

Greenways Enhancing Communities

Designing Trails & Greenways: Pathways for Success

ASLA Connecticut Conference

Hartford, Nov. 10, 2016

Bruce Donald, APBP

Tri-State Greenway Coordinator

East Coast Greenway Alliance

www.greenway.org



The East Coast Greenway



- ✓ 25 years of nationally recognized not-for-profit advocacy.
- ✓ Trail: 3,000 miles from Florida to Maine.
- ✓ Continuous on/off road route, now over 30% done.
- ✓ 60 million Americans live on the corridor.
- ✓ Runs through 450 communities, and 34.6 million people within 5 miles of the route.
- ✓ 200 miles in CT. 43% complete in 2016. 100% signed, 34% in planning, 10% in construction.

Why Greenways?



- ✓ An integral part of transportation policy
- ✓ Provide “active” transportation opportunities
- ✓ Recreational facilities, or “linear parks”
- ✓ The healthy option
- ✓ Provide pollution and noise abatement
- ✓ Fantastic community amenities
- ✓ **Foster tourism & economic development**

More Background



- ✓ Trails promote a reinvigoration of municipal centers. They boost spending in “trail towns” and influence relocations.
- ✓ Convenient bike/ped access enables underserved communities full participation in the economy.
- ✓ Walkable, bikeable communities are more desirable, attractive places to live.
- ✓ Homes near trails sell faster for more money.
- ✓ Trails increase community tax revenues.

Bike/Ped is Transportation

Fact: CT DOT now views mobility in terms of people and not just the unrestricted movement of vehicles.

✓ Walking is our primary form of transportation. Any trip necessarily involves some element of perambulation.

✓ The Metric: A Balanced Transportation System = Motor Vehicles + Transit + Bicyclists + Pedestrians.

✓ There is not enough room or money to build new roads and highways. Trails great impact per \$ spent.

✓ Bike/ped infrastructure makes public transit more effective in meeting travel needs through multi-modal connectivity.



Active Transportation

Fact: Active, or alternative transportation is growing exponentially as policy – note bicycle commutation, Safe Routes to School, etc.

✓ Connectivity: “Complete Streets” policies – sidewalks, trails, bicycle facilities, share the road signage, and sharrows. - Hartford just passed an ordinance.

✓ Infrastructure: Streetscape amenities, bike racks, benches, landscaping, lighting, public art.

✓ The Key: Better access to more destinations, providing healthy choices in how you can get where you want to go without relying on a car.



Parks & Rec.

Fact: Trails are recreational facilities, “linear parks”, and cultural classrooms.

✓ The original reason to build multi-use trails was purely recreational, based on “rail-to-trail” federal funding in 1992.

✓ Communities with multi-use trails are more sought after. People want a town where there are safe and accessible (ADA compliant) facilities for all users.

✓ These repurposed corridors are retained permanently as improved community open space.

✓ Cultural linear park amenities: “Pope/Columbia Historical Trail” would be a great community builder, enhancing cultural awareness and historical identity.



Public Health

Fact: The American health crisis is real and exercise *IS* health.

- ✓ Trails create healthy opportunities by providing safe and accessible outdoor facilities. Their existence lowers barriers to engagement in physical activity.
- ✓ Communities can leverage trails as tools to make neighborhoods more exercise-friendly.
- ✓ As more trails are built, the positive impact they have on public health is apparent. (Multiple studies)
- ✓ The feds pay 28% of all health care costs in the US, and spend billions on infrastructure. Investing in trails hits the bottom line for both of these sectors.



Pollution Abatement

Fact: Walking or biking to a destination is a 1:1 reduction in vehicle trips reducing pollution.

✓ Americans drive cars 1.5 trillion miles a year. 10% fewer vehicle miles are traveled in communities with good walking and cycling facilities.

✓ Safe routes to school are critical: parents driving their children to school make up 25% of morning commuters in suburbia!

✓ If kids walked or bikes to school at 1969 levels, it would save 3.2 billion vehicle miles, 1.5 million tons of CO² and 89,000 tons of other pollutants annually.

✓ The health costs of air pollution are a minimum of \$10 billion a year.



A Community Amenity

Fact: Trails improve a community's quality of life.

✓ Residents are overwhelmingly positive: “Trail towns” lure younger, professional citizenry, creating community identity and pride.

