East Haddam Planning and Zoning Commission
Land Use Office

Regular Meeting Minutes
April 14, 2026

1) CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Brownell called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

2) COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Crary Brownell (Chairman), James Curtin (Vice Chairman), Bernard Gillis, Susan Kinsman, Deborah Langdon, Maureen Pierson, Eric Chamberland, and D. Duncan Orr. Mr. Brownell appointed voting member Eric Chamberland to sit in Mr. Pettinelli's position.

   COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Richard Pettinelli and Gary Turenne

   OTHERS PRESENT: James Ventres LUA, First Selectman Todd Gelston, EDC members: Bob Casner, Mike Robidoux, Bill McEnery, Ralph Parady, and Dave Merrick. Yanan Wu – Freeman Companies, Nick Griffin, Ron Wheeler, Christine Vanscoy, Rochelle Davis, Laurel White, Chris Staehly, Matthew White

3) MINUTES –- Mr. Brownell instructed the March 24, 206 minutes to be filed as amended.

   - Mr. Curtin noted on Page 3, 2nd paragraph, The State Office <u>of,</u> not at

4) BILLS – Mr. Ventres asked that the bills be tabled. He wasn't clear as to what was already paid.

   At this time, Mr. Casner took attendance of the Economic Development Commission members as noted above.

5) Town Street Multi Use Trail Presentation – Town Street – Freeman Companies

   At this time, Mr. Ventres briefed the attendees on the history of this project.

   1. 2019 East Haddam Plan of Conservation and Development identified infrastructure gaps for walking and biking throughout the town.

   2. 2021 East Haddam Economic Development Commission and the Connecticut Landmarks (owner of the Palmer-Warner House and the Amasa Day House) collaborated with the National Parks Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program to develop the Lower Connecticut River Valley Trail Concept Map. East Haddam to Hadlyme, to Chester to Haddam, to East Haddam Village to Moodus Center loop.

3. 2023 Grant application submitted to CT DEEP Recreation Trails Program. Grant awarded to the town.

4. 2024 Request for proposals sent out.

5. 2025 Freeman Companies awarded the bid to develop a feasibility plan for an approximate two-mile section.

Mr. Ventres introduced Yanan Wu of the Freeman Companies to the audience.

Ms. Wu stated the presentation is a brief overview of the forty-two-page feasibility study that has been posted.

These excerpts were taken from the feasibility study that were also noted in the presentation:

Introduction/Context

Study Limits The proposed project corridor is centrally located in East Haddam, Connecticut, and extends approximately 12,900 linear feet / 2.4 miles along Town Street. It begins at the intersection of Town Street (Route 151) and Daniels Road to the north and continues south to the bridge on Route 92/ Town Street (between addresses 183 and 161, near CT-82). The trail alignment, with a typical width of up to 23 feet extending to the edge of existing driveway pavement, may shift locally to accommodate easements or other site-specific conditions.

Purpose and overview This corridor lies within a scenic and historic area characterized by a blend of residential neighborhoods, limited commercial development, and abundant open space. Town Street serves as a primary transportation route through East Haddam Village and is also a popular path for cyclists seeking alternatives to busier state routes. This project seeks to implement a multi -use trail to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity along Town Street, addressing infrastructure gaps identified in the Town's 2019 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The trail will help reduce traffic congestion and parking demand in village centers and enhance safety and mobility for residents and visitors alike. The RFP reflects a focus on sustainable transportation infrastructure and safe, multi modal access to community amenities and tourist destinations. In particular, the trail aims to improve accessibility between the Moodus section and central East Haddam, linking key sites such as the Wolf's Den Campground, Lion's Club Skating Pond, and the historic Palmer-Warner House, as well as extending connections north to Salmon River State Forest and south to Gillett e Castle State Park.

Big Picture – Genesis of the Study The concept for the Lower Connecticut River Valley Heritage Trail emerged from local interest in walkability and cultural connectivity. East Haddam's historic charm and vibrant agritourism base inspired the vision of a pedestrian corridor that could safely connect destinations along Town Street. The Palmer-Warner House—owned and operated by Connecticut Landmarks—was identified early as a cornerstone site. In 2021, Connecticut Landmarks and the East Haddam Economic Development Committee (EDC) jointly secured support from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program. This collaboration laid the groundwork for trail planning, community engagement, and funding strategies that underpin this project.

