



Meeting Notes

Place: New Britain City Hall
Room 504
27 West Main Street
New Britain, CT 06051

Date: November 15, 2016

Notes Taken by: Andrea Drabicki/Chris
Faulkner

Project #: 42201.00

Re: Steering Committee and Technical Team Workshop
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail Gap Closure Study and
CTfastrak Connection Study (Gap Closure Trail Study)

ATTENDEES

Steering Committee & Technical Team

Tim Malone, Capitol Region Council of Governments
Bruce Donald, East Coast Greenway Alliance
Jim Cassidy – Plainville Greenway Alliance
Pete Salomone – Plainville Greenway Alliance
Garrett Daigle – Town of Plainville
Carl Gandza, City of New Britain
Mark Hoffman, Bike New Britain
Grayson Wright, CTDOT
Edward Sabourin – CTDOT
Melanie Zimyeski, CTDOT
Maureen Lawrence, CTDOT
Laurie Giannotti, CT DEEP
Rob Phillips, Town of Southington
Matt Blume, Town of Farmington

Consultant Team

Dave Head, VHB
Andrea Drabicki, VHB
Chris Faulkner, VHB

The Steering Committee and Technical Team meeting took place on Tuesday, November 15, 2016 from 3:00-5:00pm. The meeting consisted of a presentation and review of the ranking and weighting of the alignment alternatives as developed during the October 2016 public workshops, Steering Committee/Technical Team workshops, as well as alignments from past studies and internal suggested alignments from VHB consultants.

- 1. Call to Order:** Mr. Tim Malone, CRCOG, called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm and welcomed the Steering Committee and Technical Team.

100 Great Meadow Road
Suite 200
Wethersfield, CT 06109-2377
P 860.807.4300

2. Public Comment: No one from the public was present.

3. Project Updates

Mr. Dave Head requested that attendees introduce themselves. Mr. Dave Head then reviewed the purpose of the meeting:

- Review Alignment Alternatives
- Review Decision Matrix Categories
- Review Category Weightings
- Results of Decision Matrix Analysis
- Next steps

Mr. Head reviewed the vision statement and asked that the attendees keep this in mind as we review the Decision Matrix.

"The vision for the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and CTfastrak Gap Closure study is to connect the communities with a **world-class multi-use trail** that closes the gap in the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT) through the towns of Southington and Plainville with a connection to the CT**fastrak** station in downtown New Britain. These links will **prioritize safety, comfort, and mobility for all users, regardless of age or ability**, through cohesive and attractive trails that promote economic and community vitality."

4. Review of Alignment Alternatives

Summary maps are displayed for the committees for both Plainville and New Britain. The maps contain all the alignment alternatives developed during the public workshops and Steering Committee/Technical Team meetings held last October, 2016.

5. Decision Matrix Categories

Mr. Head then reviewed the Decision Matrix Criteria as developed by both committees:

- Connectivity – (within a ¼ mile of alignment)
 - Schools
 - recreation facilities
 - commercial locations
 - cultural resources
 - population

- Safety – Number of conflicts points with motor vehicles along an alignment
 - commercial driveways
 - Intersections
 - mid-block street crossings.

- Security – (within 50 feet of an alignment)
 - residentially zoned parcels within 50 feet of an alignment

- Facility Type
 - Off Road
 - Multi-use Trails
 - Rail with Trail
 - Side Paths
 - Separated Bike Lanes
 - On Road
 - Buffered Bike Lanes
 - Bike Lanes
 - Shared Roadway
 - Shoulder

- Environmental
 - Wetlands (acreage of impacts)
 - Floodplain (percent of alignment within 100 year floodplain)
 - Natural Diversity Database (does alignment cross a NDDDB area)
 - Historic resources (within 50 feet of alignment),
 - Hazardous Material Locations (within 10 feet of alignment)
 - Additional impervious surface. (new pavement)

- Potential Right-of-Way Impact (number within 20 feet of alignment)
 - Private properties
 - Public properties

- Cost
 - Design
 - Construction
 - Maintenance

6. Review Category Weightings

The primary purpose of the meeting was to solicit additional vetting of established weighted criteria. The weighting percentages were established by both committees in previous working sessions as the following:

- Connectivity – 20%
- Safety/Security – 25%
- Facility Type – 30%
- Environmental – 10%
- Right-of-Way Impact – 10%
- Cost – 5%

Mr. Head explained to the committees the Decision Matrix methodology:

- Normalizing of values
- Positive attributes rated 10 to 1 (10 being most positive)
- Negative attributes rated 1 to 10 (1 being most negative)
- Category score based on average of normalized values
- Alignment score based on weighting applied to category score

7. Results of the Decision Matrix Analysis

Mr. Head then proceeded to present to the committees two example alignment alternatives, one from Plainville (P_2_Internal) and one from New Britain (NB_1_Employment_Commercial).

The Plainville example alignment P_2_Internal received an overall ranked score of 6.68. Whereas, the New Britain example alignment received an overall ranked score of 7.36. See referenced table below.

Mr. Head proceeds to explain to the committees that despite the overall high rank for each of the example alignments that the alignments may not have ranked the highest within some of the individualized criterion – this could be due to a variety of variances such as; alignment length, environmental impacts, potential property impacts, or cost associated with suggested facility type.

Facility Type

Mr. Head explained the methodological assumptions used to determine how facility types were applied to different segments of each alignment route.

