may require positioning this trail in private property.

The route alternatives described below are shown in Exhibit 1-4.

### Alternative 1A and 1B

Alternatives 1A and 1B utilize abandoned rail corridors and the former crossing of the Farmington River adjacent to Tariffville Park. West of the river, 1A incorporates an elevated segment of the old rail line while 1B uses the FCHT and runs just south of the airport. After crossing the river, both follow a portion of the old rail corridor to Tariffville Park. From the park, 1A and 1B, along with ALL other options, runs along Main

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## EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Street Extension through a state-owned parcel behind the Main Street business district to the terminus of the TBC.

### Alternative 2

Using a short segment of the FCHT, Alternative 2 turns east and utilizes an abandoned rail embankment (similar to Alternative 1A) but utilizes a different former rail crossing of the Farmington River. From the east riverbank, it follows the historic rail route, through discrete portions of the floodway and adjacent to the Governor's Bridge condominium complex all the way to Tariffville Park.

### Alternative 3A, 3B, and 3C

Alternatives 3A, 3B, and 3C continues north from the Curtiss Park Trail currently in design and remains east of the river. Designed as a sidepath within the Route 315 right-of-way, 3A and 3B then either bypasses the condominium complex by hugging the east riverbank (3A) or using the internal roadway within the complex (3B). Alternative 3C remains on the east riverbank for a longer distance before joining 3A and continuing to Tariffville Park and to the terminus of the TBC.

### Alternative 4A and 4B

Alternatives 4A and 4B avoid impact to the Farmington River altogether and instead pass through the adjacent neighborhood. From Route 315, both alternatives require switchbacks to access the back sides of the properties along Hayes Road and then connect to Tariffville Park along shared streets and a path that circles the elementary school. Alternatives 4A and 4B require the most uphill and downhill walking and bicycling of all of the options.

### Alternative 5

Alternative 5 avoids the potential flooding and permitting challenges presented by the Farmington River and the neighborhood topography and forms a long loop around the area. Alternative 5 runs around the Imperial Nurseries and includes a series of paths/sidepaths alongside Holcomb and Floydville Road and Holcomb Street in East Granby,

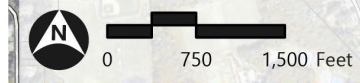
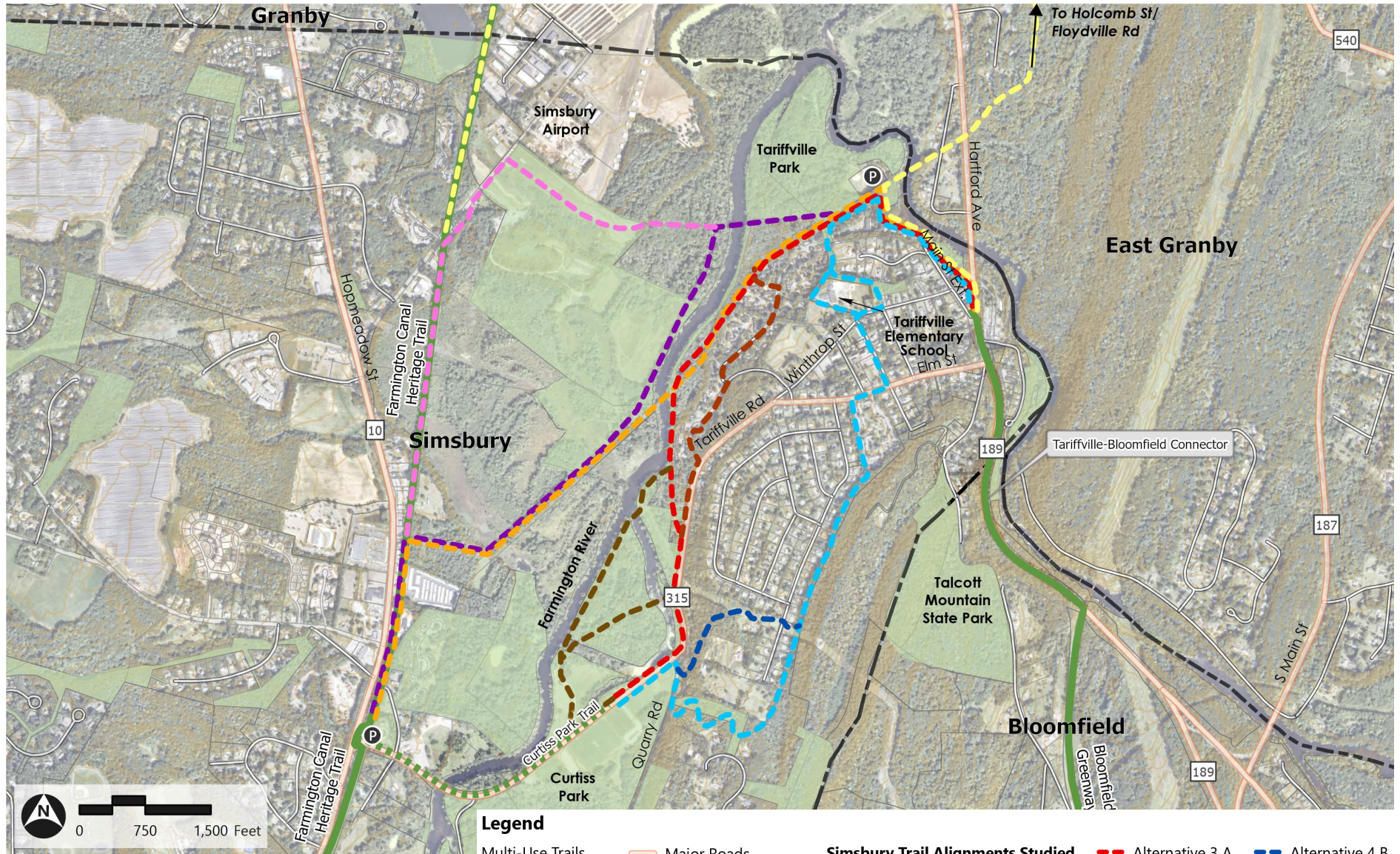
through a wooded area and then back to Tariffville Park after crossing Route 189 and crossing the river (see Exhibit 1-1 for a sense of the broader context covered by Alternative 5).



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 1-4: Simsbury Trail Alignments Studied



- Legend**
- Existing
  - - - In Design
  - Major Roads
  - Public Open Space
  - P Existing Trail Parking
  - Simsbury Trail Alignments Studied**
  - - - Alternative 1 A
  - - - Alternative 1 B
  - - - Alternative 2
  - - - Alternative 3 A
  - - - Alternative 3 B
  - - - Alternative 3 C
  - - - Alternative 4 A
  - - - Alternative 4 B
  - - - Alternative 5

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## Preferred Alternative Recommendation

Arriving at a Preferred Alternative for the ECG alignment through Simsbury required a thorough evaluation of the route alternatives described above. Each alternative was scored against the screening criteria; the highest-scoring alternatives were used to inform the ultimate selection of Alternative 2 as the Preferred Alignment.

## Evaluation Methodology

The five alternatives and their variants were evaluated and scored based on screening criteria developed and weighted in coordination between the project team, the Town of Simsbury, the Advisory Committee, and CROCOG. The screening criteria included 16 criteria within six categories:

- Off-road:** Dedicated off-road facilities per the mission of the ECG. Alternatives which provide the most separation from traffic score more favorably.
- Traffic Safety:** Route alternatives with the fewest vehicular conflict points at trail crossings, intersections, and driveways score more favorably.
- Connectivity:** Routes which are proximate to residential areas and town centers, routes with the shorter length between Tariffville and Simsbury Center, and routes with fewer accessibility concerns score more favorably.
- Right-of-way:** Alternatives with fewer constructability challenges and fewer easements on, or purchases of, private property score more favorably.
- Environmental Impact:** Alternatives with fewer impacts to natural resources such as flood plains and wetlands score more favorably.
- Economic Opportunity:** Alternatives with greater potential to increase customer traffic to existing businesses scores more favorably.

In aggregate, the objective of the screening criteria is to highlight route alternatives that achieve the high-level goals for the project. This helps to prioritize the alternative that is:

- Primarily off-road route
- Comfortable for trail users of all ages and abilities, including young children and those over 65
- Attractive
- Connects to local parks, schools, businesses and other destinations
- Focuses on environmental stewardship of the Farmington River.

## Results of the Evaluation

Based on the screening framework described above, the scores for the five alignment alternatives and their variants included:

Alignment Alternative	Points	Alignment Alternative	Points
1A	111.0	3C	94.9
1B	109.3	4A	77.6
2	129.0	4B	84.0
3A	110.8	5	78.0
3B	79.9	(maximum possible)	150

As the highest scoring alternative using the screening methodology, the key strengths for Alternative 2 include:

- 20 out of 20 points for the very high proportion of the route that would be an off-road facility (96% of the 1.7-mile route)
- 10 out of 10 points for being almost entirely separated from nearby roadways by at least 50 feet (96% of the 1.7-mile route)
- 20 out of 20 points for the very few driveway crossings and at-grade roadway crossings per 1,000 feet

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



- 19 out of 20 points for offering the most direct route between the FCHT trailhead at the corner of Route 10/202 at Route 315 and the end of the Bloomfield-Tariffville Connector Trail at Tariffville Center
- 10 out of 10 points for promoting educational opportunities by lying within ¼ mile of both the Farmington River and the Tariffville Elementary School
- 10 out of 10 points for the corridor’s proximity to existing businesses (both along Route 202 and at Tariffville Center)
- 5 out of 5 points for the minimal net increase in elevation gain (i.e., it’s a flat route)

The criterion for which Alternative 2 did not score highly included:

- 0 out of 10 points due to the potential need to acquire or use easements on private property, i.e., the identified corridor is almost entirely privately-owned (rather than the alternative lying entirely on public land)
- 5 out of 10 points for impact to wetlands since the alternative included between 500-1,000 linear feet that has a direct impact

## Preferred Alternative Design Considerations

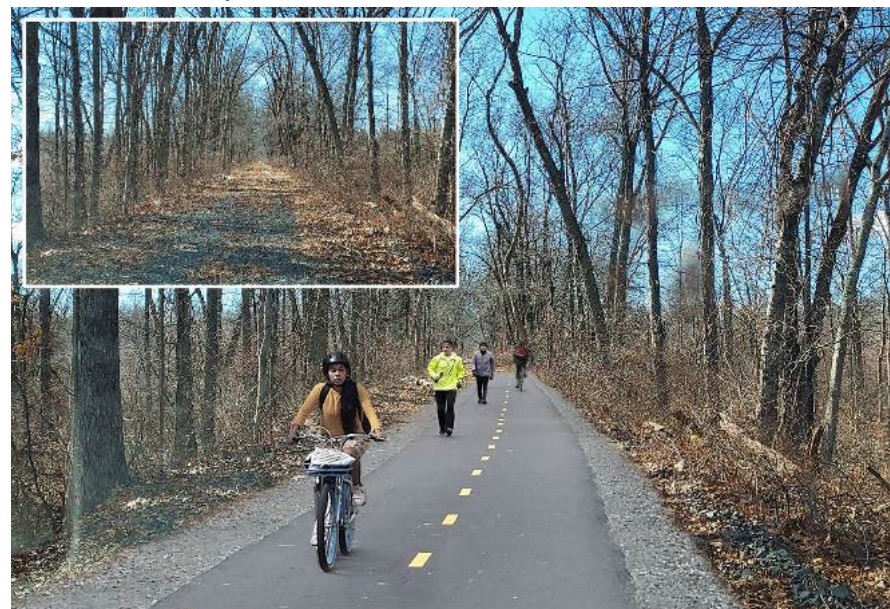
Alternative 2 was endorsed by the Simsbury Board of Selectmen as the Preferred Alternative at a meeting on September 27, 2023. Alternative 2 primarily follows the existing FCHT north approximately 2,300 feet from the Route 202/315 trailhead to the historic rail corridor, which it follows for most of the route to the Tariffville-Bloomfield Connector terminus. Key segments for the proposed 1.7-mile-long corridor include:

### Abandoned Rail Corridor (West of the Farmington River)

This segment of the Preferred Alternative can be easily converted into a trail. From the FCHT, the Preferred Alternative follows an existing access road which connects the FCHT to the abandoned rail corridor which was most recently used as an access road to reach an electric

transmission tower in the area. Further east, the trail route is elevated above the river floodplain and above wetlands. The recently used access road along much of the abandoned rail embankment allows for a trail to be constructed in this area with minimum environmental impact. In areas where the embankment has been eroded, repair or replacement with an elevated boardwalk could be considered.

**Exhibit 1-5: A good portion of Alternative 2 lies along a former rail embankment and can be easily converted into a trail with minimal environmental impact**



## CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



### Farmington River Crossing

The abandoned rail embankment ends approximately 575-feet from the abandoned rail bridge abutment on the northeast side of the Farmington River. At the west end, a wood-deck or concrete boardwalk 12 to 14-feet wide may be anticipated if a boardwalk were pursued in design, or the crossing could be designed as a traditional trail bridge. Crossing the river requires a bridge with a roughly 175-foot span. This provides the opportunity to create a memorable feature along the ECG route and would likely serve as a destination and a gateway to the Tariffville neighborhood for trail users coming from downtown Simsbury (see Exhibit 1-6). The bridge could be designed to accommodate the weight of emergency response vehicles to provide alternate emergency vehicle connections in the immediate area in times of flooding, if desired.

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 1-6: The future trail crossing of the Farmington River offers the opportunity to create a memorable landmark for the ECG in Simsbury



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



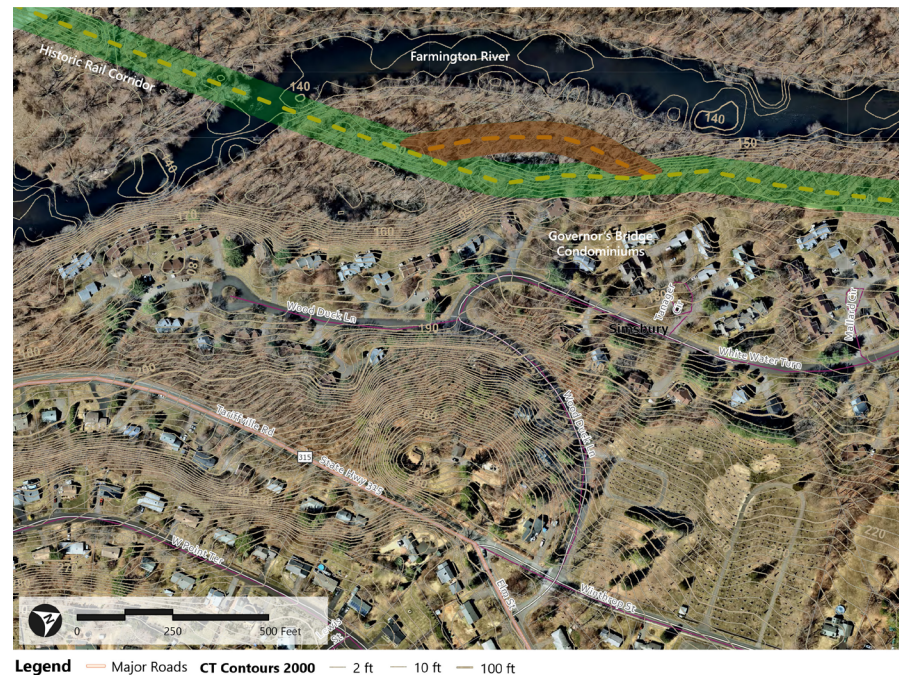
## Abandoned Rail Corridor (East of the Farmington River)

Between the river and Tariffville Park, approximately ½-mile is located within privately owned property and would require easements to construct the Preferred Alternative. The historic rail embankment continues running northeast, parallel to the Farmington River for approximately 1,000 linear feet until the vicinity of 14 Tanager Circle. At this point, the historic rail embankment is generally lost for approximately 1,500 feet due to the construction of the Governor's Bridge Condominium Association which built over this historic rail bed between 14 Tanager Circle and 40 White Water Turn in the 1980's. In this area, Alternative 2 would be routed further to the west compared to the historic rail corridor. While this puts the trail closer to the Farmington River, much of this area is elevated above the floodway, floodplains, and wetlands based on available mapping.

