

Merritt Parkway Multi-use Trail Frequently Asked Questions

What would be the surface material of the trail?

The material is not known at this time. More than likely, it would be a combination of hard and soft at different areas depending on terrain.

Would there be lighting along the trail?

The Merritt Parkway is not illuminated. In keeping with the existing character, a trail would not be lit. However, the use of small lights or reflectors may be considered for safety reasons to delineate the edges of the trail.

Where would parking for the trail be located?

It is expected that the existing Park and Ride lots, whose peaks are normally during the week and not on weekends (when a trail would likely be most heavily used), would be utilized for a trail. It is possible that additional parking may be provided by nearby businesses that may have surplus spaces. The possibility of building new surface lots will also be discussed during the study process.



Public Workshop

MERRITT PARKWAY MULTI-USE TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY

STATE PROJECT 173-410

Town of New Canaan

Outback Teen Center
71 Main Street

Tuesday April 3, 2012
6:00 pm

Connecticut Department of Transportation Personnel

William Britnell
Principal Engineer
William.Britnell@ct.gov
860.594.3274

Susan Fiedler
Landscape Architect

Michael Calabrese
Project Engineer

Marissa Washburn
Transportation Engineer

Katherine Rattan
Transportation Planner

David Head
Transportation
Supervising Planner

Serge Nikulin
Transportation Engineer

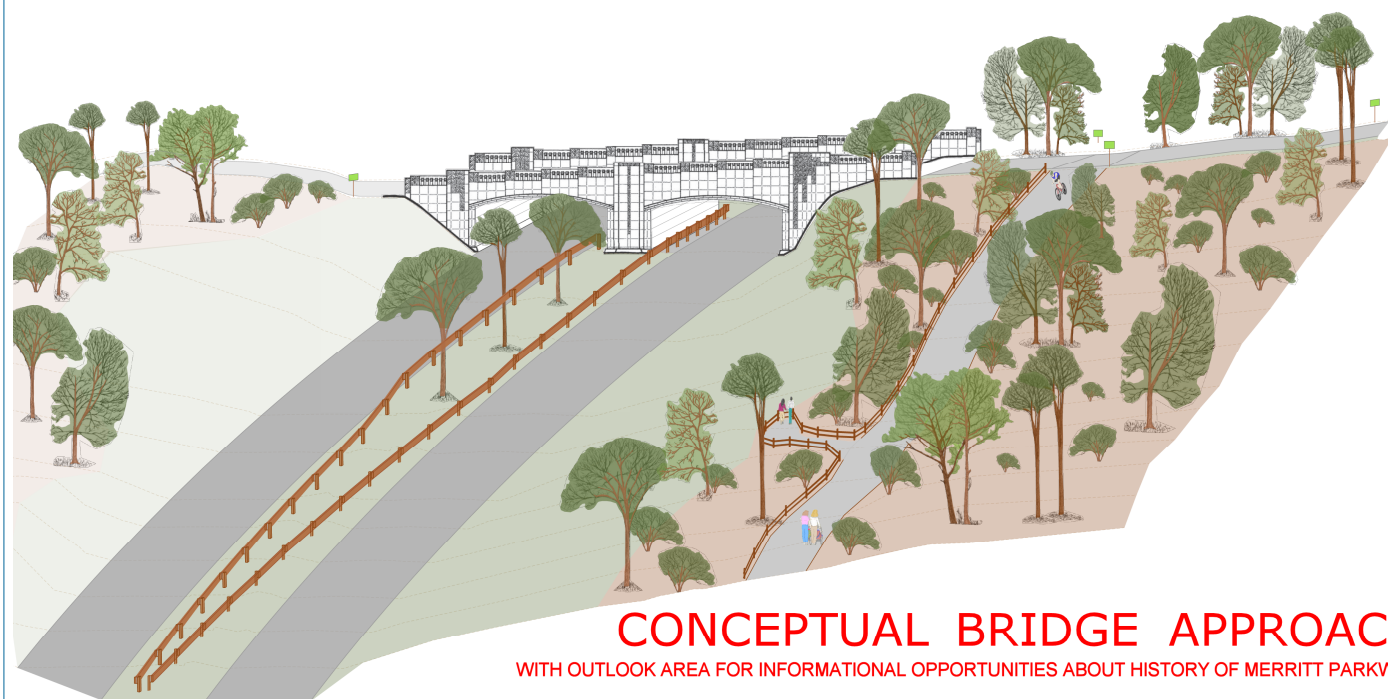
Merritt Parkway Multi-Use Trail Feasibility Study