- Through open space: off road
- Along limited access highway: adjacent to road
- Along State route: 50% adjacent to / 50% on road
- Along local road: on road
- Along Northwest Drive: off-road
- Along Black Rock Ave: adjacent to road, from Crooked Street to Wooster Street. Tilcon quarry / high heavy truck traffic

Cost

Mr. Head then proceeded to explain the methodological assumptions used to determine how the cost of each example alignment was determined:

- Design and Construction an off road facility - \$190/lf
 - If alignment goes through wetlands: boardwalk - \$60/sf
- Design and Construction on road facility - \$3.50/lf
- Cost per Intersection - \$1,000 / intersection
- Maintenance Off Road facility \$0.40/lf
- Maintenance On Road facility – \$3.00/lf

8. Committee Discussion

Mr. Head reminded the committee members that the objective for the following discussion was to reach "informed consent" by which the committee members may not all agree unanimously but have received enough information and concluded to a reasonable outcome to make an informed decision to proceed forward.

The following discussions occurred among the committee members regarding the following topics:

Decision Matrix Process

Mr. Jim Cassidy inquired with committee members if they understood the methodology process and if it made sense?

A majority of the committee members concluded that the Decision Matrix, its methodologies, and its assumptions did make sense and was deemed as logical and objective. Committee members did concur that the weighting of individualized criterion needed to be reevaluated and adjusted.

Safety/Security vs. Facility Type

The discussion focused on whether there is a correlation between the Facility Type and the perceived or real threats of the Security criterion. The determination was to make the criteria weighting the same for both Safety/Security and Facility Type.

Environmental Permitting

CJ Gandza asked if environmental impacts should be included at this point, since they can generally be designed around. Mr. Bruce Donald stated permitting through a wetland may become problematic. Mr. Head agreed but noted that permitting can be acquired with enough time and money to mitigate any impacts.

Cost

Mr. Bruce Donald inquired about how costs were determined. Mr. Chris Faulkner, VHB, stated that off road construction materials were determined as an asphalt surface and basic costing of maintenance to include brush clearing and mowing.

Further discussion by the committees included whether the criterion of Cost should stay in the Decision Matrix or not. Ultimately it was decided that it did need to stay in, but kept at a low

percentage. It was also noted that it was critical that costs are real and truly reflect what it's going to cost to design and build. A suggestion was made to include caveats on cost page relative to how costs were developed, and a note stating that the costs were planning level only.

Connectivity

Committee members discussed how the Decision Matrix wasn't capturing the desire for Plainville alignments to be near the town center. It was agreed by all to add a category for connectivity to the Town Center with the criteria being alignment distance from the Town Center (the closer and alignment the higher it will score).

Hazardous Waste

It was discussed if it was appropriate to have a 10' buffer since the wetland criteria had a 20' buffer and the cultural resources had a 50' buffer. Mr. Head indicated he would evaluate increasing the width to see if it would make a difference in the number of hazardous material locations affected.

Potential Property Impacts

This discussion by committee members focused on whether it was appropriate to weight potential environmental and property impacts the same. It was decided that the weighting of potential property impacts should be increased to 12% and the weighting of cost should be reduced to 3%. A recommendation was made to remove potential public impacts from the Decision Matrix since impacts to public property are less of a concern (note with an asterisk that public impacts are for information purposes only and not included in calculation of property impacts) and break potential private impacts into residential and commercial since commercial property owners may see the trail as more beneficial. Also suggested was to use another word other than "impacts", such as "Potentially Affected Properties" or "Potential property constraints." It was also noted that the team needs to be careful in how these potential impacts are discussed as the methodology is very rough at this stage.

Mid-block Crossing and Intersections

The committee discussed the low number of identified mid-block crossings in the safety criteria. Since only one crossing was identified, it was determined that mid-block crossings should be included in the Intersections criterion. It was also determined that the decision matrix should have a footnote indicating whether a mid-block crossing is on a state highway.

Natural Diversity Database (NDDB) and Historic Resources

Mr. Tim Malone inquired if percent ranking may not work if a criterion has only two values such as the case within the Environmental criteria. Criterion that have a binary value of Yes or No receive a

ranking value that is excessive due to the assumptions that a potential alignment that routes through or near one of the mentioned criterion can be viewed as subjective. The committee asked to have criterion with binary values adjusted and have weighted percentages removed.

Ms. Laurie Giannotti, DEEP, states that when reviewing project for NDDDB context sensitive areas applications either need a review or they do not. Other committee members weighed in and mentioned that a project area may be within a NDDDB buffer but efforts are made to alter the construction schedule or provide an enveloped barrier around the context sensitive area. The committee determined that the NDDDB criteria should be taken out of the Decision Matrix but should be mentioned in the Guidance Document.

9. Next Steps

Economic Data

Mr. Head then proceeded to present current economic data associated with communities' who host or are adjacent to trails.

Project Schedule

Subsequent to the meeting CRCOG met with the Connecticut Department of Transportation and learned that they are working with the railroad in Plainville (PanAm) to come to a resolution that may permit portions of the trail to be located within the rail right of way.

To better coordinate our efforts, and to take advantage of these potential new developments, the upcoming meetings in December and January will be postponed, the study website will be updated with new meeting dates and information as soon as it is available.

Decision Matrix

- Make the edits noted above to the Decision Matrix.
- Take the Top Alignments and refine them further
 - 4 for Plainville
 - 2 for New Britain
- Have these refined for the upcoming (date to be determined) Workshops
 - These workshops will assist in determining the final design product.
 - Workshop will entail attendees determining the best facility for different areas along the corridor.

10. Conclusion of Meeting: The Meeting adjourned 5:00pm.

DRAFT