



LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY HERITAGE TRAIL

ACTION PLAN

JULY 2023

Photo by Rachel Hunt Keating

THANK YOU + ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This action plan would not have been possible without the many contributions of ideas, energy, and time from the following individuals. On behalf of the Planning Team, we thank you for all of your hard work and your commitment to creating access to the outdoors in the Lower Connecticut River Valley!

Connecticut Department of Energy and the Environment (CT DEEP):

Kim Bradley
Laurie Gionnatti

Connecticut Landmarks:

Aaron Marcavitch*
Aileen Bastos
Erin Farley
Jocelyn Weaver
Lynette Fisher
Shaelyn Amaio

Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG):

Robert Haramut

The Nature Conservancy:

Alex Novarro
David Gumbart

Town of Chester:

Cindy Lignar
Patricia Bandzes

Town of East Haddam:

Bob Casner, Economic Development Committee*
Jim Ventres, Town Planner

Town of Haddam:

Bill Warner, Town Planner

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USWFS), Conte Refuge Visitor Services:

Dave Sagan
Jennifer Lapis

Thank you to the countless community members who volunteered their time to give us feedback and advice at our community engagement events and through our survey!

Technical Assistance Provided by:

National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA):

Mallory Zink, Public Historian*
Stephanie Stroud, Community Planner*

With support from:

Cindi Hron, Landscape Designer
Stephan Bastrycki, GIS mapping and drone footage

Photographs courtesy of the Planning Team unless otherwise noted.

* = Planning Team Member



The core planning team, from left to right: Steph Stroud, Aaron Marcavitch, Bob Casner, and Mallory Zink.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
THE LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY	4
The Connecticut River	5
The Small Towns of New England: East Haddam, Lyme, Chester, Haddam	5
The Indigenous Peoples of the Connecticut River Valley	7
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	8
Survey Results	10
THE PALMER-WARNER HOUSE	12
Interpretation and Welcome Center at the Palmer-Warner House	13
CREATING A TRAIL	17
Overall Trail Recommendations	19
Next Steps for Each Town	21
Available Funding and Resources	22



A few snapshots from our planning process, from left to right: The new interpretive signs at Palmer-Warner House; walking tour of Chester; exploring a Chapman Pond connector trail.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Lower Connecticut River Valley Heritage Trail grew out of a **community desire for walkability** in East Haddam, CT. Initially, a **one-mile pedestrian corridor was imagined to safely connect agritourism and historic sites along Town Street**. One of the sites along Town Street is the Palmer-Warner House, which is owned and operated by Connecticut Landmarks (CT Landmarks). Together, **CT Landmarks and the Town of East Haddam Economic Development Committee (EDC)** applied for and were awarded assistance from the **National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program (RTCA)** in 2021.

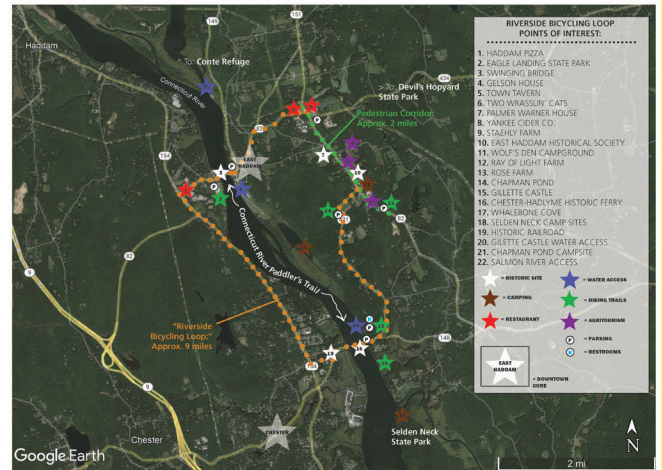
RTCA assistance was requested to focus on creating better pedestrian connectivity for historic and agritourism destinations along Town Street. The request was also to strengthen partnerships between CT Landmarks, the Town, and the community in East Haddam. **The RTCA staff, East Haddam EDC and CT Landmarks formed a planning team that met regularly.**

After looking at bicycling data and nearby community assets (see right), the planning team proposed **expanding the area of connectivity** to include bike routes to several more destinations and the **Town of Haddam**. Proposed connections included a loop trail with stops at the **swinging bridge from downtown East Haddam** (which is currently undergoing a series of pedestrian improvements), the very popular **Gillette Castle State Park**, and a river crossing at the **historic Hadlyme ferry**.

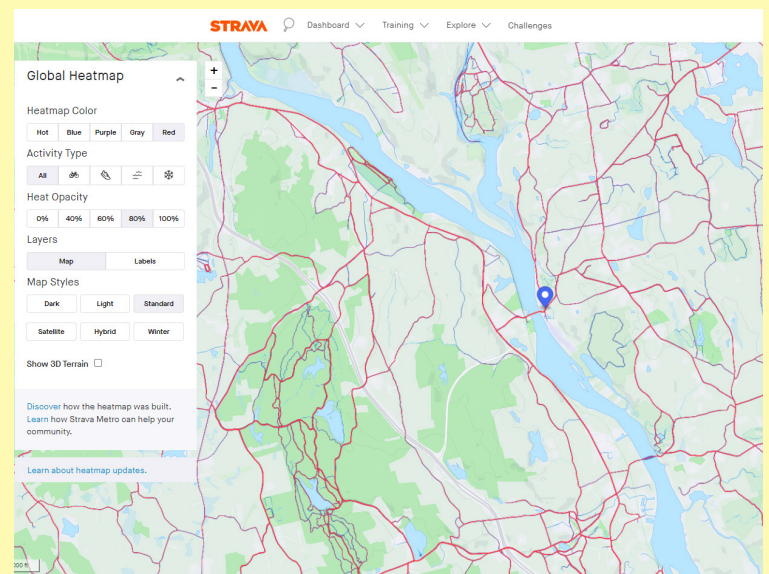
After a kick-off community workshop in the Fall of 2021 and additional outreach, the proposal grew even more: the loop expanded south to include the historic **downtown of Chester**, and north to include many beautiful **recreation sites along the river** and **parks in the village of Moodus**. Desires for safer routes to community destinations for recreation and tourism were abundant.