The purpose of the study is to determine whether a multi-use trail is feasible through the Merritt Parkway corridor. By documenting and analyzing many factors, including any effect on the scenic and historic character of the Parkway, and by soliciting stakeholder input, an informed decision can be made as to whether a multi-use trail is appropriate.

In 2010, the Department submitted a grant application to the National Scenic Byways Program for the purpose of exploring the feasibility of a multi-use trail along the Merritt Parkway. The grant was awarded to the Department and funds became available in October 2011 to begin the feasibility study process.

One of the most historic roadways in the United States, the Merritt Parkway (built during the Great Depression) is famous for its 66 unique bridges which settle into the surrounding topography and landscape. Unlike most other Parkways in America, the Merritt Parkway was conceived as a commuter corridor for the purpose of alleviating traffic on the already crowded Route 1.

The Parkway is not only a State Scenic Road and a National Scenic Byway, but it is also on the National Register of Historic Places. Its significance as a historic property is found in the bridges, the aesthetics of the alignment, and the landscape, the combination of which is truly unique.

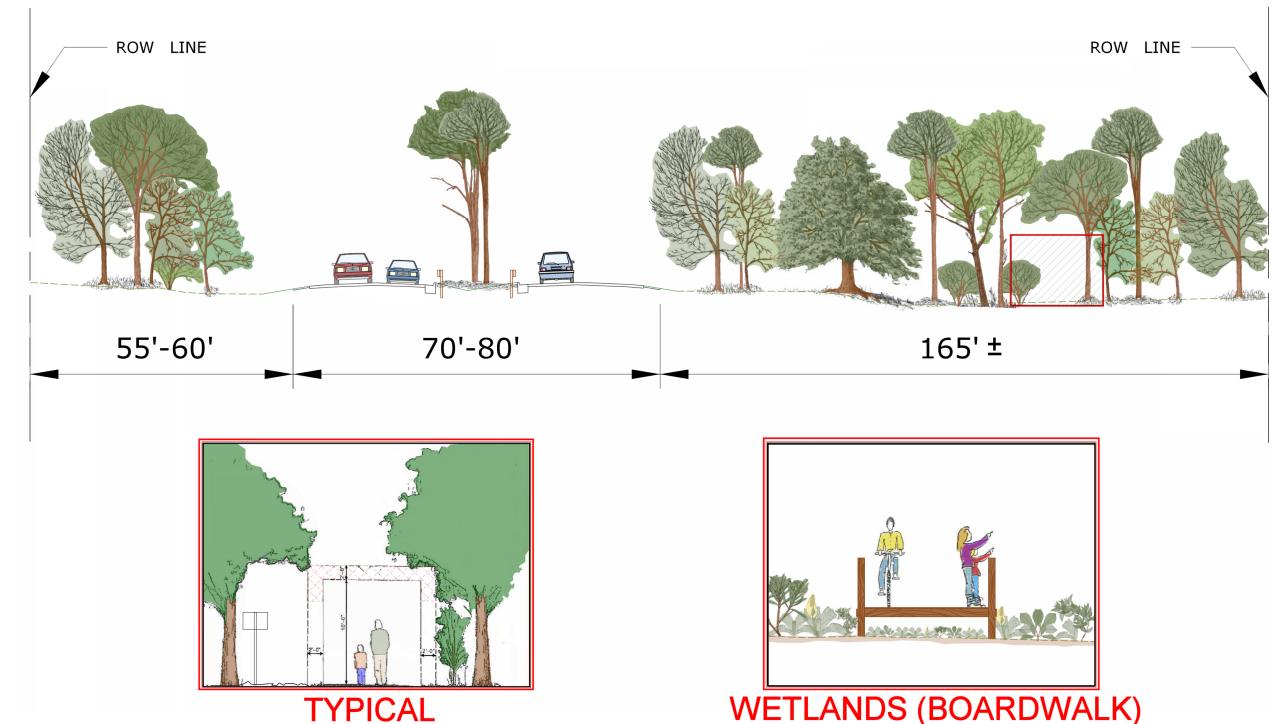


CONCEPTUAL BRIDGE APPROACH

WITH OUTLOOK AREA FOR INFORMATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ABOUT HISTORY OF MERRITT PARKWAY

NOTE: ACTUAL CONDITIONS AND DIMENSIONS MAY VARY

TYPICAL CONCEPTUAL CROSS-SECTION



POSSIBLE TRAIL TREATMENTS THROUGH VARYING TERRAIN

An extensive public outreach program is being conducted as part of this study. In addition to meetings held with the elected officials of each City or Town along the Parkway, two public meetings will be conducted in each municipality.

The purpose of this meeting, the first of the two, is to collect information from local residents and to identify and prioritize community challenges and opportunities. With a focus on New Canaan, this meeting is designed to meet stakeholders and understand their individual concerns.

Once all pertinent information has been collected and a conceptual design for the trail has been established, the second meeting, a Town Information Meeting, will be held to present the conceptual design and gather any additional feedback. Currently, that meeting is expected to be held in Fall/Winter of 2012.