In some areas, the abandoned rail embankment can be quite close to the existing condominium complex. The closest location is 6 White Water Turn, which is approximately 20-feet from the abandoned railroad embankment (green line in Exhibit 1-7).

To provide a larger buffer to the residence at 6 White Water Turn, the alignment could potentially run closer to the river (orange line in Exhibit 1-8). This section should be considered as an elevated boardwalk section of trail over the Farmington River flood plain to maintain further distance from the residence.

Exhibit 1-7: Preferred trail alignment in the vicinity of the adjacent condominium complex. Diagram illustrates the two discrete routing alternatives near 6 White Water Turn for consideration during the next phase of design



Final alignment of the trail in this discrete area—and potentially other discrete areas adjacent to the condominium complex—will be further explored in the next phase of design when survey work is complete and additional environmental analysis has been reviewed. Only then will the Town of Simsbury fully understand the environmental and privacy trade-offs between a trail route near the top of the riverbank (green line) and a boardwalk trail route closer to the Farmington River (orange line). In the latter scenario, the trail will be routed as far from any occupied dwelling as practicable. Care will also need to be taken to provide some level of privacy screening, ideally through dense vegetation and landscaping.

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Other residences sit close to the abandoned rail corridor at the very northern end of the condominium complex. In these areas similar considerations in future design stage to keep the trail as far as possible from these residences should occur. The Preferred Alternative then reconnects to the last 650-foot remnant of the abandoned rail embankment between Governor’s Bridge Condominium Association and the Tariffville Park access road.

## Connection between Tariffville Park and Route 189

From the Tariffville Park access road, the trail would continue east for 800-feet as a shared roadway along the access road and Main Street Extension until the cul-du-sac at Main Street. East of the cul-du-sac the trail would be routed along a state-owned parcel (“Farmington River Water Access” managed by DEEP) between Route 189 and Main Street Extension (see Exhibit 1-8). It is anticipated that the trail will be located within the state-owned parcel, but topography constraints may require positioning this trail in private property. In either case, care should be taken in the next phases of design to minimize impact to the off-street parking in this area, as it is critical for the adjacent businesses on Main Street. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements will then be needed to cross Main Street to access the terminus of the new Tariffville-Bloomfield Connector Trail.

**Exhibit 1-8: State right-of-way (ROW) to the east of Main Street (at left in photo) in Tariffville. Further south, the ROW runs behind Main Street businesses such as the Cracker Barrel Pub**



## Opinion of Probable Cost

The opinion of probable cost for the Preferred Alternative is roughly \$13.1 million, which includes design fees, construction costs, a 25% contingency, ROW needs, and a 3-year inflationary period. The highest cost in terms of materials is expected to be the pedestrian bridge over the Farmington River.

The Simsbury Board of Selectmen’s endorsement on September 28, 2023, clears the way to move forward raising money for design and ultimately construction in the next few years pending the potential engineering and permitting challenges related to:

- Designing a trail minimally invasive with respect to any habited home as conditioned in the Board of Selectman’s endorsement.
- The potential environmental impact of a trail bridge over the Farmington River and the elevated boardwalk segments.

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## 2 INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to identify a preferred alignment for the gap in the East Coast Greenway (ECG) through the Town of Simsbury using a collaborative process informed by coordination with Town officials, stakeholder involvement, and public engagement. This report is part of the larger Capitol Region East Coast Greenway Study (CRECG) with a project area in the municipalities of Bloomfield, Hartford, and East Hartford, in addition to the gap in Simsbury. This gap is roughly 12-mile in length and is the last gap in the East Coast Greenway within the region with an unidentified alignment.

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Rather than propose a detailed design, this planning study aims to establish a framework for the future design process by highlighting the challenges and opportunities associated with the preferred alignment. This valuable insight will offer guidance for the subsequent phases of project development.

### Study Area

The Simsbury study area includes areas between the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT) and the Tariffville-Bloomfield Connector at the intersection of Route 189 and Main Street in Tariffville (a village of Simsbury, CT). The FCHT provides off-road trail connectivity to New Haven and serves as the north-south spine of the East Coast Greenway through Connecticut, while the recently completed

Tariffville-Bloomfield Connector is anticipated to serve the East Coast Greenway on its routing towards Hartford.

While the study mostly considers alignment alternatives within Simsbury, some alternatives include alignments within Granby and East Granby as well. Exhibit 2-1 shows the entire study area, while Exhibit 2-2 focuses on the Tariffville neighborhood in Simsbury where most of the alignment alternatives are considered.

Exhibit 2-1: Simsbury Study Area Map



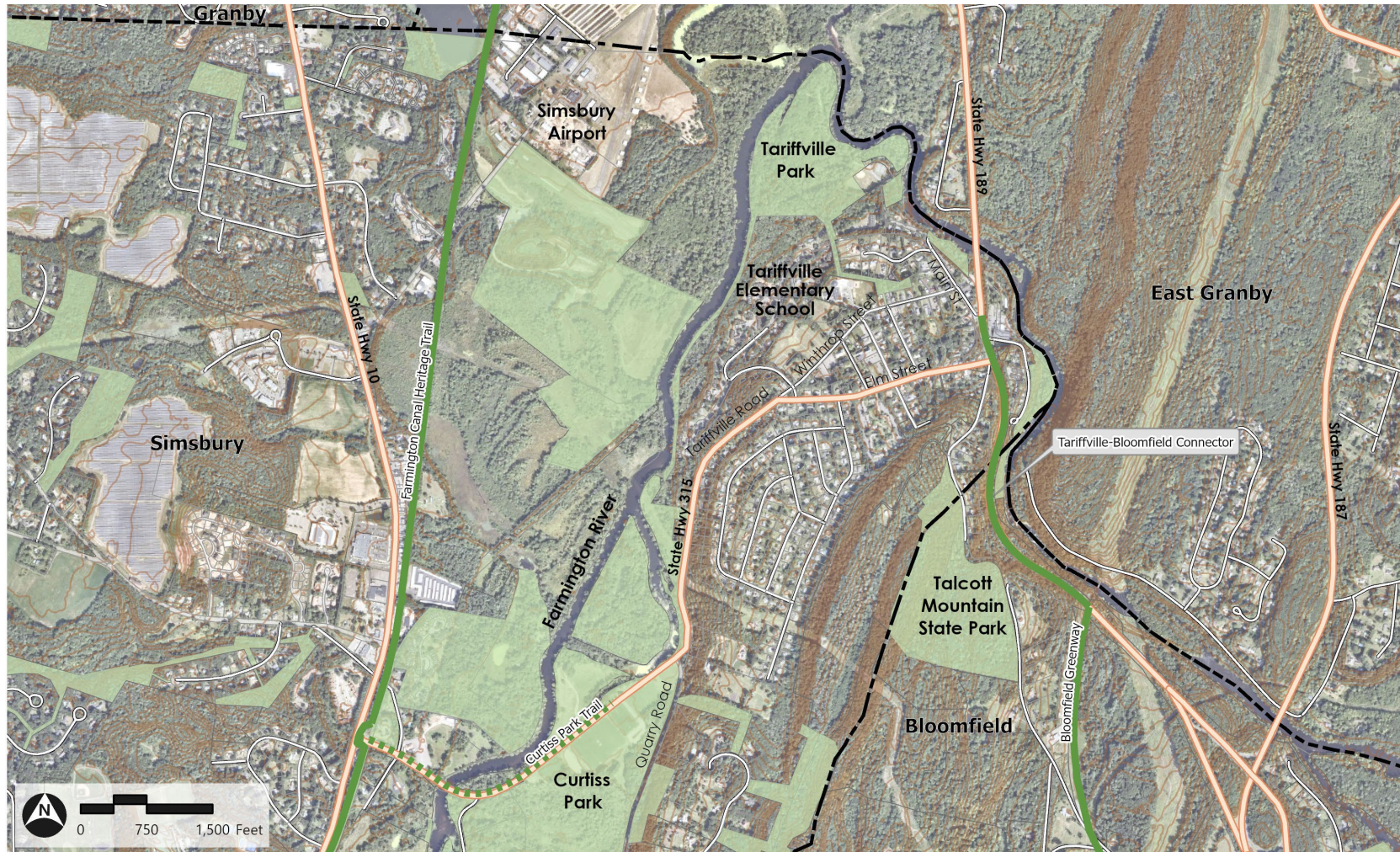
Source: Kean/Moss, Town of Simsbury, CTDOT



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 2-2: Study Area – Tariffville Focus Area



## Legend

- |                         |             |                             |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Multi-Use Trails</b> | Major Roads | Protected Public Open Space |
| Existing                | Local Roads | Town Boundaries             |
| In Design               |             |                             |

Source: NearMap, Town of Simsbury, CTDOT

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## Stakeholder Input

### Who was involved?

The CRECG Study is led by an Advisory Committee set up to oversee ECG planning in four Capitol Region communities: Simsbury, Bloomfield, Hartford, and East Hartford. The Committee consisted of the following regional and local agencies:

- Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG)
- Town of Simsbury
- City of Hartford
- Town of East Hartford
- Town of Bloomfield
- Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)
- Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECGA)
- Riverfront Recapture
- The iQuilt Partnership (iQuilt)

For the Simsbury Study, numerous additional coordination between Town staff and the consultant team occurred throughout the project. In addition, the project team received input from roughly 70 community members from Simsbury and the region at a March 30, 2023 public meeting at the Tariffville School (see Exhibit 2-3 and Chapter 6, Public and Stakeholder Outreach for more information). Additional outreach included newsletters, an interactive map, and smaller-group meetings with local stakeholders. The latter included meetings with:

- The Governors Bridge Condo Association
- The National Park Service
- Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic River Committee

Exhibit 2-3: VHB's Mark Jewell presenting at the March 30, 2023 community meeting in Tariffville.



## Study Goals

This study focuses on the Simsbury, CT gap of the East Coast Greenway (ECG). The ECG is an envisioned 3,000-mile off-road walking and biking route connecting 15 states and 450 cities and towns from Maine to Florida. As of 2023, the ECG is approximately one-third complete overall. In Connecticut, the ECG consists of a 200-mile route between the Rhode Island state line at Sterling, Connecticut and the New York state line at Greenwich. In Connecticut, the completed portions of the East Coast Greenway utilize a series of trails including the Air Line Trail, the Hop River Trail, and the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail.

The gap identified in Simsbury extends from the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT) at the intersection of Route 10/202 (Hopmeadow Street) and Route 315 (Tariffville Road) in Simsbury and the Tariffville-Bloomfield Connector (completed in November 2023) and terminates at the intersection of Route 189 (Hartford Avenue) and Main Street in Tariffville.

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## Goals for the Study include:

- Completing the East Coast Greenway route between the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and the Tariffville-Bloomfield Connector
- Creating connections between Tariffville and Simsbury's commercial center along Route 10/202
- Developing an off-road route that is comfortable for users of all ages and abilities including young children
- Providing recreational opportunities for nearby residents
- Connecting to local parks (Tariffville Park, Curtiss Park) and the Tarriffville Elementary School
- Designing an attractive trail route and associated infrastructure
- Promoting environmental stewardship of the Farmington River Wild and Scenic River corridor

Exhibit 2-4: East Coast Greenway route in Connecticut





## Definitions of Trail Types

The following trail and bikeway typologies were considered for the various alternatives that were explored for this study:



**Shared Roadway** – Shared roadway markings or “sharrows” are intended to help motorists and cyclists safely share and navigate lower-volume, lower-speed roadways. Sharrows show bicyclists where to ride in the road (aligned with the middle of the chevron markings). Along with “Bike May Use Full Lane” signs, sharrows remind drivers to expect people bicycling in the roadway. Minimizing the use of sharrows is important for the mission of the ECG, however, as they are not considered an ideal facility for trail users of all ages and abilities.



**Bike Lane** – Bicycle lanes are striped or otherwise separated areas on roadways designated for preferential use of bicyclists over motor vehicles. They can be enhanced with the use of colored pavement or physical separation from the travel lane, which would be recommended for this type of facility.



**Sidepath** – Sidepaths are placed outside of a roadway surface and are physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by a landscaped buffer, 6-inch curb, or other barrier. Typically, these are 10'-wide with a paved surface and may be used by pedestrians, runners, skaters, wheelchairs users, and bicyclists. While sidepaths adjacent to steeper roads may exceed a 5% grade as typically required by ADA, these areas may pose difficulties for some users.



**Shared-Use Path** – Shared-use paths are similar to sidepaths but run in an independent right-of-way or are significantly separated from any nearby roadways, essentially eliminating potential conflicts between trail users and motor vehicles. These are frequently found on inactive rail lines, alongside rivers, and within utility corridors. They may be used by pedestrians, runners, skaters, wheelchairs users, and bicyclists similar to sidepaths. These paths are typically 10-foot wide and must meet a 5% maximum grade to meet ADA requirements. Shared-use paths are frequently paved, but some stone dust shared-use paths may be found as well.



### 3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing conditions data was gathered using GIS data (provided by the Town of Simsbury, CROCOG, CTDOT and other statewide resources), a review of current plans and studies, and on-the-ground fieldwork performed by the consultant team. This work was supplemented by discussions throughout the project with town staff, stakeholders, and members of the public. The existing conditions reviewed for this project generally fall within four categories:

- Transportation facility context
- Land use context
- Environmental context
- Nearby related projects

#### Transportation Facility Context

The Simsbury study area features transportation facilities for a variety of modes, and includes nearby trails, a sidewalk network, roadways, a nearby airport and rail lines.

#### Trail Network

- The Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT) is a multi-use rail trail spanning Connecticut and Massachusetts along the Farmington Canal in Connecticut and the Hampshire and Hampden Canal in Massachusetts. The section between New Haven and Simsbury is designated as part of the East Coast Greenway. In Simsbury, the FCHT runs approximately 7.4 miles from the border with Avon to the south and Granby to the north. The route runs parallel to Route 10/202 and connects various business districts and local parks.
- The Bloomfield Greenway is a two-mile-long shared-use path connecting Simsbury to Bloomfield along the former Connecticut Western Railroad bed, now a utility corridor. Its northern terminus connects to the Tariffville-Bloomfield Connector trail at Route 189.

- The Tariffville-Bloomfield Connector was constructed adjacent to Route 189 and will link Tariffville Town Center to the existing Bloomfield Greenway. The trail was opened to the public in November 2023.
- The 3/4-mile-long Curtiss Park Trail—currently in design—will link the FCHT with Curtiss Park via a sidepath along the north side of Route 315.

#### Pedestrian Network

- Though some are narrow and with steep grades, sidewalks are present within many of Tariffville Town Center’s streets including Elm, Winthrop, Church, Center, and Main Streets (typically on one side of the street).
- Besides the FCHT path, portions of Route 202/Hopmeadow St feature a sidewalk, e.g., north of Hoskins Rd on the west side.
- Route 315 has no sidewalks but will host a sidepath from the Route 10/202 intersection to Curtiss Park in the near future.
- Crosswalks are present in some locations throughout the study area. Example locations include Route 315 at Curtiss Park and at multiple locations along Elm Street and Winthrop Street, generally to accommodate access to the Tariffville Elementary School.

#### Roadway Network

- The study area includes many key roadways that serve longer distance regional traffic including Route 189, Route 315, Route 10/202, Quarry Road, and Wolcott Road. All of these streets are classified as a collector or an arterial by CTDOT. Daily traffic on these streets ranges from a high of 14,200 vehicles per day on Route 10/202 south of Route 315 to a low 2,700 vehicles per day on Quarry Road. Traffic volumes on Route 315 in the study area range between 6,200 to 8,500 vehicles per day.

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



- Main Street and Winthrop Street also provide important connectivity within Tariffville.
- Other streets in the study area are generally low-volume and low-speed residential streets.
- The roadway network within the study area includes two bridges over the Farmington River. The Route 315 bridge to the south features a sidewalk on the north side of the bridge and will be included as part of the Curtiss Park Trail currently in design between the FCHT and Curtiss Park. The Route 189 bridge to the north features a 5-foot sidewalk on the south side of the bridge.

## Airport

- The Simsbury Airport is located on Wolcott Road northwest of Tariffville and the Farmington River. The airport is privately owned by a non-profit organization and primarily serves small general aviation aircraft.