After several more community engagement events, the working group created a final proposal for the **Lower Connecticut River Valley Heritage Loop Trail** (see following page).

[DRAFT] EAST HADDAM PROPOSED RECREATION LOOP: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RTCA; APRIL 2022

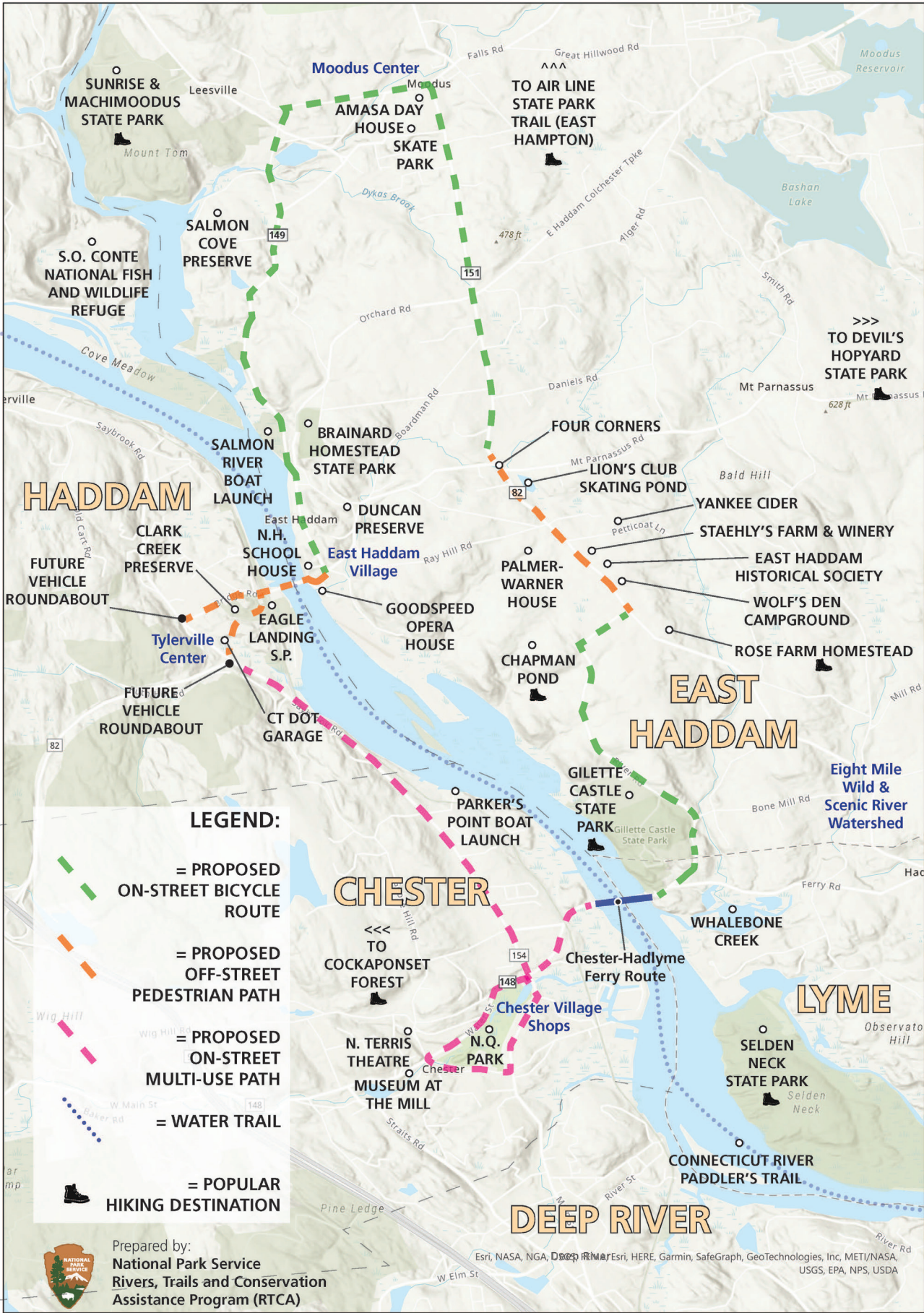


Above: A map of community assets, destinations and other and points of interests that were considered to create the proposed walking and biking routes.