Outline – Trail Vision and Regional Integration This trail segment is envisioned as the pilot project of the broader Lower Connecticut River Valley Heritage Trail network. Its purpose is to showcase a replicable design standard—encompassing alignment, surfacing, and signage—serving as a model for future trail segments throughout the region. The trail will serve not only as a local connector but as part of a larger

regional loop that highlights the Connecticut River Valley's recreational and cultural assets. Ultimately, the trail will contribute to a unified network spanning multiple communities and linking major destinations such as Gillette Castle, state parks, town centers, and agritourism sites. In addition to its transportation function, the trail supports local economic development, promotes active lifestyles, and helps preserve the natural and historic character of the region. As the initial implementation phase, this section is a foundational step toward long-term regional trail connectivity.

Site Assessment - Description of corridor

Length, limits The proposed trail corridor extends approximately 12,900 linear feet along Town Street in East Haddam, CT. The alignment generally follows both sides of the roadway, with segments that shift into adjacent lands to accommodate topography, drainage, and site conditions. The typical multi-use trail section has an average width of 23 feet measured from the edge of the roadway pavement. This includes a 10-foot buffer zone between the driveway and the trail to accommodate drainage, a 10-foot solid tread surface for the multi-use trail itself, and a 3-foot side buffer. Depending on the location, this side buffer may vary in form—ranging from planted slopes to fencing, proposed or existing retaining walls, or naturalized vegetated areas.

Highway descriptions/ROW width Town Street functions as a key corridor within East Haddam's planning framework and reflects a transitional urban-rural cross-section. It typically features a narrow right-of-way (ROW) and is characterized by a mix of low-density residential properties, historic resources, and agritourism based commercial activity. The average roadway width varies but often lacks formal shoulders, which creates challenges for pedestrian and bicycle mobility.

ROW descriptions and pinch points/opportunities Several physical constraints exist along the corridor. These include a limited-width crossing structure over Succor Brook, extensive wetland areas near the Lion's Club Skating Pond, and additional wetland crossings throughout the alignment. ROW limitations are also notable near properties such as 330–321 Town Street, and steep topographic grades occur adjacent to the Rose Farm Homestead Preserve.

Despite these constraints, the corridor presents unique opportunities. Its proximity to smallscale local businesses—such as farm stands and the Wolf's Den Family Campground—along with connections to historical sites and preserved open space, offers a diverse and enriching setting. The trail not only supports recreational use and non-motorized transportation but also has the potential to enhance East Haddam's cultural identity, economic vitality, and ecological connectivity.

Key attractions along this future trail include:

Natural Resources: Succor Brook, Rose Farm Homestead Preserve
Local Farms and Businesses: Staehly's Farm & Winery, Four Corners Historical and Cultural Sites: East Haddam Historical Society, Palmer-Warner House
Recreational Attractions: Wolf's Den Campground, Lion's Club Skating Pond

Land Owners The majority of the proposed trail is located within existing Town-owned rights-of-way and properties. However, a few areas will require additional access agreements or easements to ensure continuity of the trail.

South of Norwich Road and Town Street Intersection: The natural curvature of the road presents visual distance constraints. To minimize disturbance to the adjacent Lion's Club Skating Pond and wetland on the east side of the trail, an alternative alignment has been identi fi ed. Three parcels owned by Casner Realty LLC have been identified for potential easements. These acquisitions will allow the trail to maintain alignment within the corridor while minimizing impacts to neighboring properties.

Town Street at Commerce Drive: This alternative would pass through private properties at 346 and 388 Town Street. The Town may consider this option as part of its planning discussions.

Route 151 Section: A short segment along this section may require limited easements from private property owners at 5 Brooke Hill Road, 381 Town Street, and 385 Town Street. These adjustments are minor but necessary to maintain a continuous trail alignment while minimizing impacts to residences and natural resources.

Overall, the trail alignment has been designed to maximize use of public rights-of-way and Town-owned property, while minimizing the need for private easements. Alternative routing options have been identified to address sensitive environmental features and constrained areas, allowing flexibility for future design and community input.