## Rail Infrastructure

- The study area features three abandoned rail corridors which are shown in better detail on the 1934 aerial in Exhibit 3-3. These corridors included three separate crossings of the Farmington River. The corridors are:
  - A rail corridor in the northeast-southwest direction between Route 189 to the northeast and Route 10/202 to the southwest (Exhibit 3-3, Location 1). This corridor crossed the Farmington River in two locations. The first bridge was located just to the west of the current Wood Duck Lane (Exhibit 3-3, Location A), while the second bridge was located just to the north of the current Tariffville Park (Exhibit 3-3, Location B). While these bridges are gone, portions of the structural abutments are still present today. See Exhibit 3-1 and Exhibit 3-2.

- A rail corridor connecting from Tariffville due west across the Farmington River which provided connection to the New Haven and Northampton railroad to the north (Exhibit 3-3, Location 2). By the time of the 1934 aerial photograph, this route had already been abandoned and the bridge removed, however the pier foundations from the Farmington River bridge are still clearly visible in the photo (Exhibit 3-3, Location C).
- A rail corridor connecting from Tariffville to the southeast towards Bloomfield south of the Farmington River (Exhibit 3-3, Location 3). This connected to what is now known as the Griffin Rail Line and provided connectivity further to the south towards Hartford. Part of this corridor has now become the Bloomfield Greenway north of Day Hill Road to Route 189.

**Exhibit 3-1: Abandoned rail abutment north of Tariffville Park crossing north towards Route 189 (Exhibit 3-3, Location B)**



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 3-2: Abandoned rail abutment west of Wood Duck Lane and crossing west towards Route 10/202 (Exhibit 3-3, Location A)



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 3-3: A 1934 aerial photograph of Tariffville. Note the rail corridors in the photo. The third rail bridge (Location C) in this area has already been destroyed by the time this photo was taken but the remains of the abutments are still visible. (Source: CT State Library)





# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## Land Use Context

### Housing

- Single-family residential housing is the predominant land use in the neighborhoods surrounding Tariffville Center, located within the historic network of narrow streets that flank Elm Street and Winthrop Street.
- Multifamily housing complexes of note include the Willow Arms Apartments and the Governor's Bridge Condominiums among other areas.

### Town Center

- Tariffville Town Center includes a few commercial, residential, cultural, and land uses, such as small businesses and shops, restaurants, a fire station, church, cemetery, and the Town Green.
- A quarter-mile from the Town Green is the Tariffville Elementary School, which serves the entire neighborhood and is accessed from Winthrop Street

### Open Space

The primary open spaces in the study area include:

- Tariffville Park which features tennis courts, a baseball diamond, playground, canoe access and walking paths near the Farmington River and a small parking lot.
- Curtiss Park which includes two full-size soccer fields, four smaller soccer fields, two gravel parking lots, and canoe access to the Farmington River.

Exhibit 3-4: Aerial view of a portion of the Tariffville neighborhood showing the Farmington River and adjacent condominiums



### Environmental Context

Given the proximity of the Farmington River and nearby wooded areas, the new ECG route will be closely tied to the prevailing environmental context. While the route must accommodate environmental constraints in this area, the study recognizes that the Farmington River and other areas can be a valuable asset and destination to a future trail as well. For example, a new trail could provide additional access to the Farmington River for recreational and educational opportunities and serve the Town of Simsbury with an impressive new vista of these areas. With this in mind, the trail routing study considered the environmental constraints within the study area and studied ways to mitigate potential impacts. Potential constraints to building a trail along portions of the Farmington River within the study area include flood areas, areas of steep grades and elevation

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change, wetlands and other critical habitat areas, Farmington River hydrology requirements, and cultural resources concerns.

### Farmington River Floodway

As would be expected, much of the land immediately adjacent to the Farmington River is part of the designated floodway. Low-lying areas just west of the river are most prone to flooding. On the east side, the steeper riverbank provides the elevated ground on which the Governor's Bridge Condominium Complex was built. South of Wood Duck Lane, nearly the entire area between Rte. 315/Tariffville Rd. and the river sits within the floodway. (Note: Town of Simsbury Flood Maps can be found at: [https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf9751/f/pages/flood\\_maps\\_2020\\_0.pdf](https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf9751/f/pages/flood_maps_2020_0.pdf))

### Flood Hazard Areas

The flooding limits for a 100-year storm are regulated by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). Trail construction within the Farmington River floodway or floodplain may be challenging as it can negatively affect compensatory flood storage and can increase the possibility of damage to the trail during a flood event. Survey data in subsequent phases of the design will need to establish the 100-year flood line to gain a better understanding of how it may impact the routing for the ECG through Tariffville. This study utilizes the most recent FEMA mapping for the 100-Year flood area.

### Wetlands and Other Critical Habitat Areas

Numerous wetlands flank the Farmington River, especially on the flatter west side and some areas immediately to the east of the river. Trail alternatives in these areas may need to include elevated boardwalks, in some cases hundreds of feet long, to minimize disturbances to these areas. Greater dependence on boardwalks will likely increase the costs of the trail and create additional permitting needs. As shown in the Simsbury Natural Diversity Data Base map on

the following page, a large segment of the Tariffville Study area sits within an area featuring State and Federally listed species. Critical habitat flanks the entire stretch of the Farmington River and the adjacent floodway north and west of the river in Tariffville. These two realities will especially come into play in the next phase of the planning and design process when a more specific route will be finalized.

### Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic River Designation

The portion of the Farmington River within the study area, along with the Salmon Brook, was designated a Wild and Scenic River by Congress in 2019. While this designation does not preclude the possibility to incorporate a trail next to the river, it creates the need to consider the Outstanding Resource Values (ORV) associated with the river. The five ORVs include 1) Scenic, 2) Recreational, 3) Geologic, 4) Fish/Wildlife, and 5) Historic/Cultural Resources.

The Wild and Scenic River designation provides the opportunity for route alternatives to emphasize the environmental features of the area. For the alternatives close to the river, the alignment, material choice, and branding/signing of the future route could emphasize sustainable design principles, eco-educational opportunities (geology, natural history, wildlife, and river flow dynamics), and habitat restoration.

### Grades and Elevation

In various parts of the study area, elevation change and steep grades need to be taken into account during the planning phase. For instance, trail route alternatives paralleling Route 315 would be steep in some areas (>5%), which is not an ideal condition for a regional trail system (though for trails paralleling a road corridor, this is still in compliance with the ADA). Any trail in the residential area south and east of Elm Street and Tariffville Road will require switchbacks due to the substantial elevation change between this area and the Farmington

## CAPITOL REGION

# EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY

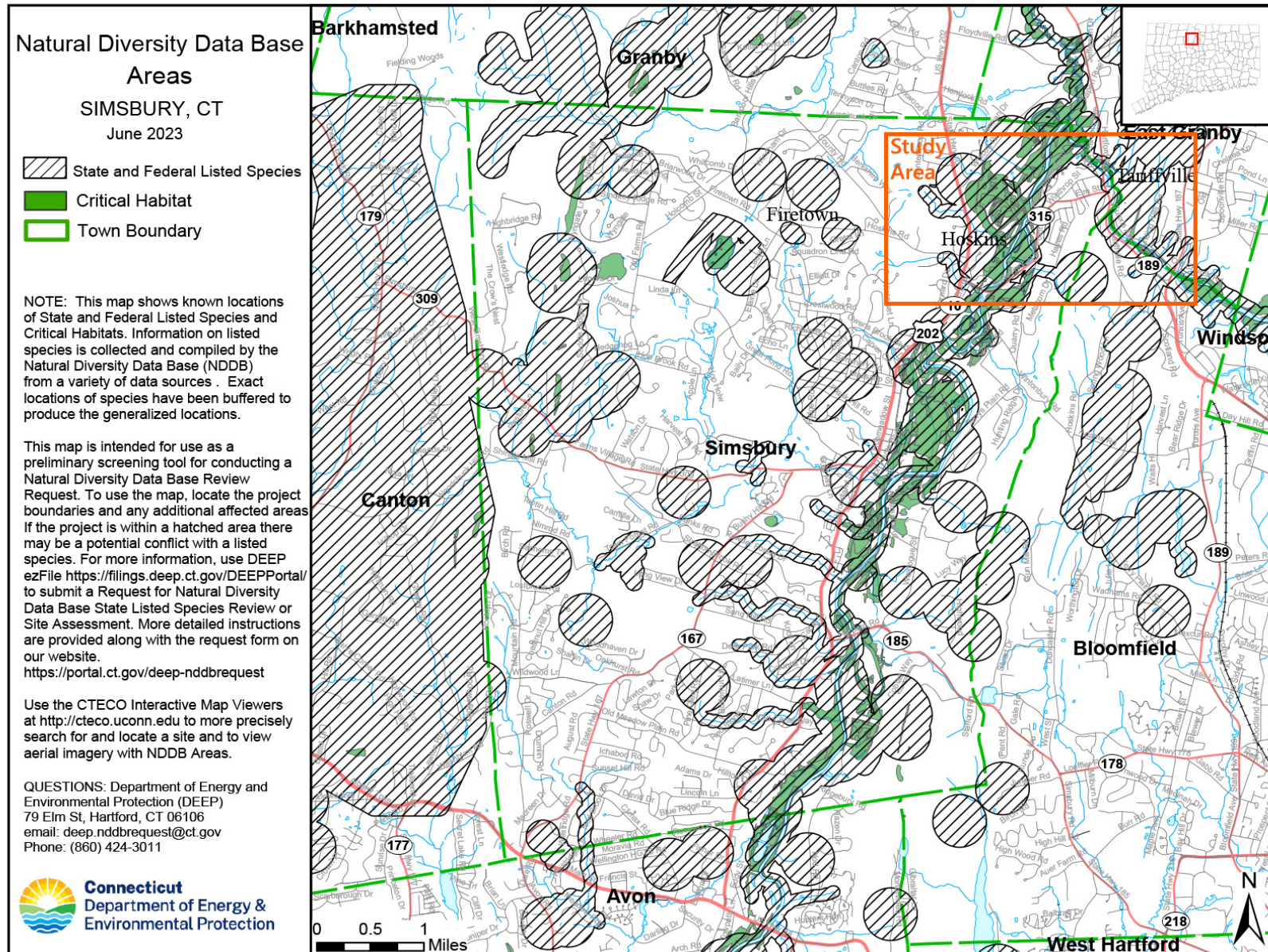


River. Route alternatives closer to the Farmington River will need to contend with steep riverbanks in some sections. Where possible, route alternatives should follow areas with gradual changes in grade to minimize regrading and environmental disturbances during future construction even if grade along the trail is relatively flat.

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 3-5: Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB) Areas in Simsbury



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## Nearby Related Projects

Current and on-going investments in shared use paths and other pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the immediate area create opportunities to leverage other projects and help provide additional connectivity within the study area. Two current projects in Tariffville do just that: the Curtiss Park Trail at the west end of Route 315 and the Tariffville–Bloomfield Connector trail along Route 189.

### Curtiss Park Trail

- The Curtiss Park Trail will connect the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail at the intersection of Route 10/202 with Curtiss Park near the Farmington River, as a side-path along Route 315.
- This 3/4-mile-long greenway is currently in design with construction anticipated in 2024 and 2025.

### Tariffville–Bloomfield Connector

- The Tariffville–Bloomfield Connector links Tariffville to Bloomfield and begins at the intersection of Route 189 and Main Street and meets the terminus of the Bloomfield Greenway at Route 189 near the utility corridor. The Bloomfield Greenway continues to the existing terminus at Day Hill Road. It is being studied as part of this project to extend its connection to Bloomfield Town Center and points further south towards Hartford.
- This 3/4-mile-long greenway was completed in November 2023 (see image at right).

Exhibit 3-6: Newly completed Tariffville–Bloomfield Connector in 2023





## 4 ROUTING ALTERNATIVES

A series of alignment alternatives to address the gaps in the East Coast Greenway within Simsbury were developed with input from the general public, the Town of Simsbury, and the Capitol Region East Coast Greenway Study Advisory Committee. These alternatives were then evaluated on how well they performed against the screening criteria established by the Town of Simsbury and informed by the public and stakeholder meetings as detailed in Section 6. This chapter summarizes the alignment alternatives identified. The study resulted in the identification of five primary route alternatives. In addition, some of these primary route alternatives include variations. The various alternatives described in this section ranged from two to six miles in length for a gap with a straight-line distance of 1.5 miles as shown in Exhibit 4-1.

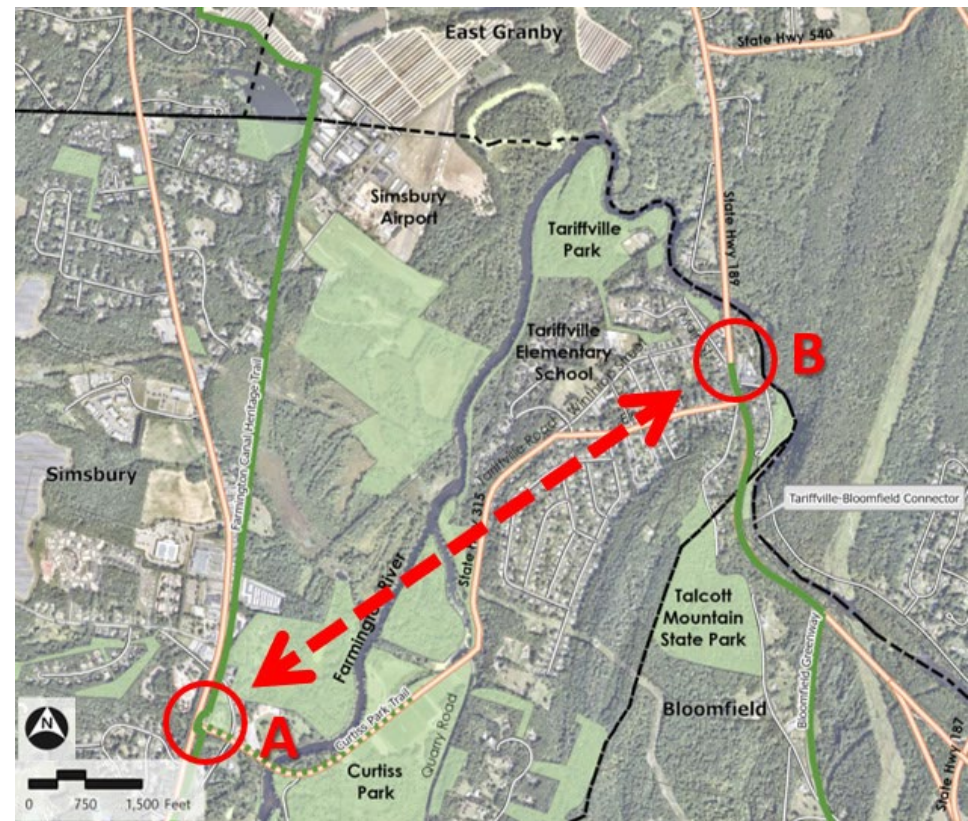
### Common Components of all Alternatives

All alternatives in the study identify a route from the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT) at point “A” (Exhibit 4-1) to the Tariffville-Bloomfield Connector trail at point “B” (Exhibit 4-1). While point “A” highlights the intersection of Route 10/202 and Route 315 specifically, alternatives may connect to the FCHT at any location. Some alternatives included in this study connect to the FCHT to the north of point “A”. In these cases, the screening analysis incorporates the existing FCHT between the connecting location and point “A” to ensure an equitable comparison between alternatives.

All alternatives include the same routing for the 2,000-foot distance between Tariffville Park and the Tariffville-Bloomfield Connector trail. This includes a shared use path along a state-owned parcel (“Farmington River Water Access” managed by DEEP) between Route 189 and Main Street Extension. It is anticipated that the trail will be located within the state-owned parcel, but topography constraints

may require positioning this trail in private property. See Exhibit 4-3 for a photo of this area. Along Main Street Extension and the Tariffville Park access road, the trail route would be a shared roadway due to limited right-of-way and nearby houses. This study recommendation is acceptable in this area given the limited traffic volumes and lower speeds.