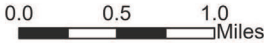


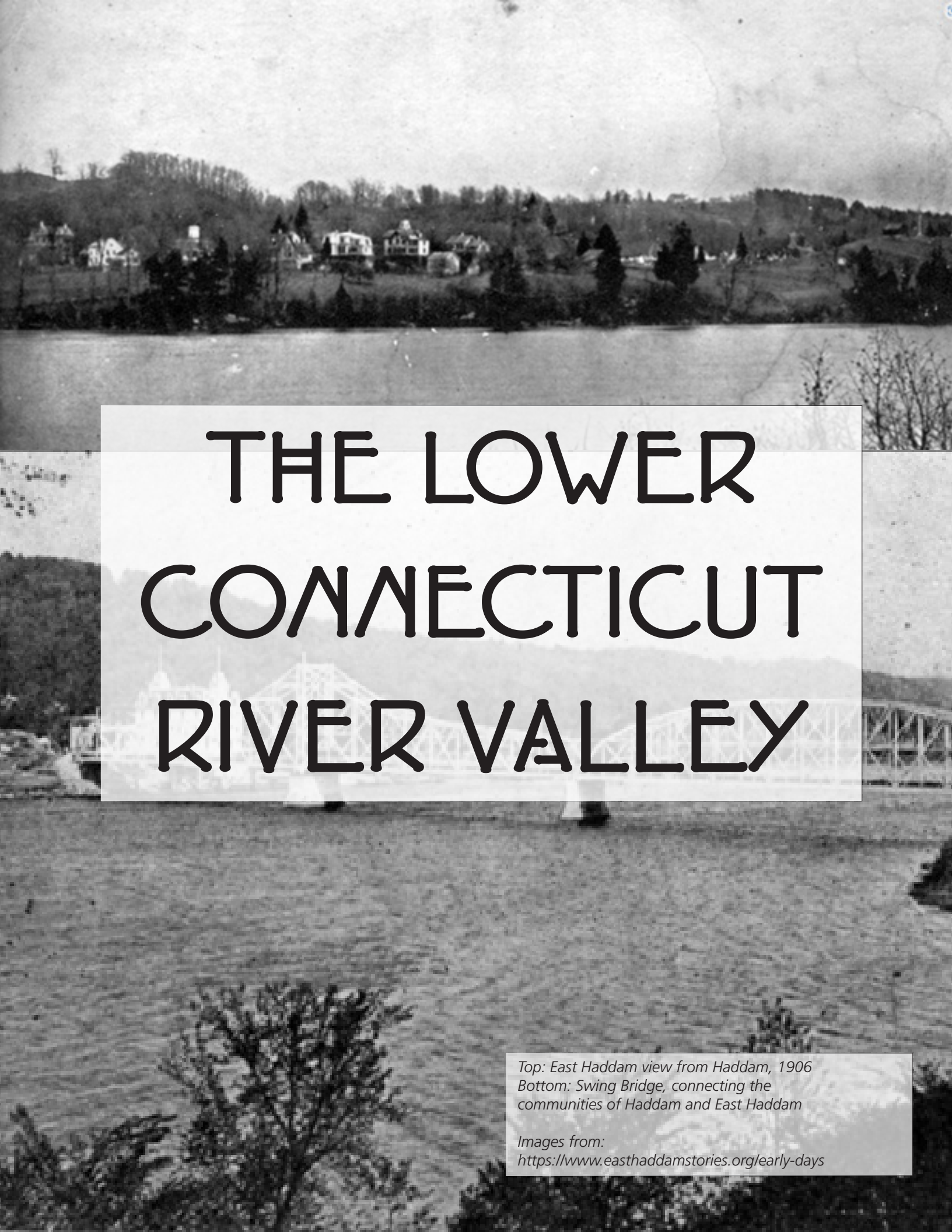
Above: a screenshot of a heat map of bike and pedestrian activity from Strava.com. This information helped the planning team learn where people are already exercising and what destinations they are traveling to in East Haddam and the surrounding areas. You can see activity on the map in red.

Using this information and other research, the team decided to expand the scope from just along Town Street in East Haddam to include a loop trail to other desirable destinations in the area.



**LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY
 HERITAGE TRAIL: CONCEPT MAP**
 JULY 2023

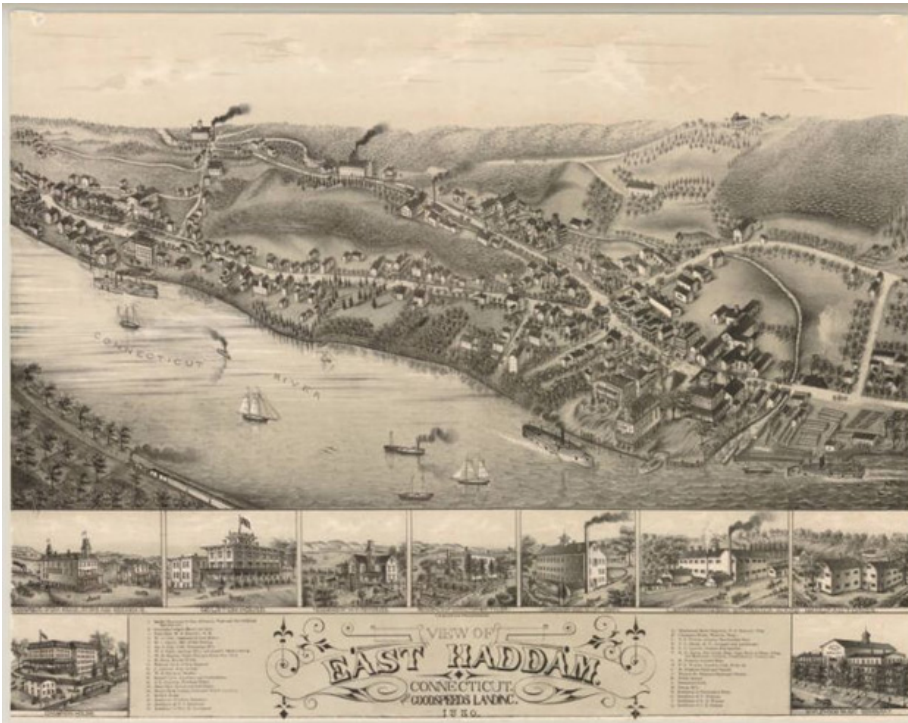




THE LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY

*Top: East Haddam view from Haddam, 1906
Bottom: Swing Bridge, connecting the
communities of Haddam and East Haddam*

*Images from:
<https://www.easthaddamstories.org/early-days>*



View of East Haddam, Connecticut. And Goodspeed's Landing, Boston, MA: O.H. Bailey & Company, 1880 - Connecticut Historical Society and [University of Connecticut Libraries, Map and Geographic Information Center](#)

THE SMALL TOWNS OF NEW ENGLAND: EAST HADDAM, LYME, CHESTER, HADDAM

East Haddam: "Once called Machimoodus or the place of noises by the native peoples. In 1662, settlers purchased the land for 30 coats, and the first permanent European residents established homesteads in 1685. In 1734 the town of East Haddam broke from Haddam and incorporated. Early commerce and industry included timber farming, shipbuilding, tanneries, and blacksmiths, and by the mid- 1800s retail shops, taverns, and mills proliferated in the area."

Lyme: "Formerly East Saybrook, the town separated from Saybrook in 1665 and named in 1667. The southern section of Lyme became the municipality of Old Lyme in 1855. An important early shipping channel, the Eightmile River connects to Hamburg Cove, the river's only navigable waterway. Shipbuilding, lumber, farms, and ferries were the major early industries. Having instituted zoning regulations as early as 1943, Lyme has managed to preserve much of its rural character and relatively undeveloped landscape."

