CULTIVATING CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Resource Conservation & Development Area

“Connecticut’s Market Place for Community Solutions”...

George Krivda, USDA
Air Line Trail

MASTER PLAN CONCEPT

MEETING GOAL

• CONCURRENCE AND SUPPORT FROM CTDEEP (PROPERTY OWNER) TO COLLABORATE WITH A 12 TOWN TASK FORCE (TO BE FORMED) TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF A MASTER PLAN FOR THE AIR LINE TRAIL
The Air Line Trail Becomes A Reality

In 1996, DEEP proposed the rehabilitation of the railbed as a multipurpose trail and linear state park.

1998 National and State Rec Trails Program Funding - Towns working with enthusiastic volunteers obtained funds and began working

• 2002 Hebron signage and Lebanon East Hampton, Colchester, worked together to link their sections;
• 2006 Thompson restoration
• 2007 Colchester, East Hampton restoration
• 2008 Windham with Willimantic White Water Partnership; 2009 Hebron-Colchester spur;
• 2010 Chaplin Renovation of 3.5 miles of Airline Trail in Chaplin completing the connection between Windham and Hampton;
• 2014 Pomfret & CT Audubon develop logo and Station
• 2015 Portland in big project;
• 2016-17 The Last Green Valley Utilizing the upgraded High Efficiency Trail Assessment Process.
The Air Line Trail Becomes A Reality

DEEP State Parks Projects:

- State Trail Plan document
- Air Line Trail Design Guidance
- Marketing plan
- CT Rail Trail Explorer
The Air Line Trail Becomes A Reality

DOT Projects

Restoration Project DOT provided just over 1 million of Federal and State funding. Surfacing, drainage, bridges, signage, some parking improvements.
The Air Line Trail Becomes A Reality

DOT Projects

In collaboration with USDA, Putnam-Pomfret sewer line extension and trail restoration.
The Air Line Trail Becomes A Reality

If you build it....

ECG from Willimantic to Putnam is planned for designation.
The Air Line Trail Becomes A Reality

If you build it....

Significant and surprising number of users are being counted!
The Air Line Trail – The Future Looks Bright!

Nationally: KATY Trail State Park in Missouri; Erie Canal Trail

In Connecticut: Multi-Town brochure and signage
The Air Line Trail – The Future Looks Bright!

Nationally:
- KATY Trail State Park in Missouri
- Erie Canal show booklet

In Connecticut:
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail – bike patrol, breweries, restaurants, amenities
Master Plan Goal
Re-establish Air Line Trail’s Economic Significance & Value

Historic Town Center Connections

The Air Line Railroad not only increased the volume and speed of sending commodity, farm products and other freight to market, but also encouraged personal travel. The railroad provided transportation to the cities as well as better mail service and transport for children who boarded the train to attend high school in Willimantic.

During the summer months, the railroad brought a huge influx of city people to the country for vacations. Many local farm families boarded these summer visitors for the extra income. The railway made possible the start of the resort business still flourishing on Williams Pond.
GOALS OF THE MASTER PLAN

Inventory of Adjacent Town Land Use, Planning, Economic Strategies
Develop Regional Collaboration Options Based on Best Practices
Wayfinding to Off Trail Towns, Tourist Amenities & Connections to other trail systems
What can trail users find off the trail in adjacent towns?

Strategies for Town Economic Development to Educate and Create New Small Recreational Supportive Business

Explore and Develop Framework for Continued Twelve Town Air Line Trail Collaborative
Fundraising, Calendars, Events, Marketing, Etc.

Regional Share Service Options and Efficiencies for Collaborative Maintenance and Improvements to Trail, Parking Areas and Amenities

Natural Resource Inventory to Highlight and Map Critical Areas for Maintenance Concerns, Infrastructure Installation as well as Promoting Eco-Tourism and Education

Enhanced Marketing and Branding to Include Town Amenities, Air Line Trail Events and Trail Information
New Website with Links to CTDEEP and Planning for Cell Phone Based Apps

Coordinate Regulatory and Design Objectives for Adjacent Land Use to Protect Scenic Integrity of the Corridor
LOCATION CRITERIA
AIR LINE TRAIL CONTEXT FOR RURAL PROSPERITY