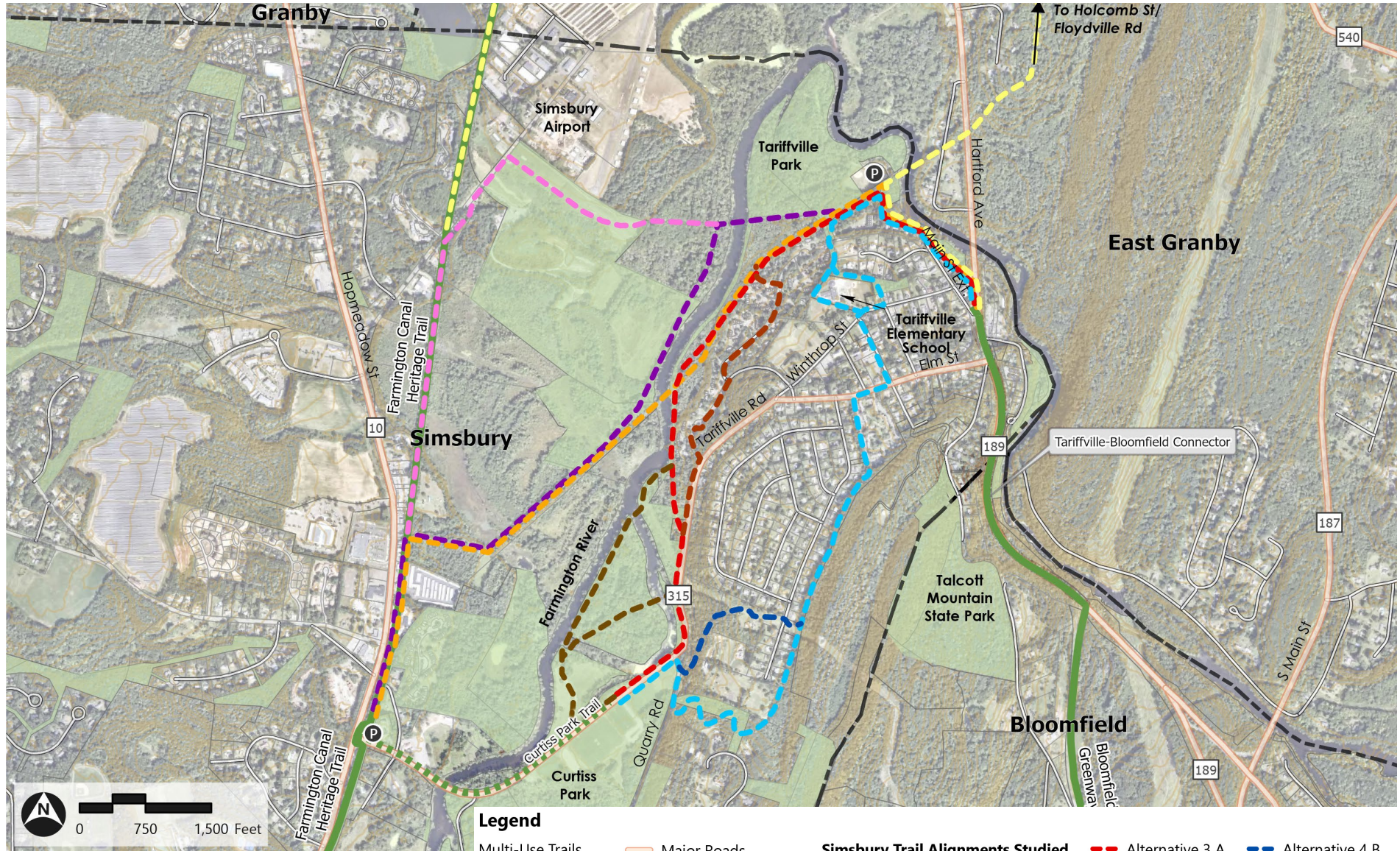
Exhibit 4-1: Connection diagram for all ECG alignment alternatives



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 4-2: Simsbury Trail Alignments Studied



### Legend

- |                  |                        |  |                 |                 |
|------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Multi-Use Trails | Major Roads            | <b>Simsbury Trail Alignments Studied</b> | Alternative 3 A | Alternative 4 B |
| Existing         | Public Open Space      | Alternative 1 A                          | Alternative 3 B | Alternative 5   |
| In Design        | Existing Trail Parking | Alternative 1 B                          | Alternative 3 C |                 |
|                  |                        | Alternative 2                            | Alternative 4 A |                 |

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 4-3a: State-owned right-of-way (ROW) to the east of Main Street (at left in photo) in Tariffville. Further south, the ROW runs behind Main Street businesses such as the Cracker Barrel Pub.



Exhibit 4-3b: Map of Tariffville showing the state right-of-way (ROW) to the east of Main Street.





# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## Alternative 1A and 1B

Alternatives 1A and 1B utilize a crossing of the Farmington River in the abandoned rail corridor at Location C in Exhibit 3-3. This rail bridge was the first of the three rail bridges in the study area to be abandoned and was removed by 1934 or earlier. The pier foundations are still visible in this location in times of lower river levels. These alternatives differ in their approach to this crossing location on the west side of the Farmington River. Alternative 1A evaluates an alignment alongside the river while Alternative 1B evaluates an alignment across Town of Simsbury land to the FCHT directly. These alignments are discussed in further detail with a summary of considerations.

### Alternative 1A

From the intersection of Route 10/202 and Route 315, Alternative 1A continues north on the FCHT until just north of Ely Lane, opposite the Big Y Market. At this location, this alternative turns off the FCHT to an access road on the east. This access road was most recently used by Eversource to service the transmission lines in the area. This access road continues to a partially elevated embankment which served the abandoned rail line. This embankment continues over Saxton Brook and continues in the northwesterly direction until it reaches the Farmington River. At the Farmington River Alternative 1A diverts from the rail bed, continuing north along the west side of the river. This portion of the route runs through wetlands and sits within the floodway of the Farmington River. The route crosses the river at the aforementioned Location C as a trail bridge (adjacent to and potentially re-using historic stone pier foundations that still sit in the river) and connects again with the existing rail bed, which continues until reaching the parking lot at Tariffville Park. The alignment then continues along Main Street Extension and within state right-of-way as previously described.

### Alternative 1B

Alternative 1B continues further north on the FCHT until the vicinity of the FCHT crossing of Wolcott Road. This alternative then diverges from the FCHT with the creation of a sidepath on the east side of Wolcott Road until just north of the Munnisunk Brook. The sidepath route then transitions to an off-road shared use path towards the east and would lie just south of the Simsbury Airport. The trail would be set back from the Simsbury Airport to meet FAA runway safety area regulations to ensure safety from air traffic. Alternative 1B joins with Alternative 1A with a crossing of the Farmington River at the same Location C. The alignment then continues to the parking lot at Tariffville Park, along Main Street Extension and along state right-of-way as previously described.

### Alternatives 1A and 1B Key Considerations

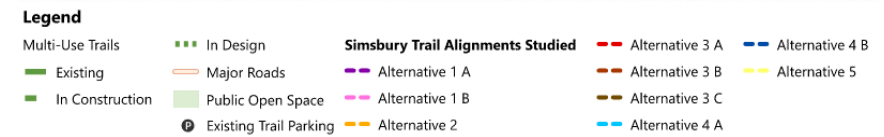
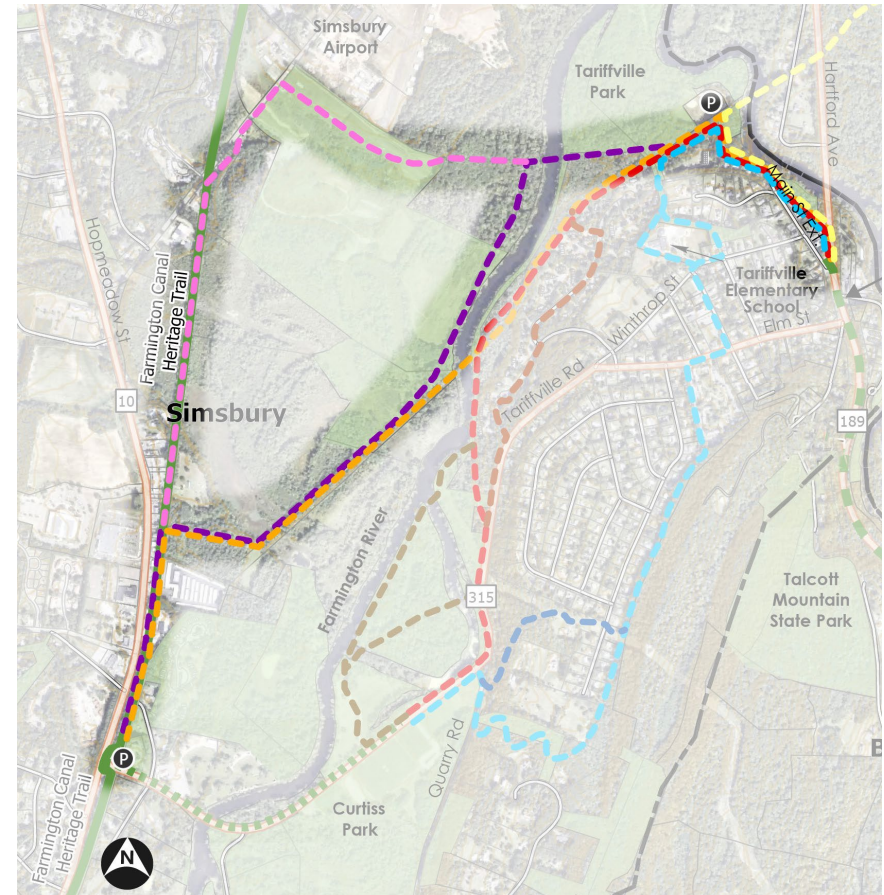
- Route Alternative 1A incorporates a segment of the FCHT from the trailhead parking at Route 315 to a gravel-road access point adjacent to the Pride gas station on Hopmeadow Street that leads to the former rail corridor.
- Routing for Alternative 1B includes a longer segment of the FCHT further north to Wolcott Road.
- Alternatives 1A and 1B would result in a direct, flat connection throughout the length of the study area.
- Routing of Alternative 1A and 1B include a significant length through floodway, floodplain, and wetlands which create environmental concern and permitting difficulties. Alternatives 1A and 1B may require significant boardwalk structures.
- Routing of Alternative 1B in proximity to an active airport could create additional permitting requirements through FAA.
- Both alternatives require construction of a roughly 500-foot-long new bridge over the Farmington River, one which provides an opportunity for a unique gateway element to Tariffville.

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



- Routed further away from Governor’s Bridge Condominium Complex than any other options on this side of Tariffville.
- Note that options 1A and 1B were explored in response to public comment indicating interest in utilizing the abandoned rail beds west of the river and the potential to minimize impact to condo properties within the Governor’s Bridge community.

Exhibit 4-4: Alternatives 1A/1B



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## Alternative 2

This route maximizes the usage of the abandoned rail corridor running in this study area as shown by Location 1 in Exhibit 3-3. While this abandoned rail corridor sits within private property on both sides of the Farmington River, it is generally elevated above the Farmington River floodway and floodplains. Similar to Alternative 1A, Alternative 2 continues north on the FCHT until just north of Ely Lane, opposite the Big Y Market, where it turns off the FCHT to an access road on the east. The access road connects to the abandoned rail embankment which continues over Saxton Brook and continues in the northwesterly direction until it reaches the end of the rail embankment approximately 400-ft to the southwest of the Farmington River (at this point Alternative 1A heads north). Between the end of the embankment and the river is a smaller watercourse and the area is within the Farmington River floodway per FEMA mapping. The 1934 aerial shows the railroad traversing this area and the Farmington River with a three span bridge approximately 575-feet in total length. Alternative 2 includes a trail bridge or a trail bridge and boardwalk combination in this area. The alternative continues on the east side of the Farmington River along the rail embankment or other suitable location until approximately 14 Tanager Circle. Here, the historic rail embankment is generally lost for approximately 1500-feet due to construction of the Governor's Bridge Condominium Association which built over this historic rail bed between 14 Tanager Circle and 40 White Water Turn during the 1980's. In this area, Alternative 2 could be routed further to the west compared to the historic rail corridor, though care will be needed to mitigate impact to vernal pools between the rail corridor and the river. While this puts the trail closer to the Farmington River, much of this area is elevated above the floodway, floodplains, and wetlands based on available mapping. Alternative 2 joins the old rail embankment to the northeast of 40 White Water Turn until it meets the

parking lot at Tariffville Park. The alignment then continues along Main Street Extension and within state right-of-way as previously described.

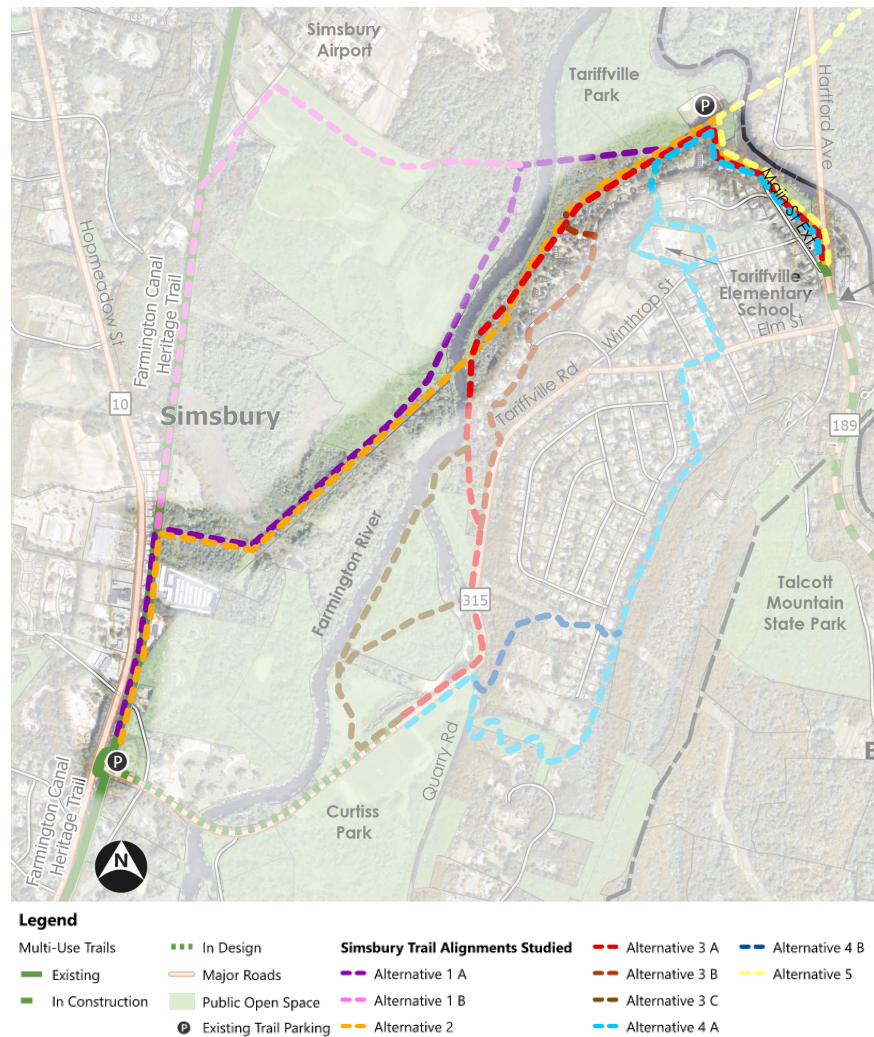
## Alternatives 2 Key Considerations

- Route Alternative 2 also incorporates a segment of the FCHT from the trailhead parking at Route 315 to a gravel-road access point adjacent to the Pride gas station on Hopmeadow Street that leads to the former rail corridor.
- Alternative 2 would result in a direct, flat connection throughout the length of the study area.
- Alternative 2 would require a trail bridge and/or boardwalk of approximately 575-feet in length to span the Farmington River, the adjacent watercourse and the Farmington River floodway; environmental permitting considerations for these structures could be significant.
- On the east side of the river, Alternative 2 would run very close to the nearby condominium structures and may require an easement on Condo Association property.
- Alternative 2 would run on top of the historic rail corridor embankment where it still exists.