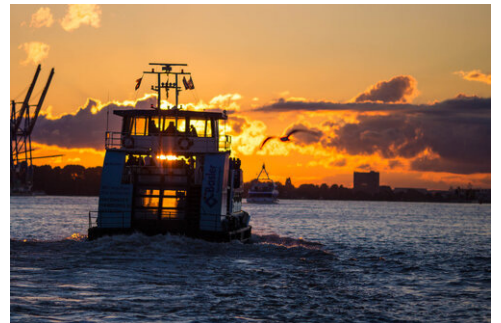
Source: <https://connecticuthistory.org/towns-page/>

THE CONNECTICUT RIVER

The Connecticut River has provided countless resources for inhabitants for thousands of years. It is the **longest river in New England, passing through four states and stretching over 400 miles.**

The river was used as a tool for navigation, trade, hunting, and farming for both the Indigenous groups and the colonists.

Industrialization in the 1800s changed how people utilized the river. Unfortunately, after decades of industrial wastes and agricultural run-off, the water began to overflow with dangerous toxins. In the 1970s, legislation targeted cleaning of the waterway and the surrounding environment. In 1985 the Connecticut River watershed became the **Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge**, and later it was designated as an **American Heritage River.**

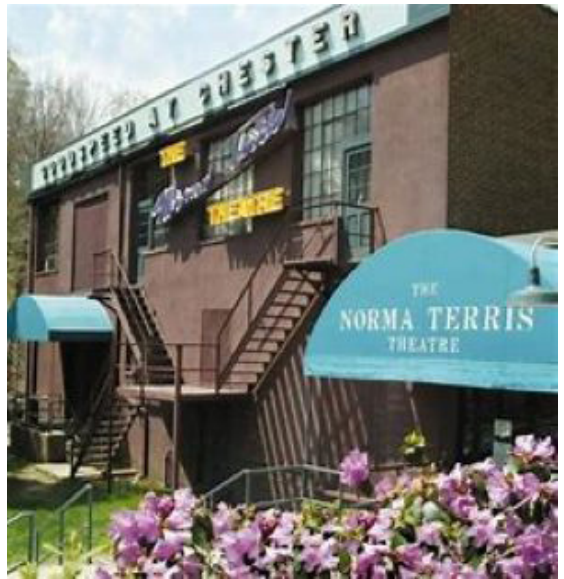


The Chester-Hadlyme Ferry, which transports pedestrians over the Connecticut River.

Chester: “The town was formed from the northern quarter of Saybrook and incorporated in 1836. Back in 1769, Jonathan Warner was granted permission to operate a ferry across the Connecticut River that became the Chester-Hadlyme Ferry, the second-oldest continuously operating ferry service in Connecticut.”

Haddam: “Incorporated in October of 1668, Haddam is the only town in Connecticut divided by the Connecticut River. It contains five villages – Hidden Lake, Higganum, Shailerville, and Tylerville on the west side of the river, and Haddam Neck on the east. For the first two hundred years of the town’s existence, the Connecticut River was a major source of income and transportation.”

Source: <https://connecticuthistory.org/towns-page/>



Images from Chester: Top right: The Norma Terris Theater. Center, right: Historic downtown Chester. Below: Fresh bread for sale at the Chester Farmer’s Market.



THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY

The Wangunk peoples were forcibly removed and displaced by colonists from the Hartford and Wethersfield area and relocated to the land around the oxbow bend based in the Connecticut River: present-day Middletown, Haddam, Portland, and East Hampton. Before colonists settled, the tribe had half a dozen or more villages around the area on both sides of the river.

The name Wangunk is the name used by scholars and contemporary Wangunk descendants. The Tribe had a strong connection with the Algonquian nations and were a part of the same language group. Although the Tribe is not recognized by the US Federal Government or by the State of Connecticut, some people still identify as Wangunk and carry on their cultural traditions. The Wangunks name means, 'the people at the bend in the river' because of their homelands in the fertile Connecticut River Valley.

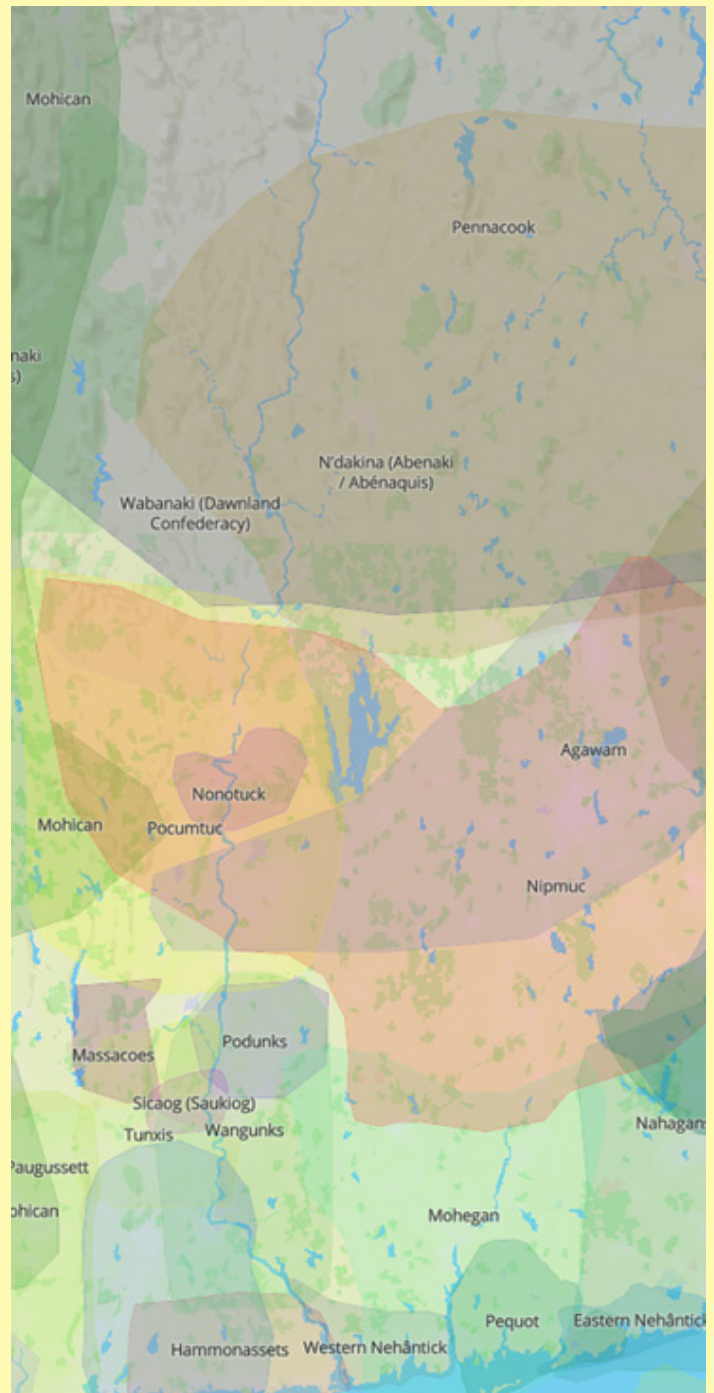
Source: *Wangunk Tribe: History of the Wangunk Tribe of Connecticut* (chathamhistoricalct.org)