The information, ideas, and concerns raised by this process are critical to the success of the study. We invite you to share input and provide us with the local knowledge that is essential for this study to best serve the community.

www.CT.gov/DOT/MerrittTrailStudy

**MERRITT PARKWAY MULTI-USE TRAIL
PUBLIC WORKSHOP**

REPORT OF MEETING

Date of Meeting: April 3, 2012

Time: 6:00 pm

Location of Meeting: Outback Teen Center, 71 Main Street, Town of New Canaan

Subject: Merritt Parkway Multi-use Trail Public Workshop

Mr. William Britnell of the Department of Transportation's Division of Highway Design opened by outlining the purpose/goals of the multi-use trail study with a presentation to the workshop attendees. He noted that this is a feasibility study and it will eventually lead to decision as to whether a trail should be constructed. He explained the meeting is a working meeting and that DOT representatives are looking for input specific to New Canaan as there will be a similar meeting held in each municipality along the Merritt Parkway.

Following the presentation, attendees were broken into small groups, each headed by a DOT representative. Attendees were given the task of identifying concerns they may have about a potential trail. They were asked to focus their discussion specifically on New Canaan. After approximately 15 minutes of discussion within the groups, the group leaders reported to the rest of the room. The concerns were recorded on flipcharts as they were being reported. When all groups had been heard, attendees were asked to vote on their greatest concerns using stickers that had been distributed to each person. During the time attendees were voting, DOT staff was available for questions and concerns. Specifically, Ms. Sue Fiedler of the Department's Landscape Design unit talked with citizens whose properties directly abut the Merritt right-of-way. She took note of where their homes were by marking survey plans and listened to their specific concerns.

Once voting had been completed, the groups were reformed and given the task of brainstorming local opportunities that a trail could create within New Canaan. Following another 15 minutes of discussion, group leaders again reported out to the rest of the room. The discussed opportunities were recorded on flip charts.

