

February 2, 2016

The Trails Committee consisting of Patrice Carson, Lance Dimock, Robert Lessard, Gwen Marrion, Robert Morra and Joyce Stille is providing this update to the citizens of Bolton regarding the possible Bolton Greenway Extension Project from Quarry Road to the Coventry town line with a spur down Tolland Road to Indian Notch Park. This project is being completed under a DEEP Recreational Trails Grant. To date the consultant, BSC Group, has prepared a draft Preliminary Design Report for the project which is posted on the town's website. Comments are welcome and to date we have held two Public Informational sessions where we have also received remarks from the public.

The Committee wanted to provide some history and next steps, and clarify the following:

1. The project is still in the planning phase and no decision has been made about whether or not to build the trail.
2. No decisions have been made by town officials on the project.
3. If this project were to go forward it would be expected to be completed without town funds being required, meaning it would be fully funded by state and/or federal grants. The reason for that is because the majority of the project is entirely on State of Connecticut property within the Route 44 right-of-way. There is a small spur on Tolland Road that is mainly a painting project to restripe the road to add a shared bike lane.

Brief History: This project was started when the town received grant money to do a preliminary feasibility and design report. During the same timeframe, the State of Connecticut funded a project called NextGenCT Pathways to UConn which is studying the connection by multi-modal transportation (i.e., bus, car, van pool, bicycle, trails) of the UConn campus in Storrs with the UConn branches in Hartford and Farmington. The logical route connecting the UConn campuses is on the Route 44 corridor, and as a result this project has regional as well as a local significance.

Next Steps: The Final Preliminary Design Report by BSC Group will be issued soon. With funds remaining under the DEEP grant, BSC Group will be completing an existing conditions mapping of the project corridor within the next six months (depending on the weather). It will show existing conditions on the north side of Route 44 and a portion of Tolland Road. The survey will benefit the town and property owners along the proposed route by identifying the north side of the Route 44 State right of way, Town right of way on Tolland Road, and any possible discrepancies with the preliminary survey.

The State will make the ultimate decision about whether the trail is built because Route 44 is a State road. Any decision by the State will be based in part on the NextGen Study. BSC Group's work has been shared with the NextGen Study Consultants. Having a detailed preliminary design for the trail puts Bolton in a proactive position as to trail location based on BSC Group's analysis. The Trails Committee will continue to work with the Selectmen and State throughout any trail consideration, design, and funding process, including the NextGen study.

If the State decides to move forward with the project, additional public meetings would be held but probably wouldn't begin for three to five years due to the state funding and review processes. Should that happen, there would be additional input requested from the town of Bolton and its residents. Until that time we encourage you to continue to submit your comments to Patrice Carson, Director of Community Development, at patrice.carson@boltonct.org.