To learn more about the Wangunk you can visit these sites:

The Native Northeast Portal: Wangunk | Native Northeast Portal: <https://nativenortheastportal.com/community/wangunk>

National Council on Public History: Repairing Hartford's Indigenous Past | National Council on Public History: <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/repairing-hartfords-indigenous-past/>

The Wesleyan Argus | O'Neil Family Artists Recreate Comforts from the Home: <http://wesleyanargus.com/2016/10/03/oneil-family-artists-recreate-comforts-from-the-home/>



Map of the Connecticut River Valley: Map from native-land.ca, whose mission to create and foster conversations about the history of colonialism, Indigenous ways of knowing, and settler-Indigenous relations: "What we are mapping is more than just a flat picture. The land itself is sacred, and it is not easy to draw lines that divide it up into chunks that delineates who 'owns' different part of land. In reality, we know that the land is not something to be exploited and 'owned', but something to be honored and treasured."

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Vista

Frederic Palmer and Edward Metzger created a space where they could look out and see what would have existed in the 18th century when the Barreres lived here. In the 40+ acres of land behind their home, they preserved the austere stone-walled fields from the property's days as a farm. Metzger placed stonery on the stone walls to create vignettes of the house when viewed from the fields.

Metzger was passionate about taking care of the gardens, the original flowers and maintained perennial plants, the trees, the stonery for the ivory statues he maintained, the stonery, dogs, frogs, displays, and more. Metzger's passion for Landmarks means to restore these vignettes in the future to honor Metzger's work.

Over the course of this partnership, the planning team put together and hosted **four major community engagement opportunities, with a community survey offered at each event.** Additionally, the planning team met with community members periodically for site visits and meetings in East Haddam and the surrounding towns.

August 04, 2021, Kick-Off Site Visit with the Town of East Haddam & CT Landmarks:

Project partners came together to meet on site in East Haddam. RTCA team members were able to view the house and neighboring trail system, in addition to looking at the pedestrian corridor.



Site visit at the Palmer-Warner House

May 04, 2022, Community Conversation at East Haddam Grange Hall & Community Center:

This event was primarily focused on adjacent landowners along Town Street. Concerns about flooding, traffic, and development were shared. Helpful guidance was given to expand the route north to Moodus and southwest to Chester. This event was well attended by most neighbors along the corridor.



Community workshop at the East Haddam Grange

June 02, 2022, Meeting with the Town of Chester and walk with the RiverCOG:

Planning team met with community members in the Town of Chester and the RiverCOG to walk the proposed walking route through downtown Chester.

July 23, 2022, Feedback Session at Palmer-Warner House:

Two presentations were given to CT Landmark members and the public, with a trail-walk on the proposed and freshly-mowed interpretive loop along the house and fields. Additionally, attendees had the opportunity to provide feedback on draft interpretive signage.



Fall Celebration workshop at the Palmer-Warner House

October 01, 2022, Fall Celebration Open House at Palmer-Warner House:

In coordination with the Town of East Haddam's Fall Celebration, the planning team shared maps, information about the benefits of trails, and a draft map and brochure for the interpretive trail for visitors.

SURVEY RESULTS

Over the course of these engagements, CT Landmarks hosted a virtual survey for additional feedback. While some questions were added or eliminated overtime, they largely stayed the same. A total of 28 people took the survey, and some noteworthy responses that informed our planning process were:

71.4% of responders said they would **use the loop trail if it were constructed** (see right).

23.1% said they would **walk it**, **26.9%** said they would **bike it**, and **46.2%** said they would **walk AND bike it**.

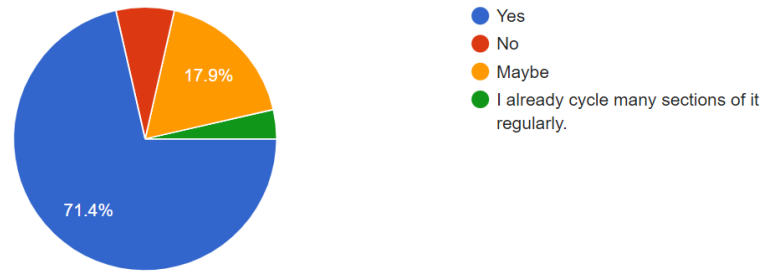
One of the **most important amenities** people want to see along the trail is **restrooms (29.6%)**, followed by **kiosks with maps and local information and play areas and/or splash pads (14.8%)** (see right).

70% of responders reported they would like to see **restrooms at Palmer-Warner House**, and **48.1%** would like to see a **walking trail to Chapman Pond** (see right).

The **Lower Connecticut River Heritage Loop name** was also selected through this survey!