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 4-5: Alternative 2



## Alternative 3A, 3B, and 3C

These alternatives are common in that they connect the study area with a crossing of the Farmington River on the Route 315 bridge and include routes along the east riverbank of the Farmington River. All three take advantage of the current design phase of the Curtiss Park Trail, which will provide a useful link between the FCHT and Curtiss Park even if none of these alternatives are ultimately built. Alternatives 3A and 3B run along Route 315 for a greater distance and continue on Route 315 to the north past Quarry Road, while Alternative 3C seeks to avoid narrow horizontal clearance between the Farmington River and Route 315 with a route further to the west between the main channel of the Farmington River and the old oxbow closer to Route 315. These alignments are discussed in further detail with a summary of considerations.

## Alternative 3A

This alternative utilizes the future Curtiss Park Trail, starting at the intersection of Route 10/202 and Route 315, then running along Route 315 until this segment’s terminus at Curtiss Park. Alternative 3A continues east along Route 315 in a sidepath configuration along the west side of Route 315. Between the parking lot to Curtiss Park and the area near Quarry Road, the distance between the edge of roadway and the Farmington River is considerably constrained. Exhibit 4-6 shows this area where Route 315 is approximately 15-feet from the riverbank with approximately 10-foot change in elevation. Alternatives in this area would likely require retaining walls, a cantilevered trail, or roadway realignment to avoid impacts to the Farmington River. Roadway realignment options in this area as shown in Exhibit 4-7 would likely impact Curtiss Park and likely be a major cost consideration for this alternative.

As the sidepath continues north, the trail continues along the Farmington River’s east bank near the Tariffville Fire District pump

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



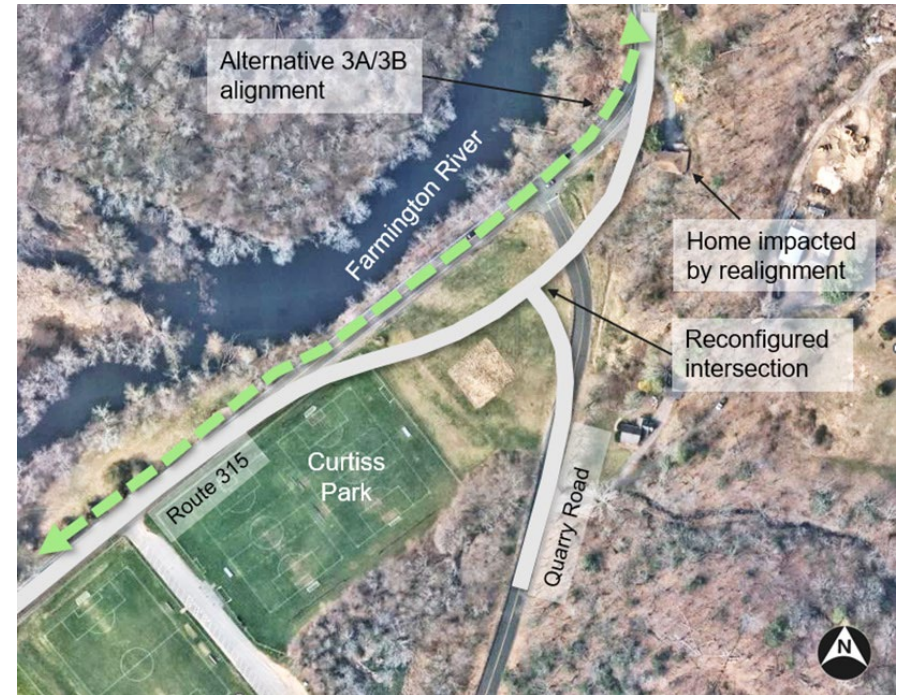
station south of 132 Tariffville Road. As the trail continues further north, the trail becomes very constrained between the condominium buildings and the Farmington River. The condominium buildings are approximately 50-feet from the riverbank with approximately 20-foot change in elevation. See Exhibit 4-8 for a photo of this area.

Further to the north, the route continues along the same Alternative 2 alignment as described above.

**Exhibit 4-6: Alternatives in this area near Route 315 south of Quarry Road would likely require retaining walls, a cantilevered trail, or roadway realignment to maintain appropriate distance from the Farmington River.**



**Exhibit 4-7: Roadway realignment option to support trail development for Alternative 3A and 3B**



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 4-8: Farmington Riverbank Existing Conditions, photo view facing southwest/upriver



## Alternative 3B

Alternative 3B maintains similar routing as 3A except that it continues further along Route 315 as a sidepath until transitioning into the Governor's Bridge Condominium complex through the southern emergency entrance at Route 315, which is normally gated, to Wood Duck Lane. The route continues north through the complex as a sidepath along the roads, which are Town of Simsbury rights-of-way for the ½-mile distance along Wood Duck Lane and White Water Turn. An alignment across private property between White Water Turn and the rail corridor described in Alternative 2 would connect Alternative 3B to the rail corridor. Alternative 3B would follow the Alternative 2 route as described above for the remaining portion of the route.

## Alternative 3C

Alternative 3C avoids the constrained area between Route 315 and the Farmington River—as described in Alternative 3A and 3B—following the route between the main channel of the Farmington River and the old oxbow near Route 315. This is achieved with a route through the western section of Curtiss Park. As an area within the Farmington River floodway and with identified wetlands, it is anticipated that this area would require many boardwalk and bridge segments. It is anticipated that permitting required for this alternative would be substantial due to the amount of structure and trail proposed in these areas.

Alternative 3C includes two branches before it follows Alternative 3A and Alternative 3B routing further to the north.

## Alternatives 3A, 3B and 3C Key Considerations

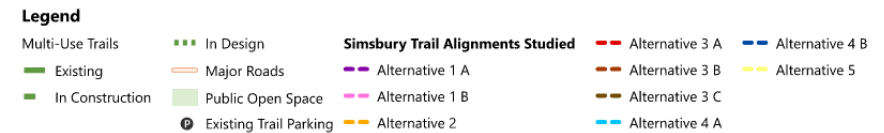
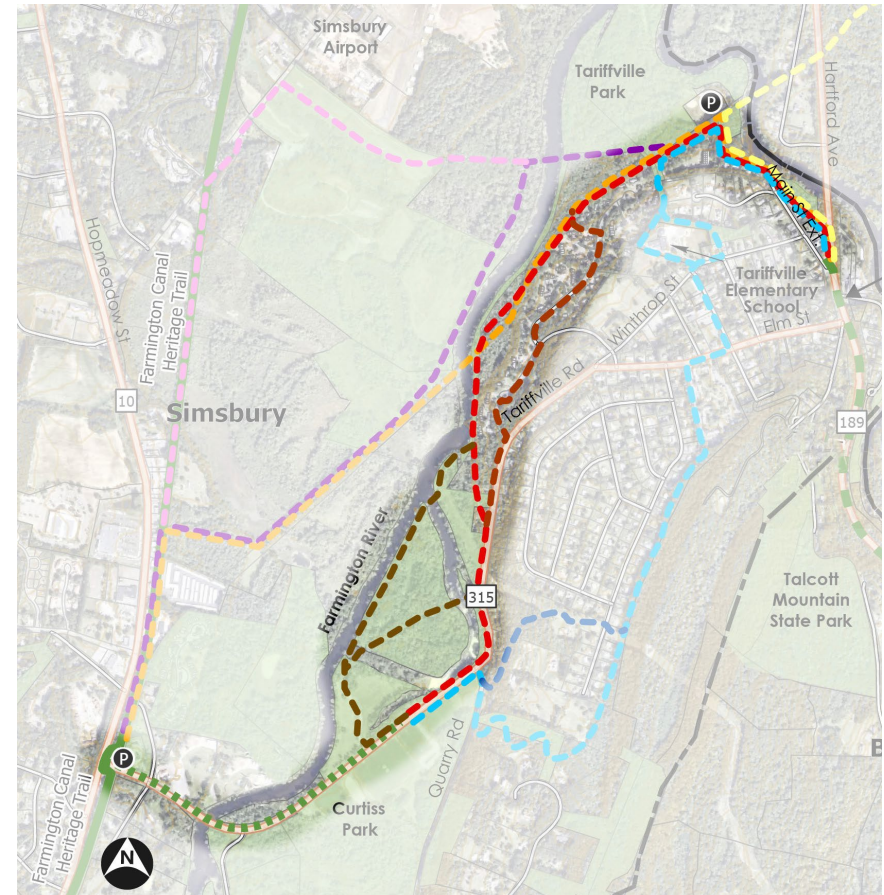
- Substantial environmental constraints due to the proximity of the Farmington River (in particular Alternative 3C).
- Severe pinch point along Route 315 creates a likely fatal flaw for Alternatives 3A and 3B unless Route 315 is re-aligned away from the riverbank (see Exhibit 4-7 on previous page).

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



- While Alternative 3B incorporates the roadway within the condo complex, 3A and 3C will require more significant permitting as they will likely lie within the river's floodway.
- Concerns from the public related to the significant constraint created by close proximity to the river and the condominium complex to the south, as well as resident concerns about the sidepath running along Town roads through the complex.

Exhibit 4-9: Alternatives 3A/B/C



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## Alternative 4A and 4B

Alternative 4 alignments cross the Farmington River at the Route 315 bridge and are routed at the toe of slope of the Talcott Mountain Ridge and Laurel Hill. These alignments are located to the east of Hayes Road and behind approximately 30 single-family residential homes in this area. Elevation change is a key consideration in these alignments. Alternative 4 alignments include some areas which are approximately 160-feet higher in elevation than the Farmington River. With ADA design considerations, this elevation change could result in trail alignments with a continuous 5% grade for over ½-mile. These alignments are discussed in further detail with a summary of considerations.

### Alternative 4A

Similar to Alternatives 3A, 3B, and 3C, this alternative also utilizes the future Curtiss Park Trail, starting at the intersection of Route 10/202 and Route 315, then running along Route 315 until this segment's terminus at Curtiss Park. To avoid the river pinch point described with Alternative 3, Alternative 4A would cross Route 315 to the south/east side of the road and continue as a sidepath along Route 315 until the intersection with Quarry Road (may have impact on adjacent soccer fields). It would be routed south on Quarry Road until a Town of Simsbury open space parcel immediately to the south of 100 Quarry Road. The trail would transition to a shared-use path and generally follow the town-owned parcel up-hill to the area near the southern end of Hayes Road. This climb of approximately 120 feet in elevation would require a series of switchbacks in this area and would likely impact portions of private property in this area.

From the south end of Hayes Road, the route continues north along the toe of the slope behind a number of residential parcels on the east side of Hayes Road. It connects to Route 315 using private property owned at Willow Arms apartments. The route then follows Route 315

east as a sidepath and turns north again at Church Street where the route would be designed as a shared roadway. The shared roadway alignment crosses Winthrop Street and transitions to an off-road path around the entire perimeter of Tariffville Elementary School. This off-road path continues north of the school using Town of Simsbury open space to the Alternative 2 alignment as described above.

### Alternative 4B

This option shares the same routing as Alternative 4A until the intersection of Quarry Road. At Quarry Road, Alternative B would be developed as a shared use path through a privately-owned wooded area just east of Route 315 until meeting the transmission line corridor which traverses privately-owned land via easement at 53 Hayes Road. The route would then utilize the transmission line corridor until it intersected with Hayes Road where it would continue via the Alternative 4A route as described above. The elevation change of this alternative would be similar to that of Alternative 4A.

### Alternatives 4A and 4B Key Considerations

- From Curtiss Park, Alternatives 4A and 4B need to cross Tariffville Road/Route 315 at Quarry Road, requiring an enhanced crosswalk
- From Quarry Road to Hayes Road, the substantial elevation change requires expensive trail switchbacks, creating a more challenging context from an ADA perspective.
- From the south end of Hayes Road to Tariffville Park, most of the route runs behind private homes and/or along residential streets.
- Unlike the other alternatives, 4A and 4B provide a direct connection to Tariffville Elementary School.



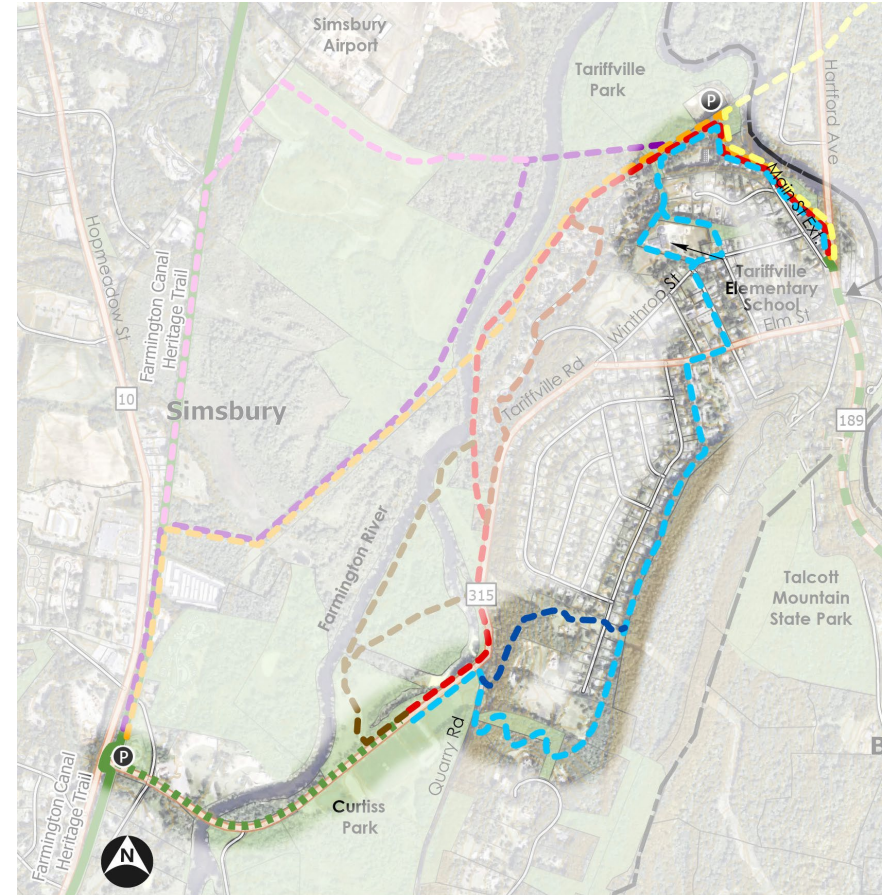
# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 4-10: Alternative 4 alignments would be routed behind the single-family homes along Hayes Street that sit at the toe of slope. (Source: Google Maps Streetview)



Exhibit 4-11: Alternatives 4A/B



- Legend**
- |                  |  |  |   |  |
|------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Multi-Use Trails | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--- In Design</li> <li>— Existing</li> <li>- - - In Construction</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Major Roads</li> <li>— Public Open Space</li> <li>Ⓟ Existing Trail Parking</li> </ul> | <p><b>Simsbury Trail Alignments Studied</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Alternative 1 A</li> <li>— Alternative 1 B</li> <li>— Alternative 2</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Alternative 3 A</li> <li>— Alternative 3 B</li> <li>— Alternative 3 C</li> <li>— Alternative 4 A</li> <li>— Alternative 4 B</li> <li>— Alternative 5</li> </ul> |
|------------------|--|--|---|--|



## Alternative 5

Bypassing most of Tariffville, Alternative 5 is a much longer trail alignment and primarily runs through the Town of East Granby, rather than Simsbury. Alternative 5 continues north on the FCHT, then east into East Granby until the intersection of Floydville Road and Railroad Avenue. Alternative 5 then separates from the FCHT and continues east as a sidepath along Floydville Road and Holcomb Street. A key consideration in this area is Floydville Road as it crosses the Salmon Brook. The road is built on a narrow embankment between Wolcott Road and Route 189 (a distance of approximately 1,000 feet) as it approaches a narrow bridge over the brook. Much of the area below the embankment is floodplain and wetlands. A trail through this area would likely require a new trail bridge over the Salmon Brook due to the narrow width of the existing Floydville Road bridge and may require additional boardwalk structure on the approach to this bridge to minimize impact to the flood and wetland areas. The existing Floydville Road bridge is shown in Exhibit 4-12.