Historic Resources Two notable historic sites are located along the proposed trail corridor: the East Haddam Historical Society Museum and the Palmer-Warner House.

East Haddam Historical Society Museum (264 Town Street): Situated adjacent to the campground south of the site, both the museum and campground provide their own parking. However, there is currently no sidewalk or safe pedestrian connection to the museum, limiting access for walkers, cyclists, and trail users. Immediately north of the museum, private residential properties abut the corridor, and this area is not a major visitor access route**.**

Palmer-Warner House: Located further along the corridor, this historic property adds cultural value to the area. Similar to the museum, visitor circulation is limited due to the lack of pedestrian connections and absence of dedicated parking, which currently restricts its usability.

Slopes/Topography The proposed trail corridor generally follows the existing driveway alignment, with moderate slopes averaging around 5%, consistent with accessible multi -use path guidelines. The overall elevation change along the north-to-south segment is modest, decreasing from approximately 280 ft to 227 ft . However, due to natural contouring and existing drainage patterns, several areas exhibit steeper grades:

• Adjacent to the East Haddam Lions Club Skating Pond and near Hemlock Valley Brook, slopes reach approximately 8%, reflecting the natural drop toward the watercourse.

• 214 Town Street to the Rose Farm Homestead Reserve presents the greatest challenge, with rocky outcrops, ditches, and steep slopes immediately adjacent to the driveway edge.

• At 381 Town Street, an existing retaining wall constrains the corridor. Similarly, between the intersection with Norwich Road and 353 Town Street, the west side (private property side) features steep slopes requiring additional earthwork or structural support to create a relatively flat trail surface.

Also, the current bridge over Succor Brook is limited to driveway width only, with no additional space for a trail surface, indicating a need for either bridge widening or an alternative crossing solution. These conditions highlight the need for sitespecific grading, retaining structures, and alignment adjustments to ensure safety, accessibility, and continuity for trail users while minimizing impacts to adjacent properties and natural resources.

Nature Resources

Watercourse / wetland

Succor Brook: Succor Brook flows west to east beneath Route 82 just north of the Town Street (Route 82) and Mount Parnassus Road intersection. The existing culvert carries a two-lane roadway with no usable shoulder and offers no excess structural capacity for a shared-use path. The stream corridor includes steep embankments, dense mature vegetation, and tight drainage conditions, presenting notable geometric and environmental constraints.

Hemlock Valley Brook: Further south, Hemlock Valley Brook crosses under Route 82. The existing bridge structure is relatively narrow, with limited shoulder width and constrained right-of-way conditions along both edges due to sloping banks and wetlands. This crossing also lies within a sensitive riparian habitat, where improvements must carefully address stormwater, scour protection, and habitat preservation while accommodating trail connectivity.

The East Haddam Lions Club Skating Pond: The pond is a seasonal recreational amenity located east of Town Street (Route 82). The pond is spring-fed and surrounded primarily by mature woodland, with maintained lawn areas near the existing access point and parking. The site has long served as a community gathering and winter recreation space, operated by the Lions Club. Wetland buffers surround to the south and grades drop moderately toward the pond edge, indicating sensitive soils and hydrology that should be protected.

Natural Diversity Database Area Along the proposed trail corridor, several segments overlap with areas identified in the Connecticut Natural Diversity Database (NDDB), which indicate the presence or potential habitat of state-listed endangered, threatened, or special-concern species. Because of this, any trail development within these mapped zones will require early coordination with the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) to assess habitat sensitivity and ensure that design, construction, and maintenance practices protect ecological resources. This may include conducting detailed biological evaluations, adjusting alignment to avoid sensitive habitats, implementing buff er zones, and timing construction activities to avoid disturbance to seasonal wildlife patterns.

Design Standards/Guidance

This trail design guide reflects both the technical requirements and community aspirations for a multi-use trail in East Haddam. With thoughtful planning and alignment, the trail will not only improve connectivity and safety but also celebrate the town's heritage and natural beauty. It is expected to serve as a replicable model for similar projects across the region.

Trail Function and Purpose The trail is designed to accommodate a range of non-motorized users, including pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair users, and individuals with strollers. Its primary purposes include: Providing safe and accessible pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure. Promoting healthy lifestyles through active transportation. Supporting local economic activity and tourism. Enhancing connectivity between historic sites, businesses, and natural areas. Contributing to a sustainable transportation system.