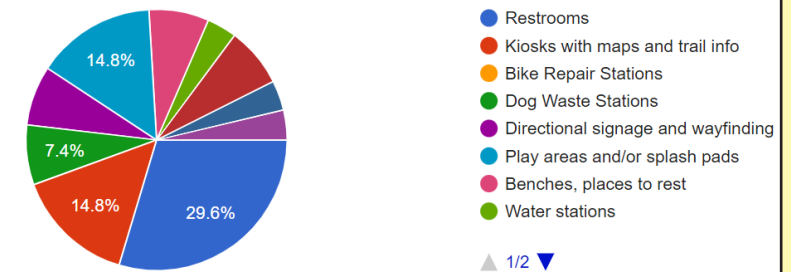
If a loop trail was constructed, would you use it?

28 responses



What is the MOST important amenity that you would like to see along the trail?

27 responses



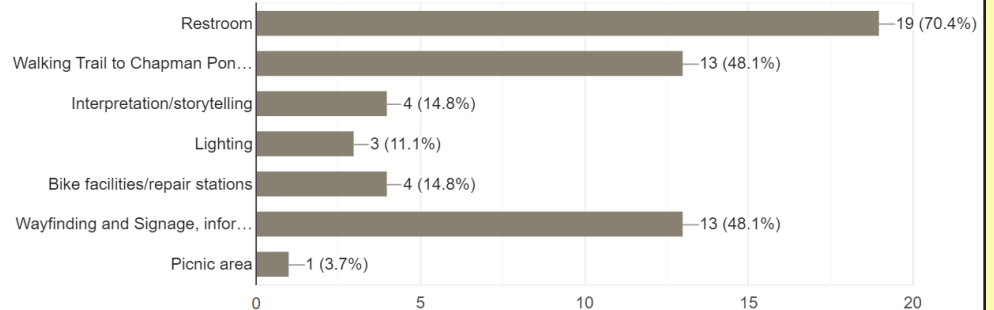
What is the MOST important amenity that you would like to see along the trail?

27 responses



If a trailhead/parking facility were established at Palmer-Warner House, what additional visitor amenities would you like to see?

27 responses



December 08, 2022: Lower Connecticut River Valley Heritage Loop, Virtual Community Workshop

In hopes of getting a few more responses to some survey questions and to avoid any upcoming bad weather, the planning team hosted a virtual community workshop. We used a new interactive polling tool, called Mentimeter. Many people who attended the workshop had not interacted with the project yet. Around thirty people registered for the workshop and around 20 attended, with about 8-10 people taking active part in the polling. Some noteworthy responses to our questions were:

Participants were given 8 choices to the following prompt, **'rank the most important things to you about this loop'** (see right). The top choice was **'a place to have fun,'** followed by **'safety & design,'** and in last place was 'maintaining privacy.'

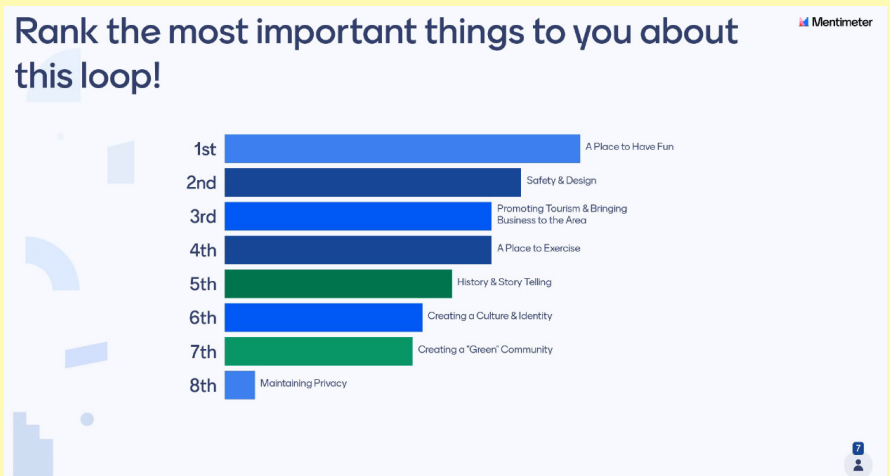
All participants were interested in using an interpretive path at the Palmer-Warner House.

We created a **word-cloud** with participants, the prompt was, 'imagine it is the year 2042 and you are out on the loop, what do you envision it is like...' (see right).

While we understand that our community workshops do not represent the community as a whole (due to its small sample size), the planning team was able to use the information we gathered to make certain general planning decisions and to help guide our process. **Further and more in-depth community engagement will be needed in the future as the effort progresses.**



The CT Landmarks Team at the Summer 2022 community feedback session at the Palmer-Warner House.



Screen shots from the virtual community engagement workshop in December 2022.



THE PALMER- WARNER HOUSE

INTERPRETATION AND WELCOME CENTER AT THE PALMER-WARNER HOUSE

To share the story of the Palmer-Warner House in an accessible way, the planning team designed an outdoor trail with interpretive signage that would allow visitors to learn the story of the grounds, the house, and its residents. After several site visits, concept sketches, community engagement and drone footage, the final ideas were “soft-launched” at the ribbon cutting on June 29, 2023.

Though it may feel like a separate effort, the planning team saw a lot of connections: the Palmer-Warner property is an opportunity to create **a unique welcome center with facilities for the larger Lower Connecticut River Valley Heritage Trail (LCRVHT), offer a highly-desired connection to Chapman Pond, and celebrate and share a rich history with a wide range of potentially new audiences.**