The route crosses Route 189 and continues as a sidepath to Holcomb Street until just east of Mount Vernon Drive. Holcomb Street in this area rises in elevation to the east and has an average grade of just over 5% through this area with grades in excess of 7% closer to the intersection of Route 189.

To the east of Mount Vernon Drive, the trail continues as a shared-use path through private property to connect with the abandoned railroad corridor between Aspen Rise and Hamilton Road. This connection includes areas of many known wetlands based on available mapping. The trail then continues along the abandoned railroad corridor until it intersects with Hatchet Hill Road.

The abandoned railroad corridor is disturbed to the south of Hatchet Hill Road due to development of residential properties in the area of Southwood Lane. The route would avoid these residential areas by

traversing privately owned property to the east of Southwood Lane and then reconnect with the old railroad corridor between the northern and southern intersections of Old Hartford Avenue with Route 315. Elevation change in this area is considerable, changing approximately 50-feet in this area.

The route crosses the river again as another trail bridge (adjacent to and potentially re-using historic stone pier foundations that still sit in the river) and connects again with the existing rail bed, which continues until reaching the parking lot at Tariffville Park. If this bridge were to reutilize the historic piers and abutments this bridge would be approximately 500-feet long and 25 to 35-feet above the Farmington River. Alternative 5 considered use of the Route 189 bridge to cross the river rather than a new bridge structure. However, the bridge's current width precludes the addition of a sidepath. Thus, the existing Route 189 bridge was removed from consideration as part of Alternative 5.

## Alternatives 5 Key Considerations

- Alternative 5 takes the most circuitous route of the various options, adding at least 3 extra miles for the greenway connection through Tariffville.
- Does not align well with one of the project goals to connect the Tariffville neighborhood with Downtown Simsbury since Alternative 5 largely circumvents it.
- The alignment would require a new bridge over both the Farmington River and the Salmon River, triggering additional permitting for the structural abutments.
- Though crossing the Farmington River, Alternative 5's alignment steers clear of the river, avoiding potential impact to the floodway and associated wetlands.
- Private property impacts for a portion of the route between Holcomb Street and Route 189 in East Granby.

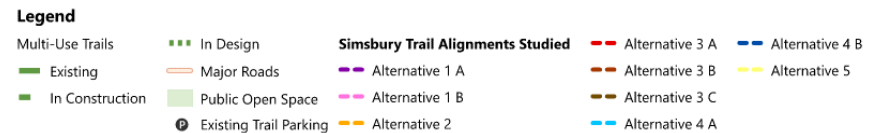
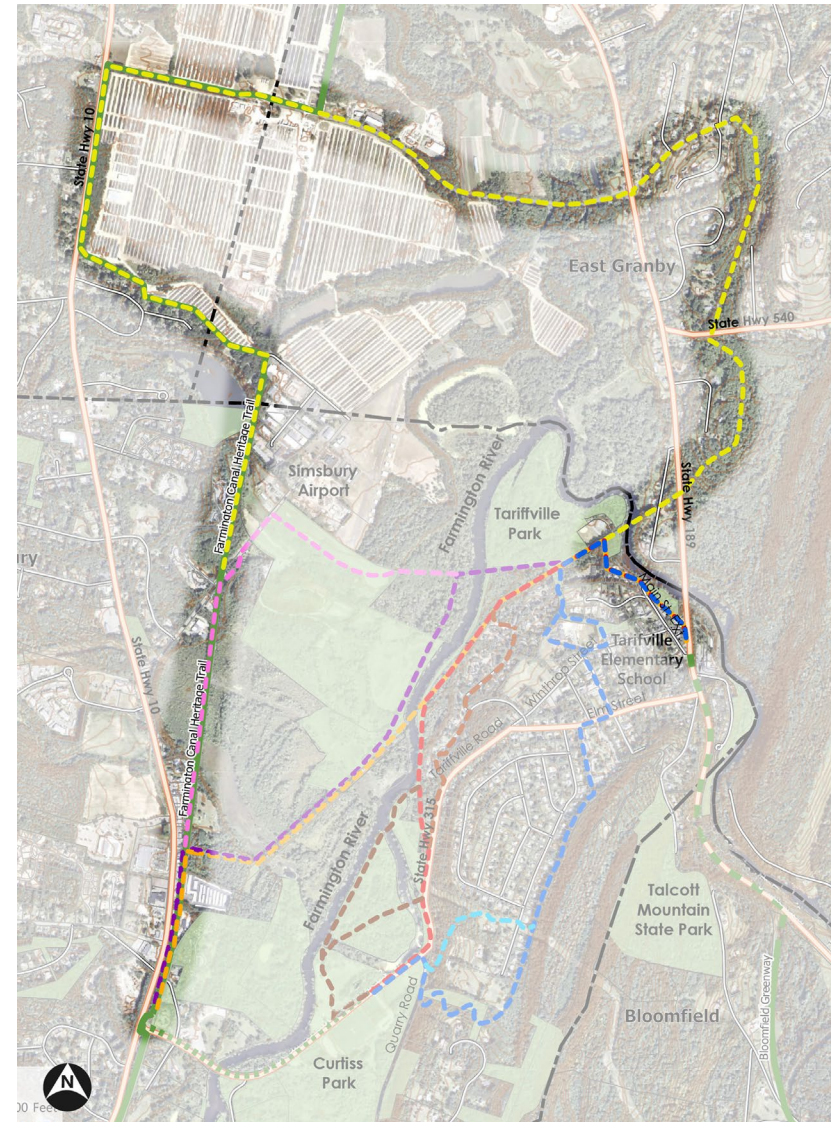
# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 4-12: Existing Floydville Road bridge across the Salmon Brook  
(Source: Google Maps Streetview)



Exhibit 4-13: Alternative 5





## 5 ALTERNATIVES EVALUATION

### Evaluation Process

The five alternatives and their variants were evaluated and scored based on screening criteria developed and weighted in coordination between the project team, the Town of Simsbury, CRCOG, and the advisory committee for the Capitol Region East Coast Greenway Study. These criteria also aligned closely with public feedback heard on criteria considerations elsewhere in the CRECG study area. Simsbury's criteria differ slightly from screening criteria used for gaps evaluated elsewhere in the Study (detailed under a separate report) to meet the context of the Town of Simsbury.

The screening criteria included six categories:

**Off-road:** Dedicated off-road facilities per the mission of the ECG. Alternatives which provide the most separation from traffic score more favorably.

**Traffic Safety:** Route alternatives with the fewest vehicular conflict points at trail crossings, intersections, and driveways score more favorably.

**Connectivity:** Routes which are proximate to residential areas and town centers, routes with the shorter length between Tariffville and Simsbury Center, and routes with fewer accessibility concerns score more favorably.

**Right-of-way:** Alternatives with fewer constructability challenges and fewer easements on, or purchases of, private property score more favorably.

**Environmental Impact:** Alternatives with fewer impacts to natural resources such as flood plains and wetlands score more favorably.

**Economic Opportunity:** Alternatives with greater potential to increase customer traffic to existing businesses scores more favorably.

In aggregate, the objective of the screening criteria is to highlight route alternatives that achieve the high-level goals for the project. This helps to prioritize the alternative that is:

- Primarily an off-road route that safely connects Tariffville with Downtown Simsbury
- Comfortable for trail users of all ages and abilities, especially young children and those over 65
- Attractive
- Connects to local parks, schools, and businesses
- Focuses on environmental stewardship of the Farmington River.

The evaluation criteria and maximum scores are shown in Exhibit 5-1, on the following page. A more detailed rubric showing how each category was scored is provided in the Appendix.

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 5-1: Simsbury Screening Criteria

Project Goals	Criteria	Max. Point Total
1: Off-Road (30 points total)	Proportion of facility that is separated from traffic	20
	Proportion of fully separated facilities (minimum 50 feet from roadway)	10
2: Traffic Safety (20 points total)	Fewest number of driveway crossings	5
	Fewest number of commercial driveways or at-grade roadway crossings	15
3: Connectivity (45 points total)	Shortest distance to access/egress points	5
	Shortest distance between Simsbury Center to Tariffville Center	20
	Total grade climbed / flattest route	5
	Education opportunities via direct access to the Farmington River and within ¼ mile walking distance to the Tariffville School	10
	Population within ¼ mile of trail	5
4: Right-of-Way (15 points total)	Number of parcels overlapping trail	5
	Level of right-of-way coordination	5
	Ease of construction access & constructability	5
5: Environmental Impact (30 points total)	Linear feet of trail route option with a direct impact to wetlands	10
	Use of existing road or rail bed	10
	Area of floodplain / floodway impact	10
6: Economic Opportunity (10 points total)	Closest distance to businesses	10
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>150</b>

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## Route Evaluation Results

Based on the screening framework described above, the five alternatives and their alternatives were evaluated. A summary chart showing the scoring results for each alternative is shown in Exhibit 5-2 while Exhibit 5-3 presents these results along with the alternative map.

Scoring ranged from a high score of 129.0 for Alternative 2 (utilizing the existing rail bed over the river and behind the condo property) to a low score of 77.6 for Alternative 4A (connection from Curtiss Park to the “toe” of the Talcott Mountain slope via multiple switchbacks). The ranking of these alternatives as follows:

Alignment Alternative	Points	Alignment Alternative	Points
1A	111.0	3C	94.9
1B	109.3	4A	77.6
2	129.0	4B	84.0
3A	110.8	5	78.0
3B	79.9	(maximum possible)	150

The alternatives had the following conclusions with respect to each of the screening categories.

### Off-road (30 Possible Points)

- Alternative 1A, 1B, and 2 all scored the maximum value of 30 points. Almost 97% of the trail alignments were fully separated, with a small on-road shared roadway segment on Main Street Extension which was shared in common by all alternatives.
- Alternatives 3B scored the least with 5 points. Only 27% of the Alternative 3B route was fully separated from traffic a minimum of 50-feet from the roadway.

### Traffic Safety (20 Possible Points)

- Alternative 1A, 1B, and 2 all scored the maximum value of 20 points.
- Alternative 3B scored the least with 10 points. This was primarily due to additional driveway and at-grade roadway crossings.

### Connectivity (45 Possible Points)

- Alternative 1A, 1B, 2, and 3A scored among the highest in this category, between 39 and 43 points among a possible 45 points. These alignments scored well due to the shortest distance between Tariffville and Simsbury Center, and their proximity to the Tariffville School.
- Alternative 5 scored the worst on Connectivity with 7.5 points.

### Right-of-way (15 Possible Points)

- Alternative 1B scored the highest of all alternatives considered with the fewest number of private parcels overlapping the route. However, this alternative scored the lowest among the qualitative assessment for constructability.
- Alternative 1A scored the lowest among the qualitative assessment for constructability and scored the lowest overall within the Right-of-Way category.

### Environmental Impact (30 Possible Points)

- Alternative 5 and Alternative 2 scored the best with respect to Environmental Impact, with 30 points and 25 points respectively. These alignments scored particularly well compared to other alternatives with respect to minimizing impact to the Farmington River / Salmon River floodway and floodplain. Additionally, these alternatives incorporated the most portion of their alignment in an existing road or railroad bed which had been previously disturbed.
- Alternative 1A and 1B scored among the worst in the Environmental Impact category. The routing of these alignments on the west side

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



of the river increase their impact to wetlands, floodway, and floodplain.

## Economic Opportunity (10 Possible Points)

- All alternatives scored 10 out of 10 for this category. All alternatives proposed the state-owned parcel to the east of Main Street which will provide good connectivity for Tariffville businesses in this area.

Based on this review, Alternative 2 was identified as the highest scoring option using the screening analysis. It maximizes off-road routing and most directly connects to existing trail facilities as well as destinations important to Tariffville residents. Alternative 2 has the potential to feature a premier river crossing and scenic experience while respecting the privacy of nearby property owners. Other key strengths for Alternative 2 include:

- 20 out of 20 points for the very high proportion of the route that would be an off-road facility (96% of the 1.7-mile route)
- 10 out of 10 points for being almost entirely separated from nearby roadways by at least 50 feet (96% of the 1.7-mile route)
- 20 out of 20 points for the very few driveway crossings and at-grade roadway crossings per 1,000 feet
- 19 out of 20 points for offering the most direct route between the FCHT trailhead at the corner of Route 10/202 at Route 315 and the end of the Tariffville-Bloomfield Connector trail at Tariffville Center
- 10 out of 10 points for promoting educational opportunities by lying within ¼ mile of both the Farmington River and the Tariffville Elementary School
- 10 out of 10 points for the corridor's proximity to existing businesses (both along Route 202 and at Tariffville Center)

- 5 out of 5 points for the minimal net increase in elevation gain (i.e. it's a flat route)

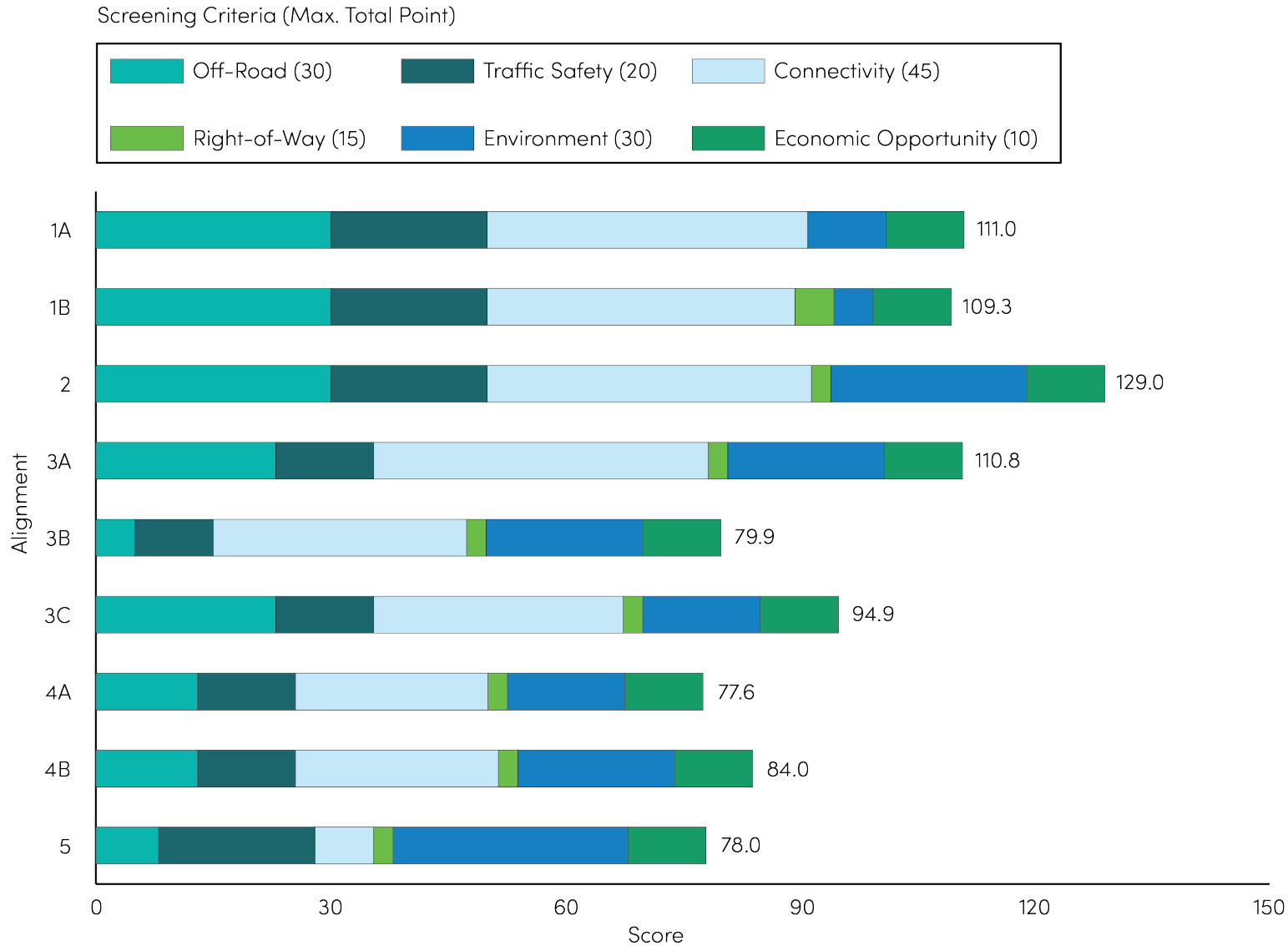
The criteria for which Alternative 2 did not score well included:

- 0 out of 10 points due to the potential need to acquire or use multiple easements on private property, i.e., the identified corridor is almost entirely privately-owned (rather than an alternative lying entirely on public land or within a public right-of-way)
- 5 out of 10 points due to the trail bridge and/or boardwalk spanning the Farmington River, the adjacent watercourse, and/or the Farmington River floodway (environmental permitting considerations for these structures could be significant).