Integration with Broader Trail Network This trail segment is the foundational piece of a broader loop system envisioned for the Lower Connecticut River Valley. When fully built, the network will:

- Connect north to Gillette Castle State Park and regional parks.
- Link south toward Route 82 and beyond.
- Provide a continuous recreational and non-motorized commuter corridor.

The Town and regional stakeholders will use this pilot segment as a demonstration of best practices in rural trail integration, promoting future grant funding and phased implementation.

Surface Materials and Accessibility The preferred surface material is permeable pavers that comply with ADA standards. These materials offer durability, drainage benefits, and ease of maintenance. Where pavers are not feasible due to slope or context, compacted stone dust or stabilized aggregate may be considered with appropriate edge restraints and subgrade preparation.

Trail Cross-Section Standards The typical multi-use trail section will have an average cross-sectional width of 23 feet. This includes:

Trail Tread Width (10'): A durable, smooth surface suitable for bicycles, wheelchairs, and pedestrians.

Roadway Buffer (10'): A separation zone between the trail and roadway. This may include vegetative drainage swales, planted buffers, or bioswales.

Side Buffer (3'): A lateral buffer between the trail edge and adjacent land. Depending on location, this buffer may be a slope, planted strip, fence, or retaining wall.

All trail sections must:

- Meet ADA requirements for surface smoothness, stability, and slip resistance.
- Maintain a cross-slope of no more than 2% for drainage.
- Include accessible connections to adjacent facilities and road crossings

Trail Alignment and Horizontal Geometry

Minimum Trail Width: 10 feet (preferred); 12 feet in high-use areas or where maintenance access is required.

Minimum Horizontal Clearance: 2 feet from any fixed object.

Trail Separation from Roadways: 5–10 feet recommended where feasible.

Turning Radius: Minimum 20 feet for 90-degree turns; wider for bicycle compatibility.

Vertical Geometry and Grades

Maximum Running Grade: 5% for ADA compliance.

Maximum Grade Without Railings: Up to 5% allowed without handrails.

Maximum Slope for Seating Areas: Seating and benches should be placed on surfaces not exceeding a 2% slope.

Vertical Clearance: Minimum of 8 feet; 10 feet recommended.

Trail Drainage & Bio-Swale Design The trail corridor shall be designed with a comprehensive surface and subsurface drainage strategy to maintain user safety, protect the trail surface, and support long-term durability. Drainage improvements should:

- Direct stormwater away from the trail surface using positive grading (minimum 2% crossslope where feasible).
- Prevent ponding, erosion, and freeze-thaw damage.
- Integrate with existing natural hydrology, minimizing disturbance to wetlands, streams, and sensitive resource areas.
- Utilize green infrastructure practices to enhance water quality where appropriate.

Bio-swales should be incorporated along trail sections where stormwater treatment, flow attenuation, or natural resource protection is desired.

Location & Application

- Along segments with steep slopes or intensive cut-and-fill activity.
- Adjacent to roadway-facing trail sections to intercept runoff.
- Near stream crossings, wetlands, or NDDB areas to improve water quality.
- Where existing drainage structures are undersized or deteriorated.

Typical Section

- Bottom width: 2–4 ft
- Depth: 1–2 ft (maximum 3 ft unless safety fencing is provided)
- Side slopes: 3:1 (preferred) or 2:1 (maximum) with stabilization
- Longitudinal slope: 1–4% with check dams as needed on steeper grades.

Vegetation

- Use native species tolerant of periodic inundation and dry periods, such as: Switchgrass, blue-flag iris, sedges, soft rush, dogwoods, and willows
- Avoid woody species with intrusive root systems near culverts or utilities.

Trailhead and Rest Areas Strategically placed rest areas are encouraged, particularly near:

- Heritage and tourist sites (e.g., Palmer-Warner House).

• Commercial nodes (e.g., farm stands). • Natural attractions (e.g., Lion's Club Skating Pond, Wolf's Den Campground).

• Rest areas may include: • Benches and picnic tables placed on stable, level pads.

• Bike racks.

• Wayfinding signage.