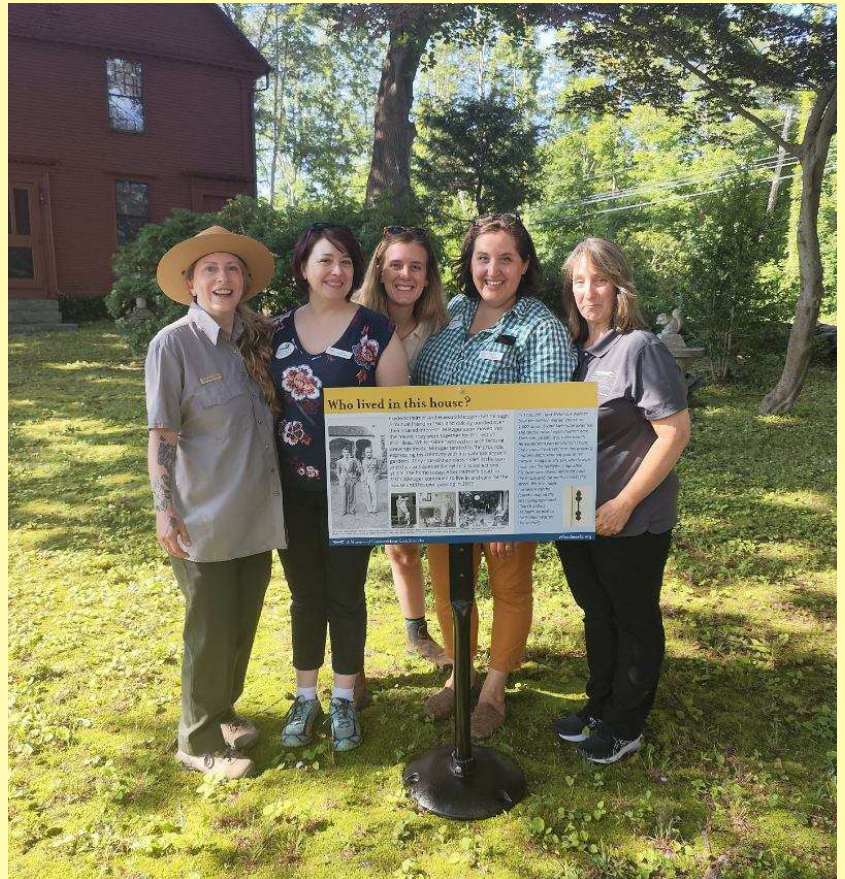
Interpretive Trails

The trail proposals at the Palmer-Warner House can be broken down into four distinct pieces, a short interpretive trail around the house and gardens (see right), a slightly longer interpretive trail that continues to the grounds, a longer loop that continues on through the fields and down through the woods to connect to the neighboring trail system – Chapman Pond, and a parking lot and trail head.

Mowed Pathways Interpretive Loop: In the summer of 2023, 4 movable signs were created to pilot signage along this trail for a ribbon-cutting event. Ideally this trail would be made fully ADA-accessible to reach audiences that cannot access the house.



Drone image showing the Palmer-Warner House (bottom right), the fields, and the Connecticut River.



*It's real! The interpretive signs had their first debut at the **Ribbon Cutting event at the Palmer-Warner House on June 29, 2023.** Guest speakers were invited to share their thoughts on the trail planning effort, and attendees were able to walk the mowed pathway and view the freshly-printed signs.*



Palmer-Warner House
East Haddam, Connecticut



Palmer-Warner House
East Haddam, Connecticut

Draft design ideas for mowed interpretive paths and welcoming seating areas at Palmer-Warner.

Interpretive Palmer-Warner Signage Panels Debuted at June 2023 Ribbon Cutting:

Welcome to the Palmer-Warner House

Connecticut Landmarks is developing trails here at the Palmer-Warner House. Nearly 50 acres of traditional stone-walled New England fields welcome you to explore the outdoors while learning more about the property and its residents. The map shows a path between signs that will help you learn about the property. Access is at your own risk; be prepared for ticks and weather, and please be respectful of this historic property.



We want to hear from you!

We appreciate your input as we work on the future of the Palmer-Warner House. Please visit ctlandmarks.org/PWtrail or scan the QR code here for more information.



If you have any questions or would like to book a tour of the house, contact information for Connecticut Landmarks' staff can be found on our website.

A Museum of Connecticut Landmarks

ctlandmarks.org

Who lived in this house?



Frederic Palmer and Howard Metzger met through a mutual friend in 1945 and quickly bonded over their shared interests. Metzger soon moved into the house; they were together for the rest of their lives. While Palmer worked on architectural drawings inside, Metzger tended to the grounds, expressing his creativity with intricate topiary and gardens. They stored their classic cars in the barn, and their antiques and vinyl record collections still fill the home today. After Palmer's death in 1971, Metzger continued to live in and care for the house until his own passing in 2005.

In 1738, John and Mehitabel Warner built the Palmer-Warner House on 1,000 acres of land Mehitabel inherited. The couple raised eight children here. Their son, Joseph, was a blacksmith. He established two blacksmith shops, one across the street from this property and one approximately four miles away in Hadlyme. His son, also Joseph, took over the Hadlyme shop while his other son, Oliver, inherited both the house and the smithy across the street. Warner-made hardware can be found today on the First Congregational Church in East Haddam, as well as the Palmer-Warner House itself.



A Museum of Connecticut Landmarks

ctlandmarks.org

At home in "the wilds of Connecticut" -Letter from Frederic Palmer, 1948



The Palmer-Warner House and property has changed greatly over its 280-year existence. When Frederic Palmer and his mother, Mary Brennan Palmer, bought the property in 1936, there were at least three outbuildings on the property; likely a barn, chicken coop, and smoke house from the Warners' farm. They removed the outbuildings and opened up the summer kitchen to create the modern back porch you see today. Frederic Palmer also made many changes to the interior of this colonial house, including installing electricity, plumbing, and heat. To learn more, book a tour on our website, ctlandmarks.org.

The Warner Cemetery

The historic Warner Cemetery is owned and maintained by the Town of East Haddam. In 1801, Daniel Warner was the first person to be buried here, and Mary Church was the last in 1876. Other members of the Warner family who are interred here include Oliver and Charity Warner, whose portraits (at right) you can view in the dining room of the house. Please let the Warner family rest in peace and respect the grave sites. If you have further interest in the Warner Cemetery, please contact the Town of East Haddam.



A Museum of Connecticut Landmarks

ctlandmarks.org

The Gardens



Howard Metzger was passionate about the gardens. He planted seasonal flowers and maintained perennial plants. He had a particular fondness for the topiary sculptures he maintained. He sculpted large rabbits, dogs, frogs, dragons, and more from boxwood shrubs. Connecticut Landmarks hopes to restore these whimsical sculptures in the future to honor Metzger's work.