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 5-2: Scoring Simsbury ECG Trail Corridor Route Alternatives (See Appendix for full scoring)

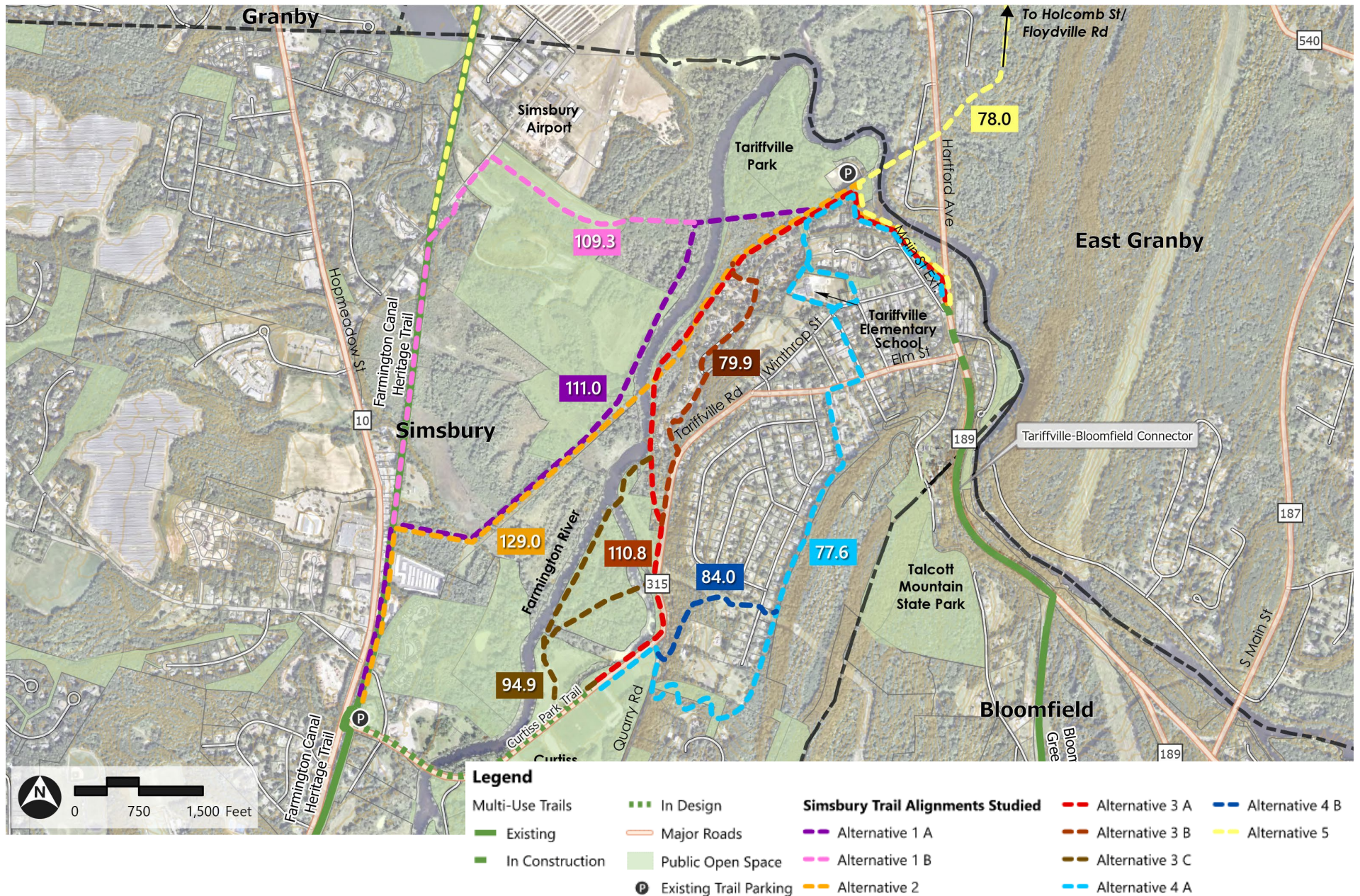




# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 5-3: Simsbury ECG Trail Corridor Route Alternatives Scoring Summary



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## 6 PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Public and stakeholder outreach took place largely during the screening analysis of this project. Input was also provided by an Advisory Committee set up to oversee ECG planning in four Capitol Region communities: Simsbury, Bloomfield, Hartford, and East Hartford (see Section 2.3).

### March 30, 2023 Public Meeting

During the early stages of the planning work, the Town of Simsbury hosted a public meeting on March 30, 2023. Held at the Tariffville School cafeteria, the event was attended by approximately 70 people, mostly nearby residents. Before opening the floor to comments and questions, the planning team presented an overview of the Capitol Region East Coast Greenway project, the Tariffville study area, the various alignment options studied, and Next Steps in the process. Some of the key takeaways from the public comments included:

- Significant support for potential use of the former rail line on the west side of the Farmington River (and potential extension further north on the west side of the river)

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SIMSBURY — BLOOMFIELD — HARTFORD — EAST HARTFORD

**BIKE PATH PLAN  
INFORMATIONAL  
MEETING**

**March 30th, 2023  
6 PM – 8 PM  
Tariffville Elementary  
School  
42 Winthrop St  
Tariffville, CT 06081**

**CAN'T ATTEND?**  
Visit the Project Website:  
[crog.org/capitol-region-ecg-study](http://crog.org/capitol-region-ecg-study)  
Send your questions, comments, or  
accommodation requests to:  
Phil Goff, AICP  
[PGoff@VHB.com](mailto:PGoff@VHB.com)

CRCOG's Capitol Region East Coast Greenway (ECG) Study is exploring alternatives to close off-road gaps in the ECG route through the Capitol Region. Currently, uncertainties in the trail route exist in Simsbury, Bloomfield, Hartford, and East Hartford. The study will examine potential routes and conclude with the selection of a final alternative for all remaining gaps. The study will also evaluate costs and benefits of route options including but not limited to:

- Environmental impacts
- Property ownership
- Waterbodies and courses
- Construction
- Trail attractiveness
- Usability & safety
- Job access & public transit
- Geographic & community equity

CRCOG does not discriminate on the basis of disability or language. Individuals may request auxiliary aids and/or language assistance by contacting 865-656-3222 as soon as possible.

**CRCOG** **FHI Studio** **vhb**

- Concerns about the environmental impact to the river, especially with the Wild and Scenic River designation
- Privacy issues for Governor's Bridge condo residents
- Desire for the planning team to revisit other alignments that the team had discarded in the initial planning phase prior to the meeting

Detailed notes from this meeting are included in Appendix D.

### Stakeholder Outreach

Stakeholder meetings were conducted during the latter half of the planning work with three organizations:

- The Governors Bridge Condo Association
- The National Park Service Wild and Scenic River Programs
- Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic River Committee

Key takeaways from conversations with these organizations include:

- The planning team needs to keep in mind the various overlapping Outstanding Resource Values (ORVs) including scenic, recreational, geologic, fish/wildlife, and historic/cultural resources. While a trail may satisfy some ORVs, it may come in conflict with others.
- The NPS is interested in being part of discussions as early as possible to help with any future permitting. The agency likes to work with communities early in the process, so they aren't providing pushback later in the project.
- The FRWA was a key part of the Simsbury Board of Selectmen's decision to place the Farmington River within the Wild and Scenic designation.
- Town officials described how they are looking to make the future East Coast Greenway segment adjacent to the Farmington River an "environmental showcase" of trail design.
- Concerns expressed by the two guests about the potential proximity of the trail to the riparian zone and the impact on the

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riverbank and wildlife habitat; the presence of humans walking and riding bicycles could disturb wildlife.

## Virtual Outreach

Virtual outreach was a component of the overall outreach effort. This outreach effort included a study website which was available throughout the study at [crcog.org/capitol-region-ecg-study](http://crcog.org/capitol-region-ecg-study). The website included all public materials including materials from all Advisory Committee meetings, materials from all public workshops and public meetings, public newsletters, an interactive survey map, a comment feedback form, and an opportunity to sign-up for the email distribution list to stay up-to date with project announcements.

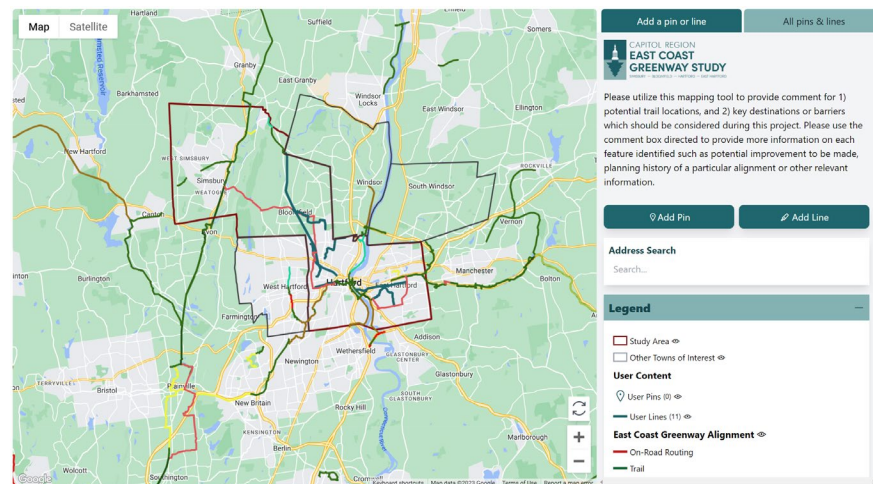
Virtual outreach was also conducted via email. As questions and comments were received via email these comments were logged and provided in Appendix G and summarized below.

## Survey Map

An interactive survey mapping tool was developed as part of this project and was made publicly available through this project as shown in Exhibit 7-1. The tool allowed interactive review of existing trail network, the study area, and allowed members of the public to add “pins” and “lines” with comments to provide input on potential areas of interest or concern. This tool was utilized for the entire gap as part of the project including areas in Bloomfield, Hartford, and East Hartford as well as Simsbury. The area in the Tarriffville area included three comments:

- Desire to include town green / gazebo as part of the trail route
- Desire to include Tarriffville Park as part of the trail route
- Concern for proximity between Condo Association and Farmington River at southern end of Wood Duck Lane

Exhibit 6-1: Interactive Survey Mapping Tool



## Comments Received via Email and Online Comment Form

Besides the March 30 public meeting and stakeholder outreach described above, community members also provided comments to the project team via email. During the planning process itself—March through July 2023—emails were received from 19 individuals. Most expressed either support for the current direction of the planning effort or opposition to any alternative that brings the trail close to the condominium complex or adjacent to the Farmington River’s riparian zones. A few comments suggested that other Connecticut gaps in the ECG should be the focus on the planning and fundraising work.

In the 30-day public comment period after the release of the Draft Town of Simsbury Recommendations Report on December 14, 2023, 27 public comments were received. Not unlike opinions expressed during the planning process, comments were roughly evenly split between those who supported the Preferred Alternative (as per the recommendations in the Draft report) and those who opposed the selection. Those who opposed the recommendation, pointed to

## CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



concerns about privacy for condominium residents, construction-related impact to the Farmington River's ecology, and potential flooding concerns. Some suggested that the ECG route should bypass Tariffville entirely and incorporate Floydville Road and Route 189 as the route. Some photos were provided of Farmington River flooding during this period as shown in Exhibit 6-2.

**Exhibit 6-2: Photo of the vernal pool area from the adjacent condominium at 6 White Water Turn. This photo shows the high water levels within the flood plain that will need to be taken into account in subsequent design stages. The photo is dated December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023. (Photo provided via email by Susan V. during public comment. See Appendix G)**



### September 27, 2023 Board of Selectmen Meeting

After the completion of the screening process and the identification of Alternative 2 as the highest scoring alternative, the planning team presented to the Simsbury Board of Selectmen on September 27, 2023 (see Appendix E for presentation slides). The presentation included an overview of the project goals and the planning process. The latter included emphasis on the alignment alternatives that scored the highest and why Alternative 2 was ultimately recommended to move forward as the preferred alternative. Aware of concerns expressed during earlier stakeholder meetings, the team focused on potential revisions to the alignment where it came closest to structures within the Governor's Bridge condominium complex. Prior to the presentation 7 Simsbury residents discussed their concerns, primarily focused on the alignment's proximity to the condominiums and potential environmental impacts to the river.

After additional questions raised and answered, the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to endorse the selection of Alternative 2 as the Preferred Alternative "with the condition that the trail be minimally invasive with respect to any habited home". The Resolution supporting the vote (see Appendix F) also included the acknowledgement of the need for a maintenance agreement between the Town and the State to ensure maintenance responsibilities are clearly defined between both parties.

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## 7 PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Alternative 2 was endorsed by the Simsbury Board of Selectmen as the Preferred Alternative at a meeting on September 27, 2023. Alternative 2 primarily follows the historic rail corridor as identified by Location 1 in Exhibit 3-3 for most of the 1.7-mile distance from the FCHT trailhead to Tariffville Center. The routing overview is summarized in Section 4 with key segments which are discussed in further detail which include:

- Abandoned rail corridor (west of the Farmington River)
- Farmington River crossing
- Abandoned rail corridor (east of the Farmington River)
- Connection between Tariffville Park and Route 189

A full routing map at 1" = 40' scale is provided in Appendix H.

### Abandoned Rail Corridor (West of the Farmington River)

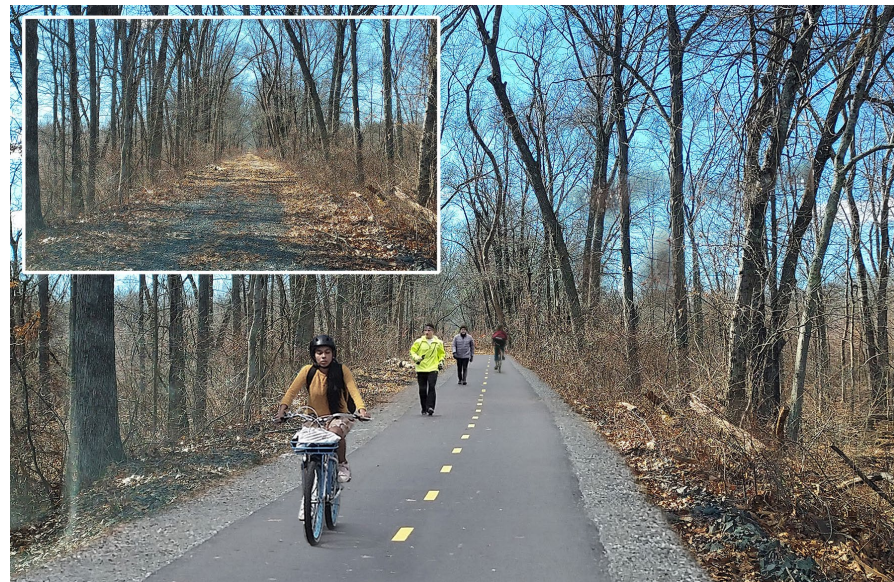
The Preferred Alternative continues north along existing FCHT until just north of Ely Lane opposite the Big Y Market. At this location, the Preferred Alternative follows an existing access road which connects the FCHT to the abandoned rail corridor which was most recently used as an access road to reach an electric transmission tower in the area. Approximately 2,300 linear feet of this route is privately-owned. The abandoned rail embankment then crosses to property publicly owned by the Town of Simsbury just south of the utility corridor, approximately ¼-mile southwest of the Farmington River. The embankment continues in a good state of repair until the utility corridor. Northeast of this point, the embankment has been out of use (as it no longer needed to serve as an access road) and has eroded in some places. The abandoned

rail embankment continues until it meets a watercourse approximately 400-feet southwest of the river where the embankment ends.