✓ CRCOG and UCONN did a survey in Hartford in which 86% of respondents agreed that more places where people can walk (rather than drive) point-to-point are needed. *There is great demand.*

✓ Trails are the new “town square”. People naturally congregate, meeting family and friends away from the TV, making connections with neighbors, fostering pride, and building a better community.



Economic Development

Fact: Studies confirm that every dollar spent building trails returns a multiple of that yearly.

✓ Trail-based tourism creates annual revenues of \$MM's in direct spending, making businesses more profitable, increasing the tax base.

✓ Trails reinvigorate municipal centers. Visit Collinsville, Southington, Simsbury, or Unionville on a sunny weekend day and be very impressed.

✓ Safe and convenient bike/ped access enables more individuals full participation in the local economy.

✓ Real estate prices are higher in walkable, bikeable communities. Homes near trails sell faster for more money.





Towns Embrace Trails



✓ Simsbury first Silver Bike

Friendly (LAB) Community in CT





“Economic Wayfinding”





Full-Cost Accounting

How much does your commute cost (or save) society?

Every time you travel you put money into the system, but you also cost the system. Your contribution to and burden on the system differs depending on how you travel.

For example, when you ride the bus you pay a fare – money into the system. Your burden on the system includes the cost of operating the bus, and also less obvious impacts like emissions and noise pollution.

By looking at the ratio of what we put in versus what we cost the system, we see that different ways of travelling are more subsidized than others.

The practice of taking these less tangible costs and benefits into consideration and assigning them a dollar value is known as "full-cost accounting." While there are many ways of doing this, this infographic shows one example of how those costs and charges can be calculated.



Economic Background



- ✓ Studies confirm that every dollar spent on multi-use trails creates a large yearly return. **“Cost/Benefit Ratio”**
- ✓ Trail-based tourism is a major economic driver, creating annual revenues of millions per trail in consumer spending, creating businesses and increasing profitability. **“Economic Impact”**

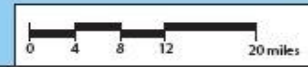
ECG in Connecticut



East Coast Greenway®
Connecticut
 Spine: 195 miles
 February 2013

- Key to Segments**
- 1 Moosup Valley Trail
 - 2a DOT Trail
 - 2b DOT Trail to Trolley Trail
 - 3 Trolley Trail
 - 4 Quinebaug River Trail
 - 5 Quinebaug River Trail to Tracy Road
 - 6 Tracy Road Smart Parks Trail
 - 7 Tri-Town Trail
 - 8 Tri-Town Trail to Air Line Trail North
 - 9 Air Line Trail North
 - 10 Veterans Memorial Greenway
 - 11 Willimantic River Trail
 - 12 Hop River Trail
 - 13 Charter Oak Greenway
 - 14 Riverfront Recapture pathways
 - 15 Downtown Hartford
 - 16 Griffin Line Greenway
 - 17 Tarrifville Connector Trail
 - 17a Farmington Canal Heritage Trail a. Simsbury e. Southington
 - 17b Farmington Canal Heritage Trail b. Avon f. Cheshire
 - 17c Farmington Canal Heritage Trail c. Farmington g. Hamden
 - 17d Farmington Canal Heritage Trail d. Plainville h. New Haven
 - 18 Downtown New Haven
 - 19 Vision Trail
 - 20 Harborside Trail
 - 21 Harborside Trail to Savin Rock Trail
 - 22 Savin Rock Trail
 - 23 Savin Rock Trail to Merritt Pkwy Trail
 - 24 Merritt Parkway Trail

- Legend:**
- Trail Complete
 - Trail in Development
 - Trail Route in Public Control
 - Trail Route Identified
 - Gap Area (trail route sought)
 - Interim on-road route
 - ECG segment delineator
 - Significant linking trail
 - Passenger rail and station
 - Interstate highway
 - State and US highways
 - Urban area
 - Open space



Original map prepared by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. Updates by ECGA

VHB
 Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.
 101 Walnut Street
 Watertown, MA 02471-9151

Farmington Canal Heritage Trail

- ✓ The FCHT stretches from New Haven to Northampton, MA - 84 miles.
- ✓ 75% complete, it nears total completion (56 miles, 11 towns) in CT by 2020.