• Trash receptacles.

Environmental and Site Constraints All design must comply with but not limited NDDB, DEEP and Army Corps of Engineers environmental permitting standards. Several site-specific constraints must be addressed in design:

Wetlands: Include but not limited to the area near the Lions Club Skating Pond and Succor Brook Crossing. Limited bridge width may require cantilevered or adjacent structures, mitigation or boardwalk structures may be needed. ROW Limitations: Easements or narrowing may be required.

Topographic Constraints: Extreme slopes near the Rose Farm Homestead Preserve may require terracing, retaining walls, or switchbacks.

Urban Design and Character Integration The trail will follow an "urban tier" framework through East Haddam's Town Street corridor:

• Tier 1: Rural-Suburban Transition Zone: with informal edges, naturalized vegetation, and lower usage intensity.

• Tier 2: Village Core Zone: near civic and historic sites with increased pedestrian amenities, lighting, and signage.

Design elements must reflect local character through:

Native plant palettes: Interpretive signage highlighting cultural history. Material finishes consistent with adjacent architecture.

Wayfinding and Signage: All signage must be ADA-compliant and consistent with the visual language of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Heritage Trail. Signage types include: Trail Markers at key junctions.

Interpretive Signs: near heritage sites.

Distance/Direction Markers: at intervals of 0.25 miles.

Utility and Drainage Coordination Trail design must coordinate with existing utilities: Drainage swales or underground pipes should be integrated into the 10' buffer zone. Avoid locating trails over major utility lines unless reinforced base treatments are applied. Utility access points must be surfaced to maintain trail usability.

Maintenance and Durability Trail design must support low-maintenance operation:

- Use of long-lasting, vandal-resistant materials. • Avoidance of steep slopes that may erode.
- Design of joints and transitions to minimize trip hazards.

Routine maintenance requirements:

Vegetation trimming. Surface patching (pavers or aggregate). Seasonal drainage inspections.

Initial Considerations

Trail Alignment

Trail Alignment Strategy and Routing Principles The proposed trail alignment prioritizes maximum accessibility while supporting local economic vitality and maintaining environmental sensitivity. The route is strategically designed to provide strong pedestrian and recreational connections to local businesses, cultural attractions, and residential neighborhoods, while minimizing impacts on wetlands, sensitive habitats, and established vegetation. The alignment emphasizes the use of public land, including town-owned properties

and existing public rights-of-way (ROWs), with minimal reliance on private easements. Key design principles include:

• Following existing topography to minimize grading and environmental disruption;

• Providing connections to local businesses, parks, and historic sites;

• Creating a safe and comfortable user experience, especially at key crossings and high-traffic intersections.

As part of the preliminary study, the proposed multi -use trail alignment along Town Street (Route 82) in East Haddam was carefully reviewed through site visits and test routing on both the east and west sides of the corridor. The preferred alignment begins near Daniel Road, follows the west side of Town Street, and continues south to the Palmer-Warner House, where a pedestrian crossing brings the trail to the east side, ending at the bridge over Hemlock Valley Brook. This routing responds to several constraints: the limited rightof-way that would require multiple easements, existing wetlands and drainage conditions that pose mitigation challenges, and the importance of maintaining access to local businesses while highlighting the area's historic and scenic character. Collectively, the trail has been divided into four sections for evaluation.

Section 1

Daniel Road–Town Street Intersection to Ray Hill Road–Town Street Intersection This segment is approximately 2,884 feet long and remains on the west side of Town Street. It passes multiple private parcels, requiring easements at 385 Town Street, 6 Brooke Hill Road, and 381 Town Street. At 381 Town Street, a short retaining wall is recommended to protect the adjacent property while maintaining safe clearance for trail users. The corridor in this section is generally open, providing broad seasonal views and a unique stream-crossing opportunity at Succor Brook near the intersection of Town Street and Mount Parnassus Road. The Lions Club Skating Pond offers an existing recreational destination, particularly in the winter months, and nearby businesses such as Cactus Bistro & Bar, Two Wrasslin' Cats Coff ee House & Café, and the Shagbark True Value Hardware store contribute to the local attraction of this segment. The trail character in this section will emphasize open views, a blend of natural and commercial interest, and safe connections for pedestrians. Existing culverts will require upgrades and may be converted into green infrastructure elements that provide both ecological benefit and functional stormwater management.

