



The Farmington Canal Rail-to-Trail Association

December, 2015

Dear Friends,

Got greenway? Read on for the trail mix this year!

In Connecticut we grew the trail a few more miles in Cheshire, closing a gap that's been a sticking point since the trail was first developed 25 years ago. And in Massachusetts more miles were opened in Westfield, promising a boon for downtown businesses by bringing people on foot and on bikes to Main Street.

Nearly 3 of every 4 miles of the right-of-way in Connecticut has now been rebuilt as greenway for non-carbon recreation and commuting. Perhaps the most significant achievement this year was the success of a \$5.1 million bonding initiative that passed in September to completely fund completion of the trail in Farmington. It is the first time the state has entirely funded trails without federal funds. This seachange bodes well for closing the remaining gaps in the trail in the near future.

Appreciation for the trail continues to grow as well and we are a happy witness to many volunteer efforts and organizations that help maintain and celebrate and expand the trail's circle of friends. Just last week, I was delighted to partner with the Sound School in New Haven to plant bulbs around newly planted trees along the trail in the city. FCRTTA was one of many partners, which included the New Haven Friends of the Trail (you can find them on Facebook), the Newhallville Learning Corridor, Neighborhood Housing Services, the Urban Resources Initiative, and retail establishments in the area. We thank this complicated network that creates a community of care for the trail. As any reader knows, this is just one small example of the energy up and down the greenway that helps maintain it and keep the pressure on to complete it.

That's people power. Thank you for your continued support of this path, to sustain what's built and to finish the rest. It's a thrilling reality, and an even more exciting prospect as the gaps continue to close. Please join other committed FCRTTA members by making as generous a donation as you can.

Sincerely,

Lisa Fernandez, President

Growing a heritage greenway for open space, biking and walking from the Long Island Sound into Massachusetts.

<http://www.farmingtoncanalgreenway.org>



Sign at Lock 14 in Hamden, next to the restored house where FCRTTA meetings are held

News on Individual Sections of the Trail

New Haven: (1.6/3.4 miles; 47% complete) For years, the New Haven portion of the trail from Hillhouse Ave. to the Hamden town line has been open. Unfortunately despite approval by CONNDOT more than two years ago, the final design for the portion from Hillhouse Ave. down to Long Wharf (Phase IV) has not yet gone out to bid, pending permission from adjacent property owners in the below-grade section between Whitney Avenue and Grove Streets. Most of these owners need to provide construction access during the building phase, while others need to allow longer-term access. Frustratingly, only two of nine owners of the property along this section have yet signed permission despite protracted negotiations with the City. In the meantime, the funds obligated to this project are eroding in value due to inflation and increasing construction costs. In sunnier news, the Canal Dock Boat House, which will be the official southern terminus of the trail, has gone out to bid and is expected to be completed by spring 2017 at a total cost of \$32 million.

Effective partnerships have formed that engage in beautification of the trail in Newhallville including Neighborhood Housing Services, New Haven Friends of the Farmington Canal (look for them on Facebook) and the Newhallville Learning Corridor. In that neighborhood, the trail is the main open space for recreation and nature.

Hamden: (9.5 miles; 100% complete) The town is repairing the asphalt paved surface in the northern section and behind Stop & Shop and Home Depot. The contractor is William M. Laydon Construction, LLC The project is being carried out under the direction of the Public Works Department, which will also replace the stone dust on the jogging path and shore up embankments in the spring.

Cheshire: (2.8/7.5 miles; 37% complete) Hamden/Cheshire line to Cornwall Avenue, a 2-plus mile stretch, has been open for years. The gap north of there to the Southington Line is now being designed and built in three sections. Section 1: Cornwall Ave. past North Dalton Industries to West Main. CTDOT in design, at DOT internally. 3,500 ft of which 740ft will be elevated Permatrack. Rest rooms at West Main. Construction 2017. Unfunded. Section 2: West Main to Jarvis St, was constructed this year and is open: 8,700 feet. Section 3: Jarvis to Southington Line, 90% design by DOT internally, 77-space parking lot at terminus, It includes building a pedestrian crossing with a "HAWK" beacon instead of a conventional traffic signal for safe passage across West Main St. by trail users. Construction in 2016; 12,700 ft. Funding in place.