This segment of the Preferred Alternative can be easily converted into a trail with minimal environmental impact. The trail is elevated above the river floodplain and above wetlands. The recently used access road along much of the abandoned rail embankment allows for a trail to be constructed in this area with minimum impact. In areas where the embankment has been eroded, repair or replacement with an elevated boardwalk could be considered.

Exhibit 7-1 shows a rendering of this area as it could be designed with a paved multi-use trail.

**Exhibit 7-1: A good portion of Alternative 2 lies along a former rail embankment and can be easily converted into a trail with minimal environmental impacts**



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## Farmington River Crossing

The abandoned embankment ends approximately 575-feet from the abandoned rail bridge abutment on the northeast side of the Farmington River. The 1934 aerial image shows this bridge as a three-span bridge with approximately two-thirds of the bridge lying to the west of the Farmington River over wetlands, floodplain, and a minor watercourse. This 400-foot distance between the southwestern abutment and the western edge of the Farmington River could be considered as an elevated boardwalk or bridge in future design stages of the project. An elevated boardwalk trail segment would likely remain at the same grade as the former rail embankment and retain similar width. A wood-deck or concrete boardwalk of 12 to 14-feet wide may be anticipated if a boardwalk were pursued in design. Exhibit 7-3 shows an example of a boardwalk segment in Cheshire, CT.

Alternatively, this area could be designed as a more traditional trail bridge, effectively adding two additional bridge spans similar to that considered for the main crossing of the Farmington River. This approach could result in the need for less bridge piers which could reduce potential environmental impacts.

Exhibit 7-2: Minor watercourse west of the Farmington River looking west towards the southwestern abutment



Exhibit 7-3: Example boardwalk trail in Cheshire, CT



## CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY

A new bridge with a 175-foot span is envisioned across the Farmington River along the historic rail corridor. Currently, remnants of a historic brownstone abutment still exist, though it is not able to be re-used for the new bridge. This provides a potential location for the new trail bridge, to be determined in the next phase of design. Construction of a trail bridge provides the opportunity to create a memorable feature along the ECG route and would likely serve as a gateway and destination to the Tariffville neighborhood for trail users coming from downtown Simsbury. The bridge and trail approaches would likely be approximately 8-feet higher in elevation than the flood-prone areas of Route 315 near Curtiss Park. A unique resiliency opportunity, this bridge could be designed to accommodate the weight of emergency response vehicles to provide alternate emergency vehicle connections in the immediate area in times of flooding, if desired.



**Exhibit 7-4: Historic bridge abutments still sit on both sides of the Farmington River**



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 7-5: The future trail crossing of the Farmington River offers the opportunity to create a memorable landmark for the ECG in Simsbury





# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## Abandoned Rail Corridor (East of the Farmington River)

The Preferred Alternative continues along the east bank of the Farmington River until Tariffville Park. Much of this distance utilizes historic rail embankments, and approximately ½-mile of this distance is located within privately owned property and would require easements to construct this route. The historic rail embankment continues northeast of the Farmington River for approximately 1,000 linear feet until the vicinity of 14 Tanager Circle. At this point, the historic rail embankment is generally lost for approximately 1,500 feet due to the construction of the Governor’s Bridge Condominium Association which built over this historic rail bed between 14 Tanager Circle and 40 White Water Turn during the 1980’s. In this area, Alternative 2 would be routed further to the west—relative to the historic rail corridor—facilitating the opportunity to provide additional privacy to Governor’s Bridge residents. While this puts the trail closer to the Farmington River, much of this area is elevated above the floodway, floodplains, and wetlands based on available mapping.

In some areas, the abandoned rail embankment can be quite close to the existing condominium complex. The closest location is 6 White Water Turn, which is approximately 20-feet from the abandoned railroad embankment. This area is shown in Exhibit 7-6. Just to the west (closer to the Farmington River) of the abandoned rail embankment is a vernal pool of approximately 50-100 feet in width. The vernal pool is shown in Exhibit 7-7.

Exhibit 7-6: Abandoned rail embankment alignment in the center-right portion of the photograph, sitting no less than 20 feet elevated porch at 6 White Water Turn



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 7-7: Vernal pool water at the bottom of the riverbank adjacent to 6 White Water Turn and other condominium buildings at upper right



Consideration of a trail off the rail embankment which would provide an increased buffer to the residence at 6 White Water Turn should be considered in further design stages of this project. An alternate as depicted in Exhibit 7-8 is to route the trail on the west side (closer to the Farmington River) of the vernal pool shown in Exhibit 7-7. This section should be considered as an elevated boardwalk section of trail over the Farmington River flood plain to maintain further distance from the residence and minimize environmental impacts. This alternative location is approximately 100 to 150-feet away from this residence, as opposed to 20 feet (the current offset between the structure and the edge of the former rail corridor).

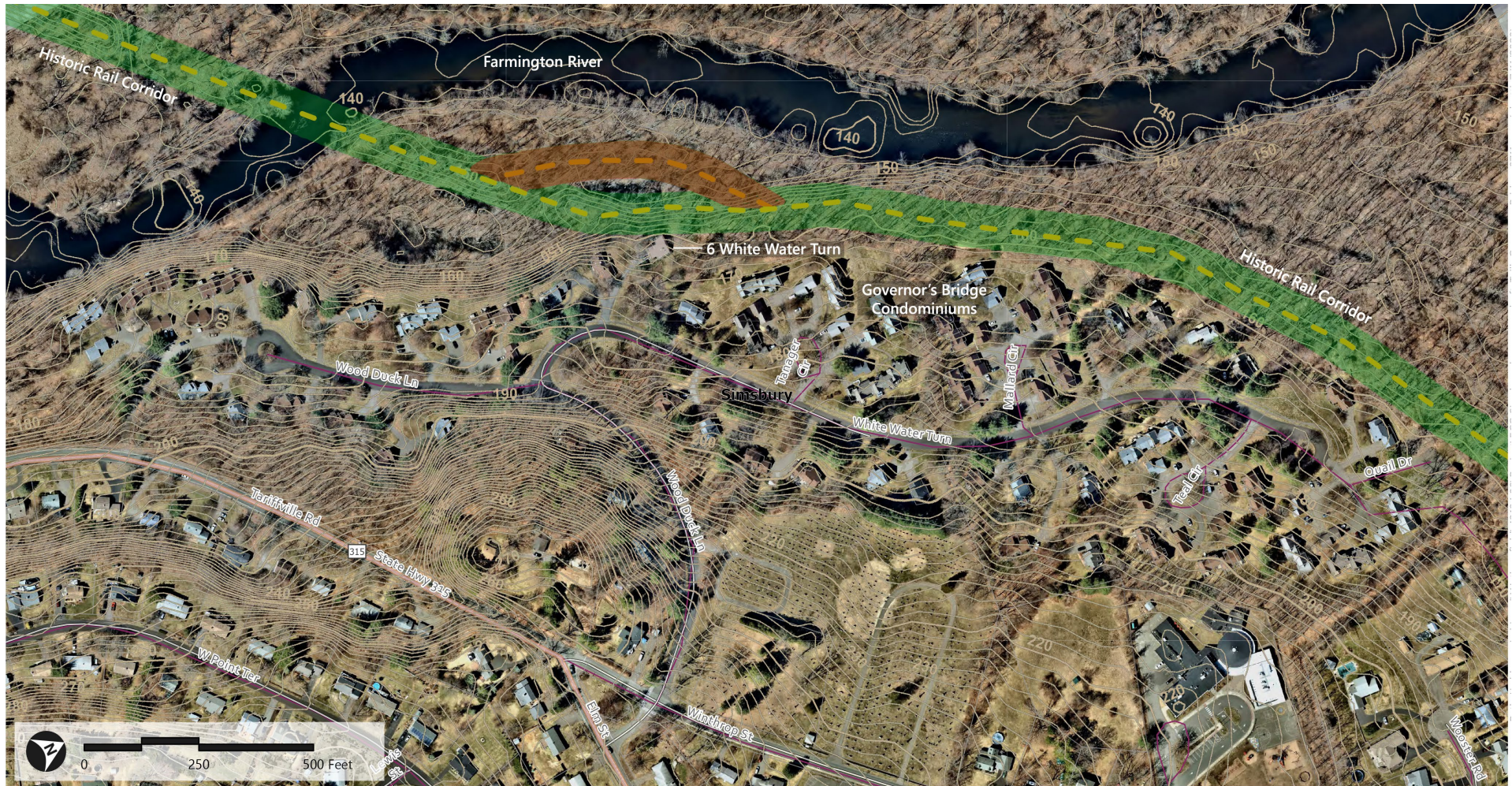
Determination of the preferred alignment in this discrete area—and potentially other discrete areas adjacent to the condominium complex—will be further explored in the next phase of design when survey work is complete and additional environmental analysis has been reviewed. Only then will the Town of Simsbury fully understand

the environmental and privacy trade-offs between A) a boardwalk trail route closer to the Farmington River and B) a trail route on the top of the abandoned rail bed. In the latter scenario B, the trail will be routed as far from any occupied dwelling as practicable. Care should be taken to provide some level of privacy screening between the trail and adjacent residences through dense vegetation and landscaping as applicable.

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 7-8: Preferred trail alignment in the vicinity of the adjacent condominium complex. Diagram illustrates the two discrete routing alternatives near 6 White Water Turn for consideration during the next phase of design.



**Legend** Major Roads CT Contours 2000 — 2 ft — 10 ft — 100 ft

Source: NearMap,  
Town of Simsbury, CTDOT

## CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Between 14 Tanager Circle and 40 White Water Turn the historic rail embankment has generally been lost due to the construction of the condominium complex. In this area, an alignment between the condo association and the Farmington River will be determined in a future design stage. This area between 14 Tanager Circle and 40 White Water Turn is generally higher in elevation and outside the flood areas and wetlands of the Farmington River as the riverbank in this area is much steeper than other areas in the study area. This area is similar in elevation to portions of the rail embankment further to the south. For example, the elevation of the area about 70-90 feet away from 19 Mallard Circle is approximately similar to the rail embankment shown in Exhibit 7-6 near 6 White Water Turn (note elevation contours shown in Exhibit 7-8). This demonstrates the ability in this section to consider routing the trail closer to the Farmington River while still keeping the trail outside of the river floodway or floodplain.

Other residences which are close to the abandoned rail corridor include 38 and 40 White Water Turn at the very northern end of the condominium complex. In these areas similar considerations in future design stage to keep the trail as far as possible from these residences should occur per the resolution by the Board of Selectmen.

The Preferred Alternative then connects to the last 650-foot remnant of the abandoned rail embankment between Governor's Bridge Condominium Association and the Tariffville Park access road. This area includes parts of the embankment that is within a privately-owned parcel at 22 Main Street Extension. In this area, portions of the gap in the embankment would be built up with a new earthen berm but discrete areas may require a trail bridge or boardwalk to traverse a low-lying area in an existing gap in the embankment where there are wetlands.

### Connection between Tariffville Park and Route 189

From the Tariffville Park access road, the trail would continue east for 800-feet as a shared roadway along the access road and Main Street Extension until the cul-du-sac at Main Street. This area is shown in Exhibit 7-9. East of the cul-du-sac the trail would be routed along a state-owned parcel ("Farmington River Water Access" managed by DEEP) between Route 189 and Main Street Extension. It is anticipated that the trail will be located within the state-owned parcel, but topography constraints may require positioning this trail in private property. In either case, care should be taken in the next phases of design to minimize impact to the off-street parking in this area, as it is critical for the adjacent businesses on Main Street.

**Exhibit 7-9: The trail would follow Main Street Extension and would be configured as a shared roadway in this limited 800-foot length. (Source: Google Maps Streetview)**



# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



## Opinion of Probable Cost

Exhibit 7-10 outlines the conceptual opinion of probable cost for both design and construction of the preferred alignment (Alternative 2). The total opinion of probable cost for this project is just over \$13.1 million. The highest cost in terms of materials is expected to be the pedestrian bridge over the Farmington River.

# CAPITOL REGION EAST COAST GREENWAY STUDY



Exhibit 7-10: Alternative 2 Opinion of Probable Cost

Item Description	Unit	Quantity	Unit Price	Amount
<b>ROADWAY / TRAIL ITEMS</b>				
Earth Excavation	C.Y.	3000	\$24	\$72,000
Rock Excavation	C.Y.	300	\$90	\$27,000
Formation of Subgrade	S.Y.	12,500	\$4	\$50,000
Processed Aggregate Base	C.Y.	2,000	\$58	\$116,000
Bituminous Concrete	Ton	2,000	\$140	\$280,000
Sedimentation Control System	L.F.	7700	\$8	\$61,600
Furnishing and Placing Topsoil	S.Y.	9000	\$8	\$72,000
Turf Establishment	S.Y.	9000	\$2	\$18,000
Construction Field Office	MO.	18	\$5,000	\$90,000
<b>STRUCTURE ITEMS</b>				
Pedestrian Bridge / Boardwalk	LS	1	\$4,200,000	\$4,200,000
<b>TRAFFIC ITEMS</b>				
Trafficmen - Police	HR.	600	\$75	\$45,000
Trafficmen - Flagger	HR.	600	\$55	\$33,000
Pavement Markings	L.F.		See "Incidentals" below	
Pavement Markings	S.F.			
Signs	S.F.			
<b>OTHER ITEMS</b>				
Wood Fence	L.F.	200	\$40	\$8,000
<b>IDENTIFIED ITEMS SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$5,072,600</b>
Minor Items (25%)				\$1,268,150
Clearing and Grubbing (2%)				\$101,450
M&P of Traffic (3%)				\$152,180
Mobilization (6.5%)				\$329,720
Construction Staking (1%)				\$50,730
<b>BASE ESTIMATE SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$6,974,830</b>
Incidentals (25%)				\$1,743,710
Contingencies (25%)				\$1,743,710
Inflation (Start at year 3 at 5% annually)				\$1,569,340
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$12,031,590</b>
Engineering				\$850,000
Utilities				\$0
Estimated ROW				\$250,000
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>				<b>\$13,131,590</b>



## 8 NEXT STEPS

The Simsbury Board of Selectmen’s endorsement of the Preferred Alignment on September 28, 2023 clears the way for the potential design and construction of the East Coast Greenway trail segment in Tariffville.

### Design Considerations

While this Study has identified the Preferred Alignment to connect the Tariffville–Bloomfield Connector and the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, there are still many additional design details to be investigated. Within the route described above, a few critical challenges will need to be addressed in the subsequent design phase to ensure a seamless trail, community support, and minimal impact to the ecology of the Farmington River. These challenges include but are not limited to:

- Designing a trail minimally invasive with respect to any habited home as conditioned by the Board of Selectmen in their endorsement of the Preferred Alternative
- A trail bridge over the Farmington River
- Accommodating elevated boardwalk segments

Throughout the design process meetings with Connecticut DOT will be held to facilitate discussions with abutting property owners and coordinate right-of-way purchases and easements. Coordination with DEEP and other state and federal regulatory agencies will be needed both prior to, and during the design process. Last, but not least, a series of public meetings will be held throughout the design process and the lead-in to the construction phase. The robust public engagement is intended to address concerns about potential privacy issues, environmental resources, access to the trail, and safety issues.

### Permits Required

The Town of Simsbury’s Preferred Alignment for the future East Coast Greenway lies quite close to the Farmington River for much of its length. As such, environmental conditions along the river will trigger several required permits. Anticipated permits include:

- USACE Pre-Construction Notification: Section 404
- CTDEEP Water Quality Certification: Section 401
- CTDEEP PCN, General Permits for CT
- CTDEEP Flood Management Certification or DOT FMC-MOU depending on funding
- CTDEEP Inland Wetland General Permit (assuming over 5,000 sf of wetland impact)
- CTDEEP General Stormwater Discharge

### Potential Schedule

This Study and the Selectmen’s endorsement paves the way for trail completion within 5-years if funding is secured by early 2024. This estimate allows for two years of design and two years for construction. The estimated schedule includes:

- Fall 2023 – Board of Selectmen endorsement
- Fall 2024 – Begin design phase
- Fall 2026 – Design phase complete
- Spring 2027 – Begin construction phase
- Fall 2028 – Construction phase complete