Two pedestrian bridges are proposed along Succor Brook to preserve existing vehicle circulation while ensuring a continuous trail experience. At the Norwich Road/Town Street intersection, a safer pedestrian crossing is essential, given the potential for trail users to visit nearby businesses and for visitors to use the Lions Club Skating Pond as a parking and trailhead location. Intersection improvements would include narrowing crossing distances, adding a median refuge island, and installing advanced pedestrian-activated flashing beacons to address the high traffic volumes of this busy junction. Additionally, a retaining wall adjacent to Cactus Bistro will not only separate trail users from traffic but also provide ADAcompliant grades for all trail users.

Segment 2

Norwich Road–Town Street Intersection to Ray Hill Road–Town Street Intersection In this segment, the preferred trail alignment is located along the west side of Town Street (Route 82), traversing a combination of privately owned parcels and Town-owned land. At the north end of the section, the primary easement need involves three parcels owned by Casner Realty LLC, where steep natural contours and limited right-of-way create geometric and grading challenges. As illustrated in the concept sections, a range of slope-stabilization strategies may be considered— including 2:1 slopes, 1:1 reinforced slopes, and retaining wall systems. To minimize encroachment on adjacent private properties, this concept assumes no drainage swale on the private side, limiting the overall trail width to a minimum 10- foot trail tread with a 2–3 foot shoulder or swale on the right-of-way side.

An alternative alignment on the east side of Town Street was also reviewed. This option would extend from the Lions Club Skating Pond parking area to approximately 337 Town Street, functioning as a

secondary spur for visitors interested in accessing the pond area. However, the horizontal curve of Route 82 in this location creates a tight turning radius and restricted sight distance, presenting a safety concern for both trail users and motorists. In addition, existing residential structures sit very close to the right-ofway, leaving insufficient space to accommodate a consistent multi-use trail. While the nearby Ansible Market offers a potential local destination, the east-side alignment is not feasible for the primary trail corridor.

The proposed pedestrian bridge on the west side of the existing Succor Brook crossing is also proposed within this segment. The timing and phasing of this structure can be adjusted based on available funding and construction conditions. The bridge remains a flexible implementation element intended to increase safety and provide adequate width for the trail where the existing culvert serves only vehicular traffic.

Segment 3:

Ray Hill Road–Town Street Intersection to River Road–Town Street Intersection In this segment, the trail transitions from the west side of Town Street to the east side, with a roadway crossing located just south of the PalmerWarner House. A designated crosswalk with a safety-flash beacon—or another traffic-calming device with equivalent function—is proposed to ensure a safe crossing for pedestrians, trail users, and motorists along this section of Route 82. This area contains two major historic resources: the Palmer-Warner House and the East Haddam Historical Society Museum.

After completing the crossing, the trail continues along the east side of Town Street, providing direct connections to nearby local businesses, including the Stanley-Whitney Winery and the Wolf's Den Campground. The concentration of historic sites and local commercial destinations in this area enhances the overall user experience by offering multiple points of interest adjacent to the trail corridor.

Beyond these immediate destinations, the trail will also extend toward Chapmans Pond Preserve and the adjacent natural conservation trail network, with further linkages to Gillette Castle. Collectively, this segment creates a key junction that integrates local attractions while establishing access to regional destinations for future visitors.

Segment 4:

River Road–Town Street Intersection to the Bridge over the Hemlock Valley Brook As the trail progresses toward its final south segment, it moves away from the East Haddam center and leads visitors to the Rose Farm Homestead Preserve. In this section, the trail is positioned along the east side of Town Street, emphasizing a nature-focused travel experience.

At the onset, near the rear of Light Farm, Inc., decorative or safety fencing is proposed to address visitor safety and prevent trespassing. In areas with aggressive topography—such as deep ditches, steep slopes, and rocky conditions—cutand-fill techniques will be employed. A 12-foot wide trail is recommended, with a center stripe to separate pedestrian and cyclist traffic. The slope in this segment, which averages to 8%, poses a challenge for meeting accessibility requirements, and efforts will be made to ensure compliance with ADA standards.