Finally, attendees were asked to provide suggestions for the trail. It was noted that the as the groups had already discussed concerns, the suggestions provided during the session might focus on potential resolutions to those concerns. Following 15 minutes of discussion, group leaders reported their group's recommendations, which were again recorded on a flip chart.

Will Britnell thanked the attendees for coming and the workshop was officially ended. Numerous residents and attendees remained behind to talk with DOT personal.

Following the workshop, the information collected on the flip charts was compiled below. The concerns are ranked according to the number votes they received during the workshop, whereas the opportunities and suggestions are simply listed as they were recorded.

Concerns:

1. Safety
2. Cost
3. Privacy
4. Will bathrooms be available?
5. Noise from traffic
6. Potential for crime
7. Maintenance
8. Loss of trees
9. Mike markers
10. Public perception of the trail being seen as a misuse of funds
11. User conflicts/interactions
12. Distraction to drivers
13. Scale/scope too large
14. Contiguous
15. Loss of historic landscape
16. Inaccessibility
17. Wetlands
18. Safety at crossings
19. Litter
20. Accessible by both bike and foot
21. Challenging to design
22. Emergency turnarounds
23. Noise
24. Stone wall
25. Conflicting with bridle trails
26. Fire
27. Parking on side streets
28. Litigation
29. Will lead to future expansion
30. Hours of operation
31. Separation from traffic
32. Parking impact
33. Delineation/glare
34. Coordination
35. Conflicts with animals
36. Trail needs to be wider

Opportunities:

1. Gas Stations/Rest areas on the Merritt could provide bathrooms
2. South Avenue provides access to local businesses
3. Use signage on the trail for local destinations
4. Connect to Waveny Park
5. Commuter connection to train station
6. Tourism/Segway tours
7. Mapping along the trail
8. Security phones
9. Stone walls along the trail
10. Increase health benefits
11. Cell phone coverage
12. Safe place to bike
13. Save on gas

14. Community linkage
15. Connect to other trails
16. Economic opportunity
17. Cyclist vacations
18. YMCA of South Ave
19. Churches/religious establishments
20. Silvermine Arts Guild
21. Connect to Middle/High School
22. Commerce
23. Springdale Community
24. Exercise stations
25. Increase property value
26. Connect to beaches
27. Reduction in childhood obesity (part of the 'No Child Left Inside' initiative)
28. Safely get bikers off the road
29. Alternate mode of transportation
30. Connect to the downtown village area
31. Reduction in traffic
32. Cross country skiing in winter
33. Highlight history of the Parkway
34. ADA compliance will open the trail to all people
35. Interest in nature
36. Tie into the Town's Greenbelt map
37. Armories for bathrooms
38. Environmental educational opportunities
39. Mead park and bird sanctuary

Suggestions:

1. Install a bike lane on South Avenue
2. Provide safe connections at feeder road crossings
3. Don't under design trail (width)
4. Use screening next to the parkway
5. Locate trail further from road
6. Use grade separation for all road crossings
7. Install security cameras for safety
8. Provide for skiers
9. Use local roads
10. Underpasses (not roads)
11. Preserve topography
12. Pre-Fab bridge (Silver Mine School)
13. Consider the scale of the project
14. Use a permeable surface
15. Landscape for screenings
16. Post rules and regulations
17. Preserve environment
18. Meandering trail (but consider sightline)
19. Use service clubs for maintenance (eg boy scouts)
20. Route stewards to oversee portions of trail
21. Review other trails to see how challenges have been overcome
22. Use timber rail for safety
23. Benches/seating areas should be included
24. Informational kiosks
25. Bollards to prevent motorized vehicles
26. Walking trail for first phase
27. Water fountains
28. Taxation for maintenance
29. B/C study
30. Separate directions

31. Limit to 12'
32. Use different surfaces for different users
33. Use flowering trees near road and evergreens near homes
34. Maximize distance between house and trail
35. Don't use fences, use vegetation
36. Limit hours of operation
37. Install composting tables
38. Consider grading at crossings