

Pathway to Revitalization

Economic Benefits of Developing a
Multiuse Trail within the Naugatuck
River Greenway

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Overview

- Who/What is NVCOG?
- What is a Greenway?
- Why Build One?
- Funding Options
- Lessons Learned



Naugatuck River Greenway A Regional Vision

The Naugatuck River - A Storied Past

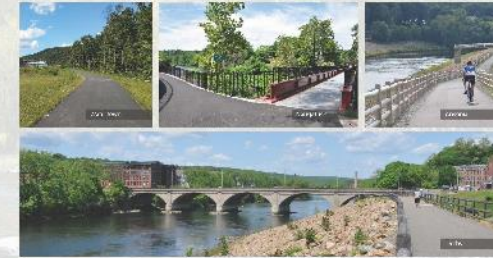
The Naugatuck River is the largest tributary of the Housatonic River, and is the largest river entirely within the state of Connecticut. The name "Naugatuck" is derived from an Algonquian term meaning "lone tree by the fishing place", hinting at the bounty of Salmon, Shad, Alewife and Herring that once inhabited the river. The steep grade of the Naugatuck and its tributaries provided an ideal source of power for early mills, powering the production of textiles, metal and rubber products and driving the economy of the valley for nearly two centuries.

An Industrial Legacy

For decades, the river was a dumping ground for sewage and industrial waste. The waterway became known for its odor and changing colors depending on what dyes and wastes were being discharged upstream at the time. The river no longer supported aquatic life and became toxic to humans. Residents were physically separated from the river when a railroad was built along it in the 1840s, when flood controls were developed as a response to the devastating flood of 1955, and when the Route 8 Expressway was constructed shortly thereafter.

A Remarkable Recovery

Following the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972, sewage treatment plants were upgraded and industrial wastewater discharges were regulated. These actions, in addition to a general decline of certain industries in the region, greatly reduced pollution impacts to the river and improved water quality. Over the past several decades, the Naugatuck River has made a remarkable comeback. Fish, birds and other wildlife have returned and the river is increasingly a destination for anglers, paddlers and sightseers. Work to protect and improve river water quality continues.



A Bright Future - The Naugatuck River Greenway

The Naugatuck River Greenway (NRG) is an officially designated Connecticut State Greenway consisting of the open and green spaces along the Naugatuck River. The NRG Trail, a non-motorized multi-use trail is being developed that will follow the river for 44 miles through 11 communities from Torrington to Derby, connecting those green spaces. It will provide a non-motorized transportation option, support tourism and economic development, and improve the health and quality of life of residents.

Open sections of the NRG Trail are already providing a high quality and attractive corridor accessible to users of all abilities, once again harnessing the vitality of the river for the benefit of the region's residents. Work to connect existing sections is underway with parks, waterfront promenades, overlooks, and river access all figuring into plans.

Visit www.nvcogct.org for more information.



Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

- Forum for Regional Planning and Cooperation – 19 Municipalities
- Governed by Chief Elected Officials
- Planning activities focus on Transportation, Land Use, Environment, Brownfields & Shared Regional Services
- Active Transportation – Pedestrian & Bicycle
 - Naugatuck River Greenway Trail
 - Farmington Canal Heritage Trail
 - Steele Brook Greenway
 - Shelton Greenway
 - Larkin Bridle Trail
 - Middlebury/Woodbury Greenways
 - Naugatuck Valley Trails Online Interactive Viewer



What is a Greenway?

- "Greenway" means a corridor of open space that (1) may protect natural resources, preserve scenic landscapes and historical resources or offer opportunities for recreation or nonmotorized transportation, (2) may connect existing protected areas and provide access to the outdoors, (3) may be located along a defining natural feature, such as a waterway, along a man-made corridor, including an unused right-of-way, traditional trail routes or historic barge canals or (4) may be a greenspace along a highway or around a village. (CGS section 23-100)
- Connecticut Greenways Council designates CT greenways