<u>Town</u>	<u>Distance</u>	<u>Complete</u>	<u>Remain</u>	<u>Designed</u>	<u>% Done</u>
New Haven	3.4	1.8	1.6	1.6	47
Hamden	9.5	9.5	0		100
Cheshire	7.6	4.0	3.1	3.1	56
Southington	6.6	4.0	2.6	1.6	61
Plainville	4.3	0	4.3	0	0
Farmington	4.8	2.3	2.5	2.5	48
Avon	4.7	4.7	0		100
Simsbury	7.5	7.5	0		100
East Granby	5.3	5.3	0		100
Granby	1.1	1.1	0		100
Suffield	1.2	1.2	0		100
Total	56	41.4	14.1		74.6%



Data Sets: Farmington Valley

Extrapolated Summary Data Metric: Trail Uses*

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
Annual Farmington Total	97,482	80,451	121,584
Annual Canton Total	71,668	156,297	124,429
Annual Suffield Total	159,442	89,639	161,550
Average Total	107,451	108,995	135,854
Annual Regional Trail Total¹	262,874	261,110	326,050
Weekday Peak Hour	11:00 am	11:00 am	12:00 pm
Weekend Peak Hour	1:00 pm	12:00 pm	12:00 pm
Month with Highest Activity	August	July	August
Month with Lowest Activity	January	January	February
Weekday Peak Day Volume	565	610	698
Weekend Peak Day Volume	1,066	950	940

* Raw data is the average of three days at each site extrapolated using the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project Methods: <http://bikepeddocumentation.org/>. Counters are TRAFx refracting laser units as used by many federal and state agencies.

¹ This number is approximate and includes an estimate that 20% of uses at each of the three collection sites must be factored out as users traveling to or from another counted site. Note: 2013 numbers are restated to reflect the same time period as 2014 and 2015.



Data Sets: FCHT 2015 Uses



Farmington Valley	326,050	22 Miles
FCHT South*	296,818	20 Miles

Total Corridor Usage for Study = 622,868

- ✓ The FCHT Spine Corridor in CT is demographically densely populated, well-heeled, older, and well educated. A “perfect storm” in economic terms.

**Using National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project Methods, Less 14 miles for the Plainville, Southington, Cheshire and New Haven gaps.*

Comparative Studies

New York Parks & Trails Erie Canalway Trail 2014*

- ✓ 277 miles complete (75%): 1.6 million visits a year.
- ✓ Visitor spending generates \$253 million in sales, 3,440 jobs, \$78 million in labor income, and \$28.5 million in taxes.
- ✓ Locals spend on average \$26.37 per visit.
- ✓ Overnight visitors spend \$531.47 per visit.
- ✓ Overnight stays push the metric: As a trail system becomes a tourist magnet, these \$\$ explode.

**Paul A. Scipione Ph D.; SUNY Genesco*



Comparative Studies

The Great Allegheny Passage*

- ✓ 700,000 annual trips taken along the rural trail corridor between Cumberland, Md., and Pittsburgh, Pa.
- ✓ Direct annual spending by trail users exceeds \$40 million.
- ✓ Trail-related businesses pay out \$7.5 million in wages every year, and since 2007, 54 new or expanded businesses serving trail users have created 83 new jobs in 8 small towns.

**www.atatrail.org/au/impact.cfm*



Economic Modeling



- ✓ A 2013 study by the **Outdoor Industry Association** surveyed 3,133 participants (distributed across regions) in non-motorized recreational activities found that participants in CT spent an average of \$60.26 per trip on trail-based recreational day trips and **\$43.81** on bicycle related recreational day trips. (Gas, food, etc.)
- ✓ Overnight trips averaged \$148.89 for trail-based trips and \$150.93 for bicycle related trips.

Economic Modeling



- ✓ Participants in trail based recreation spent an average of \$119.30 annually on equipment and accessories.
- ✓ The impact of tourism is difficult to determine although various reports show approximately 1.6% of state visitors biking. There were slightly more hikers in CT. Visitor parties spent an average of **\$623** during each trip.*

**Connecticut Department of Community & Economic Development, Witan Intelligence and H2R Market Research in 2015.*

Extrapolated FCHT Data

622,868 users on 42 miles of non-contiguous trail in 2015:

Local Day Trips @ \$44 = \$26,967,693

Tourist Trips @ \$623 = \$6,208,749

Base Return: \$33,176,442/Yr.

Much more detailed, scientific studies are coming soon through NVCOG and UCONN.





R. Bruce Donald, APBP

bruce@greenway.org

cell: 860.707.2888

Tri-State Coordinator

Chairman