Southington: Planning has begun on closing the major part of the gap north of the end of the current trail at Hart/Curtiss Sts., and consists of several parts: **the** BL Companies have been contracted by the Town to study the details of the trail alignment from Lazy Lane to just beyond Townline Rd. in

Plainville. Most of this alignment will be on the already abandoned railroad right-of-way, with the remainder to the north being the subject of negotiation between CTDOT and PanAm Southern RR. Planning work will be complete in 2016. Remediation of the former SRS "superfund" site south of Lazy Ln. is nearing the previously prescribed three years. Once complete and with all environmental approvals in place, the contractor will construct the trail and amenities such as trailhead parking and seating areas, from Lazy Ln. south to the Quinnipiac River. CTDEEP, owner of the right-of-way from the river south to the end of the existing trail, has already rebuilt the existing bridge over the river. The Town Engineering Department is designing the improvements from there south to the existing trail, including the intersection with Curtiss and Hart Streets. This design is not as simple as it sounds, as both of these streets are heavily traveled and awkwardly configured at their intersection east of the trail crossing. This is a perfect opportunity for application of some "safe cycling infrastructure" design, perhaps a "roundabout".

Plainville: Approximately \$500,000 has been made available by CTDOT to fund a comprehensive planning study which will have 2 parts: a) Examine all trail alignments currently proposed for Plainville and any new ones that develop during initial fact finding, then evaluate and select the one that scores highest using a "solution selection matrix" developed for this purpose. Included in the study will be some conceptual sketches of what improvements for such a solution might look like; b) Once a final alignment has been selected for Plainville, the study will focus on a route to connect it with the CTFastrak station in downtown New Britain and, once there, to the 4 mile multi-use trail along the guideway to Newington Junction station (Willard Ave./Newington Rd.). A consultant team has been selected from a field of 5 who submitted their qualifications at the request of Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) and the scope of their services and fee for those services is currently being developed. Once that is complete, a highly participatory process of workshops and public input meetings will begin, and hopefully conclude by the end of 2016, or sooner. Once complete, the project will be immediately submitted to CTDOT for funding to complete design and construction. No timetable is available for this, but 2 years seems reasonable, yielding a construction completion date of 2018.

Farmington: (2.6/5.0 miles; 52% complete) The last 2.5-mile section south from Red Oak Hill Road to past Northwest Drive in Plainville is 100% designed by VHB, including a 135-foot bridge over busy Route 6. The plans include a terminus with a 40- space parking lot and pavilion inside the Plainville Town line. Plainville approved this plan in August 2015. Funding is in place in a brand-new bonding initiative where the total cost of \$5.1 million was voted on and approved on Sept. 29th. This is the first time in state history that the state has completely funded a section of trail without using federal money., Fall2016 is the anticipated completion date.

Avon to Suffield: (18.8 miles; 100% complete) For details on this completed section, please visit www.fv-greenway.org. In Suffield, the 2006 Coca-Cola North America grant of \$55,000 was finally used to build a parking area and kiosk, with funds from FVTC. A granite CT/MA border crossing monument will be erected in 2016.

Southwick, MA: (6.2/6.2 miles; 100% complete) Southwick's trail is now [paved](#) from the Connecticut line to the Westfield line. southwickrailtrail.org

Westfield (2/3.2 miles; 63% complete) columbiagreenway.org The **Columbia River Trail** to Westfield Town Center is complete and open and is a boon for downtown businesses. The Greenway group held a ribbon cutting and trail dedication ceremony on Oct. 30th also dedicating eight historic/interpretive panels: *Early Westfield, The Canal, The Railroad, Tobacco, Columbia Bicycle, The Green, Immigrants, and Industry*. Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail (FOCGRT) is

partnering with the Greater Westfield Chamber of Commerce to host a round-table discussion aimed at businesses near the Columbia Greenway. Issues regarding new business strategies, marketing, economic impacts, and safety will be addressed. 2016 will see the rehabilitation of the trestle spanning the Westfield River (this is the northern-most section of the trail). The central corridor including 5 bridges is slated to span two construction seasons (2017/2018), and will complete Westfield's portion of the downtown corridor of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail. In the future FOCGRT plans to designate and sign on-road routes (north of the Westfield River) to connect to Southampton.

Southampton (3.9; 0% complete) southamptongreenway.org The town's Open Space Master Plan calls for the purchase of the ROW from Pan Am Southern Railway. Voters approved the purchase in November 2012.

Easthampton (3.7; 100% complete) manhanrailtrail.org The Manhan Trail is now 6 miles long and is part of the FCHT.

Northampton (3.5; 100% complete) fntg.net

Hundreds of Association members generously contribute to our organization and provide virtually all of our financial support. We're at 70% build-out of the trail now. Your renewed support will help us close the remaining gaps. As in the past, Association leaders remain involved as significant advocates of Farmington Canal Rail-to-Trail activities at intra-state and local levels. If you would like to participate, send an email to info@farmingtoncanalgreenway.org, or write us: FCRTTA, 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, CT 06517.

Farmington Canal Rail-to-Trail Association Board

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Construction of the trail in Cheshire Connecticut, between West Main and Jarvis Streets, fall 2015