• Collaboration Leverages Rural Location for USDA Municipal Eligibility for Community Infrastructure
• Airline Trail Corridor Traverses Last Green Valley
• Village Center Connections and Opportunity
• Promotes Grassroots Business Creativity
  • Hospitality
  • Local Food and Farms
  • Recreational Tourism Business
  • Environmental Educational
• Promotes Lifestyle to Attract New Business – Work From Home Residents

“Rural areas have unique assets which can create social and economic opportunity, like affordable real estate and cost of living, acreage for expansive industries, strong communities, and hard-working people.” – Center on Rural Innovation
Twelve Town Committee & Task Force Structure

MASTER PLAN PROJECT COMMITTEE
1-2 Representatives From Each Town

ECONOMIC TASK GROUP: 10 Representative
Stakeholders from business, commerce, non-profits

MAINTENANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN
TASK GROUP: 1-2 Representatives From Each Town
Public Works and Planning Staff & CTDEEP Representatives

ENVIRONMENTAL TASK GROUP: 10-12 Representative
stakeholders from conservation and environmental organizations
and CTDEEP Representatives
TWELVE TOWN ALL STAR TEAM

Representatives Who Gathered on September 13th to Discuss Possibilities and Met with Property Owner – CTDEEP on September 26th

Windham: Jim Bellano, Li Yukshan, Jim Rivers
Putnam: Delpha Very
Portland: Mary Dickerson
Pomfret: Maureen Nicholson, Charlie Tracy, Nick Gardner
Lebanon: Phil Chester, Donna Koenig, Jay Tuttle
Hebron: Rich Calarco, Brian O’Connell, Mike O’Leary, John Guszkowski
Hampton: John Guszkowski, Allan Cahill, J. Arriola
East Hampton: Jeremy DeCarli
East Haddam: Rob Smith
Colchester: Randall Benson, Jay Gigliotti
Chaplin: Jay Gigliotti

CME Associates: Mike D’Amato
Salmon River Watershed: Pat Young
Portland: Ashley Majorowski
Columbia: Mark Walter, Paula Stahl
Thompson: Chris Elkinson, Ken Beausoleil
Staff Support
CTDEEP: Laurie Giannotti
CTRC&D: Jeanne Davies
GEOGRAPHY

Project Stakeholders Implementation:

- Twelve ALSPT Towns
  - Conservation Commissions
  - Trails Committees
  - Public Works
  - Planning and Land Use Departments
  - Economic Development Commissions
- Two Conservation Districts
- Numerous Regional Land Trusts
- Three Transit Districts
- Four Councils of Governments
- Three CT Workforce Development Areas
- Numerous State Parks, Forests, Land Trust Lands, Town Open Space, Municipal Parks
- One CTDOT Highway District
- CTDOT Bike Ped Coordination
- East Coast Greenway
- Salmon River Watershed
- The Last Green Valley
Focus of Business Development for Village Center

Manufacturing Past
- Area in decline from 1970s

Resurgence of small locally owned businesses
- Bike Shop
- Coffee Shop
- Restaurant
- Bakery
EXAMPLE OF TRAILSIDE GRASS ROOTS BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY
Hebron, Connecticut – Route 85
Your Local Bike Shop

AirLine Cycles is the classic small town America bike shop, where cutting edge technology meets old school community. Whether you are looking for the latest in Di2 electronic shifting or clutch derailleurs for better chain retention, or searching high and low for a retro shifter to complete your vintage mountain bike restoration, AirLine Cycles has the expertise you are looking for!
REGIONAL CONTEXT

Existing and Future Statewide Links

East Coast Greenway Trail
Hop River Trail
Farmington Canal Trail
Colchester Link
Goodwin Trail (Future)
Central CT Planned Loop Trail

Massachusetts – Quinebaug Park & River Trail, the Tri-State Marker Loop and more.
Picture yourself ... pedaling across the entire country on a safe, seamless and scenic pathway—or walking a local trail that connects along historic routes. Imagine the incomparable experience of exploring America’s heritage by trail—its potential, its beauty and bounty, its people and places. Consider the economic opportunities and the benefits for communities along the route of a multiuse trail that stretches more than 3,700 miles between Washington, D.C., and Washington State.
JOIN US ON THE AIR LINE TRAIL

MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE KICK OFF MEETING – LATE AUGUST – EARLY SEPTEMBER 2019