Prior to any ground disturbance, geotechnical assessments will be conducted to confirm site conditions and ensure the trail's stability and safety.within the Lower Connecticut River Valley.

The site improvements for this segment also include upgrades to the existing trailhead at the Rose Farm Homestead Preserve. The current gravel area will be formalized into a designated parking facility featuring improved surface materials, defined parking bays, and ADA-compliant parking spaces. Additional site amenities—such as wayfinding signage, seating, and informational elements—are proposed to enhance user comfort and accessibility for visitors of all ages and user groups.

Notes: Phasing Note The section numbers identified in this study do not represent a finalized construction phasing plan. They serve only as location markers to support future decisions about construction sequencing. Each segment offers unique opportunities and addresses the needs of different local communities and stakeholder groups; therefore, the final phasing strategy will be developed to best support these varying priorities.

Public Outreach

As part of the East Haddam Town Street MultiUse Trail feasibility study, a preliminary public outreach effort was conducted to inform the community about the project scope and gather input on key considerations.
Stakeholders were briefed on the proposed trail corridor, including areas adjacent to private properties, and discussions focused on potential easements, trail alignment options, and opportunities to minimize impacts on neighboring landowners. Community members were invited to share local concerns, priorities, and "wish list" items for trail amenities, safety features, and access to recreational and cultural resources. Feedback collected during this process helped identify design opportunities, potential constraints, and strategies to balance public benefit with respect for private property and environmental resources.

Outreach Methods
Stakeholder Meetings
• Individual or small-group meetings with property owners
• Discussions with local businesses owners and residents

Public Meetings / Open House Events
Time: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. Location: Municipal Office Complex 1 Plains Road Moodus, Connecticut times, and locations Event format: Voting, Q&A, comments collection, Survey and Mapping exercise

Final Recommendations

The East Haddam Town Street Multi-Use Trail represents a significant opportunity to enhance community connectivity, support local economic activity, and provide accessible recreational options for residents and visitors of all ages. Based on the feasibility study, site conditions, and survey feedback, it is recommended that the trail be implemented in a phased approach, prioritizing Sections 1 and 2 for initial construction. These segments offer the highest immediate value, providing safe and accessible connections to local businesses, historic sites, and recreational destinations such as the Lions Club Skating Pond, while also accommodating the majority of anticipated trail users, particularly older adults and walkers.

Sections 3 and 4 should follow in subsequent phases, integrating scenic, historic, and natural features while establishing connections to broader regional destinations, including Chapmans Pond Preserve and Gillette Castle State Park. This phased strategy allows the community to experience tangible benefits early, while managing construction complexity, easement negotiations, and budget considerations.

Trail design must carefully address practical considerations identified during the study, including stormwater management, slope stabilization, drainage improvements, retaining walls, and safe roadway crossings. The use of ADA-compliant surfaces, buffers, and signage will ensure accessibility and safety for all users. Integrating the trail with community spaces and local businesses will maximize recreational and economic benefits, while sensitive alignment choices will minimize impacts to wetlands, topography, and private properties.

In conclusion, advancing the East Haddam Town Street Multi-Use Trail in this phased, carefully

designed manner will create a durable, safe, and engaging corridor that supports healthy lifestyles, strengthens community connectivity, and highlights the town's natural and historic character. This project is expected to serve as a model for future trail development in the Lower Connecticut River Valley.

Preliminary Opinion of Probable Construction Costs

Town Street Trail/ All sections

Item #1 Section 1	$1,031,742.32
Item #2 Section 2	$ 624,313.49
Item #3 Section 3	$ 906,510.84
Item #4 Section 4	$ 692,681.35
Total Construction Items	**$ 3,255,248.00**

Mr. Brownell asked if Mr. Ventres wanted to add anything before opening to any questions from the audience.

Mr. Ventres stated that he would present a 5 – 6 year plan to the Board of Finance to budget money along with a DEEP grant that would cover 80% of the cost.

Ms Kinsman inquired about property easements.

Mr. Ventres shared that most property owners are active walkers and are very interested in this project. There are a few areas that are of concern, but a full design would need to be done before this could be addressed.

Mr. Curtin expressed his concern about the width and homeowners crossing the path to enter or exit their property.

