

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 Trumbull

Trumbull Library
Community Room
33 Quality Street

Monday May 14, 2012
7:00 pm

Connecticut Department of Transportation Personnel

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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.

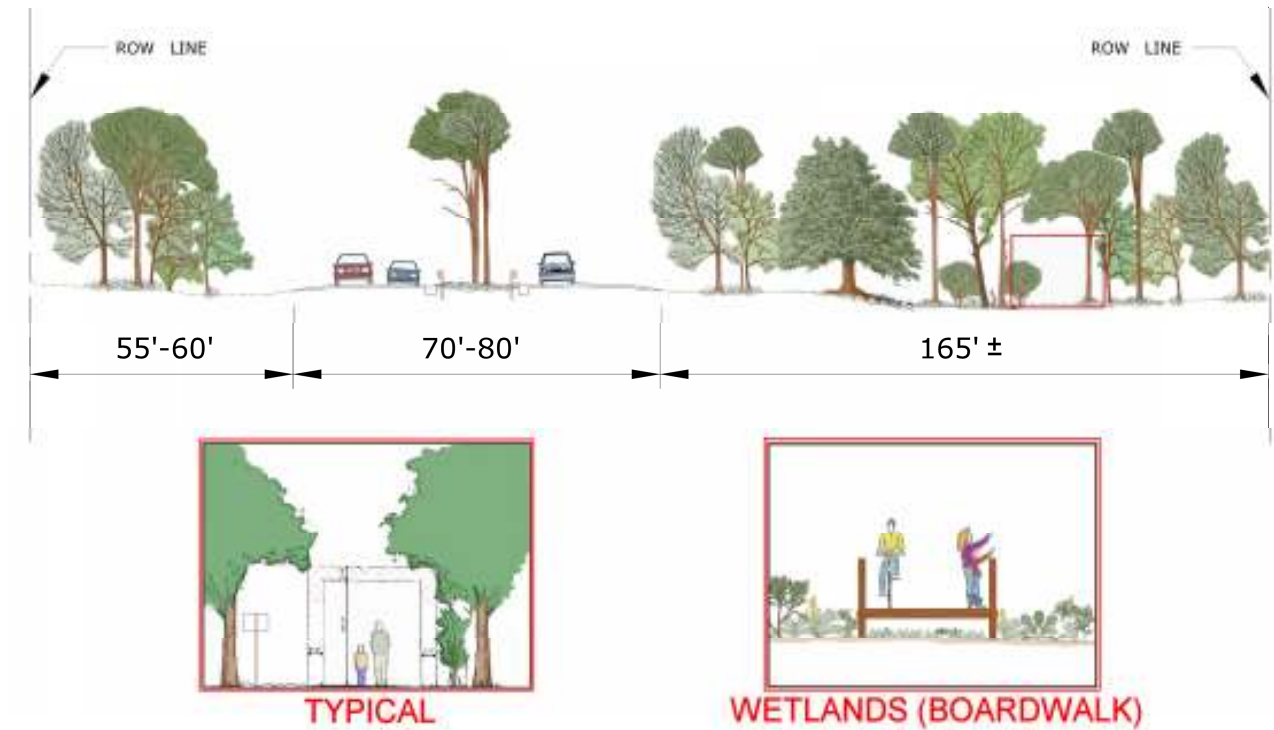
In 2010, the Department submitted a grant application to the National Scenic Byways Program for the purpose of exploring the feasibility of a multi-use trail along the Merritt Parkway. The grant was awarded to the Department and funds became available in October 2011 to begin the feasibility study process.

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.



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 Trumbull, 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.

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

REPORT OF MEETING

Date of Meeting: May 17, 2012

Time: 7:00 pm

Location of Meeting: Trumbull Town Hall, Community Room, Town of Trumbull

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 Trumbull 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 Trumbull. 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 numerous 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 Trumbull. 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 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. The workshop attendance was approximately 15 people.

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. Tree Removal/Loss of Vegetation
2. Fencing
3. Safety at Crossings
4. Maintenance
5. Routes 8 and 25 Interchanges
6. Privacy
7. Cost
8. Crime
9. Distraction to Drivers
10. Pequannock Trail should be linked
11. Noise
12. Time of Construction
13. Discontinuity of Sections
14. Loss of Parkway Character
15. Parking - On Local Roads
16. Unknown Police Jurisdiction/Confusion
17. Security
18. Safety -Pkwy crashes affecting trail
19. User Conflicts/Interactions
20. Decrease in Quality of Life in Surrounding Neighborhoods
21. Winter Plowing
22. No use in Winter because no Plowing
23. Wetland Impacts
24. Liability
25. Increase in Pedestrian Accidents on Local Roads
26. Mountain Bikers - Erosion of "Off Road"
27. Misuse of Trail by Motorized Vehicles
28. Impact to Wildlife
29. Property Depreciation
30. Large User Groups
31. Cleanliness - Food/Litter Disposal
32. Location of ROW

Opportunities:

1. An alternate way to commute to work
2. To utilize existing and proposed trail networks within Town
3. Tie into the Commuter lot at While Plains Road
4. Hawley Lane Mall (south of the Parkway)
5. Educate people about the Parkway
6. Tie trail into school curriculum/safe routes to school
7. Increase property values
8. Tie into Unity Park
9. Safe area for children to play
10. Cultural aspects – more bike friendly
11. Tie into Frenchtown Elementary School
12. Tie into shopping center/Kohl's
13. Tie into the Marriot
14. Tie into Trumbull Mall
 - a. Parking/destination
15. Discovery Magnet School (under construction)
16. Connectivity

17. Create an off-road network
18. Utilize Sacred Heart and GE
19. Tie into Beardsley Park/Zoo
20. East Coast Greenway connection
21. Connecting to New York

Suggestions:

1. Use input from abutters of the White Plains Trail
2. Build a 15' high stone wall or fence along ROW
3. Fyi – can't use natural plantings under the canopy
4. Utilize Reservoir Road to connect the Parkway Trail to the Pequannock Valley Trail
5. Paving the trail will reduce the needed maintenance and discourage mountain bikers
6. Use volunteers for maintenance
7. Install fences
8. Use "blue phones" for emergencies
9. Consider the appropriateness of a trail in this area. Are other areas of the State a better fit?
10. Spend the money on existing trail systems that need maintenance
11. Look to the Manchester trail for fencing policies
12. FIND THE BEST ROUTE
13. Try to use commercial property where possible – try to coordinate trail location
14. Rails to trails
15. Look to Hutchinson Conservancy
16. Look to Shelton and Stratford for examples
17. Use walkways like those employed on the Sikorsky Estuary Walk
18. Look to sponsorships to fund/maintain the trail
19. Call on bike groups (like the Sound Cyclists)
20. Provide bathrooms
21. Have crime statistics ready for public involvement
22. Design the trail closer to the Parkway than to the ROW line.