Multiuse Trails

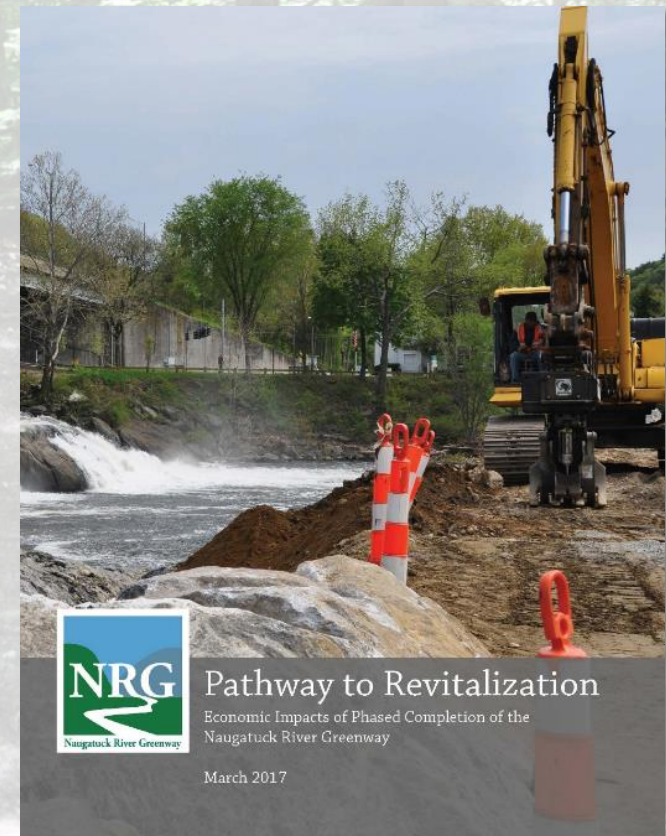
- 10-12' wide, bidirectional
- Paved or soft surface
- Pedestrians, bicycles and other non-motorized uses
- Alternative Transportation
- Recreation & Exercise
- Economic Benefits
 - Local Spending
 - Health
 - Quality of life
 - Livable Communities
 - Property Values



Why build one?

Naugatuck River Greenway Economic Impact Study

- Conducted by NVCOG, with NHCOCG, CT Center for Economic Analysis and UCONN
- Provide municipal officials with data about economic and health benefits of continued construction of the NRG Trail
- Study Tasks:
 - Literature Review
 - Data Collection – IR Trail Counters
 - Interview Surveys on open trails
 - Focus Groups – Farmington Canal Heritage Trail
 - Economic Assessment – Horizon Year = 2031
 - Trail Construction Costs
 - Direct Spending
 - Consumer Surplus
 - Monetized Health Benefits
 - Macro-Economic Impacts – GDP, Income, New Jobs



Economic Benefits of Investing in the NRG Trail

- At full build-out, 44+ miles & estimated 2.6 million annual visits
- Direct Spending by trail users – \$8-\$14 from Intercept Surveys
- Trail Construction Costs – ±\$77.2 million (2016\$)
- Amenity Benefits / Consumer Surplus – ±\$34.6 million (2031)
- Monetized Health Benefits – ±\$259.6 million (2031)
- Macro-Economic Impacts using REMI – simulates county state economies
 - Population (new & retained) ≈2,500 people
 - Employment (new) ≈1,400 jobs
 - Real Domestic Gross Product ≈\$127.9 million; 0.21%
 - Personal Income ≈\$205.8 million; 0.16%

Funding Opportunities

- State – Recreational Trails Program:
 - \$5,000 - \$500,000
 - 80:20 (State/Local) funding ratio
- State – Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP)
 - \$300,000 - Up
 - Design – 100% Local; Construction – 100% State
 - Administered through the COG
- Federal – Transportation Alternatives
 - 80:20 (State/Local) funding ratio
 - Federal Design Standards
 - Administered through the CTDOT
 - Very competitive; limited funding



Lessons Learned...

- Communities and residents realize substantial economic benefits from investments in developing multiuse trails
- Even if residents don't use the trails, they derive benefit from the trails and feel it enhances community value
- Improves the quality of life of host communities
- Results in a substantial return on the investment; economic benefits far exceed the cost to build
- Although this study focused on the NRG Trail, similar benefits can be expected from other in open space & outdoor investments

Lessons Learned...

- Safety

- Engage public safety officials early
- Provide for easy locating along trail

- Amenities

- Wayfinding and Signage are essential
- Provide for connections to pedestrian network

- Demonstrate Value

- Educate leaders and the public about trail benefits

- Maintenance

- Create plan and budget from the beginning
- Engage volunteers

- Business/Community Engagement

- Help businesses capitalize on the trail
- Integrate the trail into community planning
- Program events and activities

- Routing and Planning

- Integrate other uses like playgrounds
- Create destinations

Thank You!



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W: <https://nvcogct.gov/what-we-do/naugatuck-river-greenway/>