Mr. Casner stated that there has been a positive reaction from the landowners and helping the businesses in the area with access from both bicyclists and pedestrians.

Nick Griffin, 55 Maple Street, is excited about this and asked how many total miles on both sides of the river this was.

Mr. Casner replied that in total would be 17 miles.

Ron Wheeler, 150 Clark Hill, is also excited and asked how this would be paid for.

Mr. Ventres stated that the majority would mainly be paid for with grant money from DEEP along with the National Park Service. Mr. Casner expanded that the Park Service will help find federal funding.

Bill McEnery, 1 Lumberyard Rd, expressed his concern on Section 1 at the Succor Brook Bridge and suggested that the two projects be completed together.

Mr. Ventres stated that both bridges and the intersection would be reconfigured.

Christine Vanscoy, 253 Town Street, stated that from Ray of Light to Staehly's Farm stand is a passing zone and is concerned about the safety in that area.

Mr. Ventres was not aware and noted that for future attention.

Rochelle Davis, 55 Maple Avenue, is also excited about the idea and asked if the businesses in the area had been included in these conversations, noting that Ballek's often has pedestrians.

Mr. Casner stated that 90% of the businesses are in favor.

Laurel White, 191 Norwich Salem Road, is concerned about accidents in the Ray Hill/Rt. 82/Petticoat Lane area.

Mr. Ventres will check with DOT.

Mr. Gillis, referring back to Mr. Curtin's comment, asked Ms. Wu of similar residential areas and the risks of homeowners crossing the path.

Ms. Wu stated that they will work with their engineer to ensure safety.

Mr. Gillis asked if there was an alternative to crossing at the Palmer Martin House due to safety concerns in that area.

Mr. Ventres shared that the entrance to the Palmer Martin House has been moved farther south towards Phanauf's property which will help alleviate the congestion there.

Mr. Gillis asked where the "pinch points" are.

Mr. Ventres stated the following: at the Industrial Park entrance, across from Miller's property and Sanibel's, and the ledge just past Ray of Light.

Mr. Curtin asked if the path is the same level as the road.

Mr. Ventres replied, yes.

Ms. Langdon asked about a cantilever area.

Mr. Ventres said the only structures are 2 bridges.

Mr. Robidoux, of EDC, stated that the Airline Trail has road crossings in Colchester and Hebron. In Hamden there is a section of trail that goes behind businesses, and in Avon, a trail goes through both residential and commercial areas. All have signs for both bikers and pedestrians.

Laurel White is concerned about the site line issue.

Mr. Curtin concurred.

Mr. Casner agreed that the Palmer Martin House was a major concern, however they are moving their driveway south and that the bank is going to be cut back, giving a much better site line for the area.

Ms. Kinsman asked where Chester is with this process.

Mr. Casner said they are running from the Ferry into the center of town, Rt 148, and looping around to Main Street.

Mr. Brownell asked how were they able to do this on the road.

Mr. Casner shared that the state is adding 4' on that road, as they don't have the right of way that we have with DOT in East Haddam, 75 – 100' in some areas, but that it varies.

Mr. Ventres pointed out that River Road will be painted and have signage due to it's narrow width.

Mr. Gillis asked if we had looked at having both options.

Mr. Ventres said there will be both, especially at the pinch points.

Ms. Kinsman stated that the estimate is 3.5M and asked what the real cost will be over 5 years.

Mr. Ventres hasn't done that calculation yet.

Ms. Kinsman asked what the Phase 1 cost would be.

Mr. Ventres stated $157,00. The DEEP grant would pay their portion and the town would pay 30K.
Per DEEP, the money must be allocated before they will allow the grant.

Ms. Kinsman asked when the realistic time frame to launch the project would be.

Mr. Ventres stated 2027-2028.

Mr. Brownell questioned the process, being that this must go to the Board of Finance.

Mr. Ventres explained that it is a combined project with both Planning and Zoning and the Economic Development Commission.

6) LAND USE ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Ventres passed out review material for the next meeting focusing on The Moodus Center Regulations.
He also said he received a request for limited car sales in the IG-1 zone. Existing regulations will be sent out with the next agenda.

7) ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Curtin to adjourn at 8:26 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gillis and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Olson
Recording Secretary