Frederic Palmer and Howard Metzger created a space where they could look out and see what would have existed in the 18th century when the Warners lived here. Behind their home, they preserved the austere stone-walled fields from the property's days as a farm. Metzger placed statuary on the stone walls to create vignettes of the house when viewed from the fields.



A Museum of Connecticut Landmarks

ctlandmarks.org

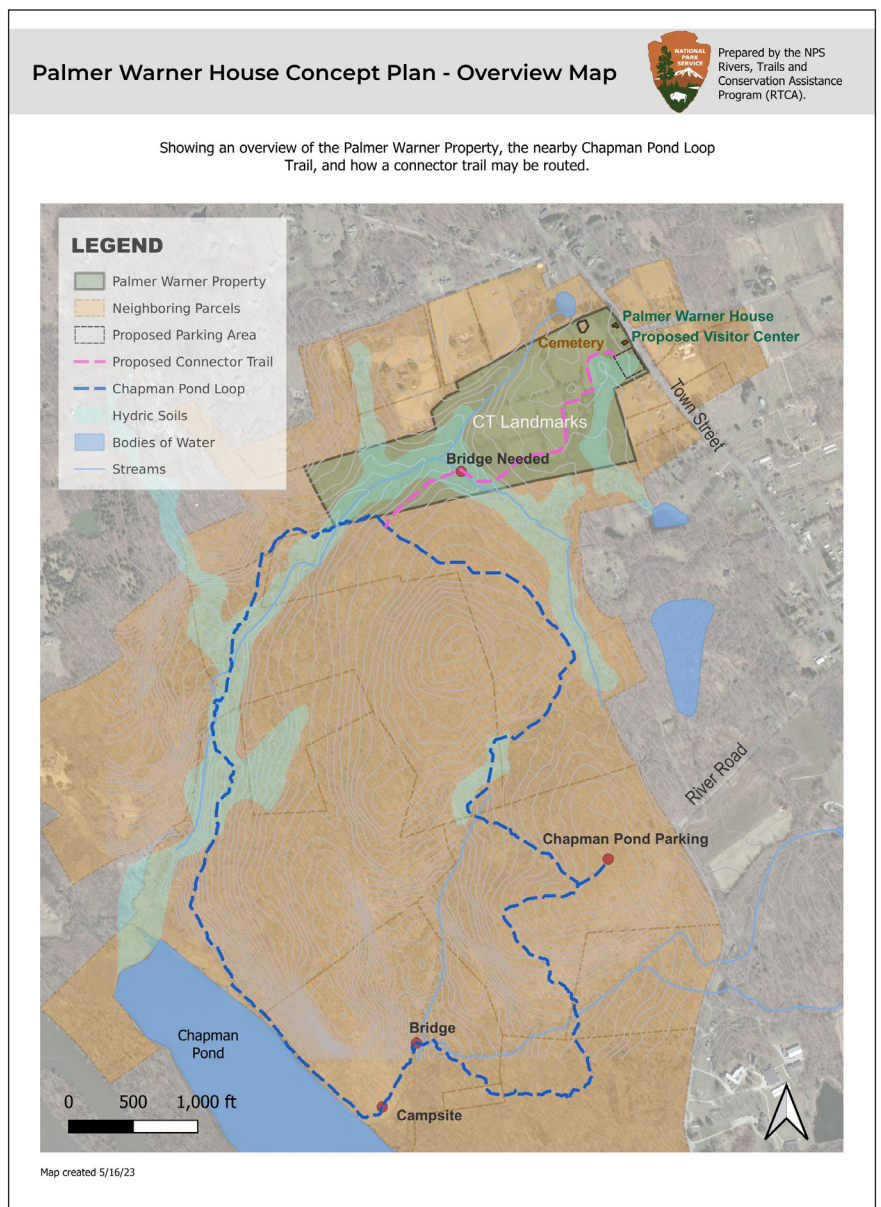
We hope that the interpretive signs can be changed and added to over time!

Chapman Pond Connector Trail

The connector trail is a proposed opportunity to connect the Palmer-Warner interpretation trail with Chapman Pond, and would provide amenities for those looking to have more of a rugged hiking experience. We would recommend a natural trail surface with boardwalk or bridge when necessary. This will provide a desirable connection to the popular Chapman Pond Trail, maintained by the Nature Conservancy (TNC), with camping amenities for the Connecticut River Paddler's Trail that are maintained by the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC).

Opportunities and Considerations:

- **Potential stewardship projects:** bridge building, signage building, trail construction and maintenance (example: local Scouts project)
- **Land ownership transfer** to local land trust or other organization
- **Partnership building** with TNC, AMC and the Connecticut River Paddler's Trail.
- **Parking:** create ADA parking spaces. Consider adding bollards and separate entrance/exits for the parking lot as a means to control traffic and promote safety.
- A formal **land survey** is needed before parking recommendations can be made.
- Add **useful and welcoming amenities for trail visitors** such as bike racks, a bike repair station, a drinking fountain, access to restrooms, seating area, and a kiosk with both Palmer-Warner trail and LCRVHT information.
- **Incorporate interpretative information** about the Connecticut River, Native peoples of the area, rotating local art and stories, and more!



The camping platform and composting toilets, maintained by the AMC, that are amenities for visitors of the Connecticut River Paddler's Trail. Photo credit: Adrian Stroud.

Observations & General Recommendations:

The RTCA project application requested assistance in communicating and building relationships with neighbors. During meetings with invited neighbors, we heard concerns about trails being too close to property lines, a lack of information about the house, and concern about sidewalks and flooding.

In regard to Chapman Pond, we heard about the challenges of the current parking and lack of signage, despite it being one of the best trails for hiking in the area. There was great discussion as to creating a brave space for programming and creating an inclusive and welcoming space.

Based on these observations, conversations and our work together, we offer these general recommendations regarding the Palmer-Warner House:

- 1** Showcase the work being done in the house through **outdoor interpretive signage**, that can be used passively by trail users.
- 2** Collaborate with organizations to create inviting **programming opportunities** that tie in with the history of the house, especially incorporating LGBTQ+ themes.
- 3** Ensure that trails, parking, entrances and exits, **do not run directly next to neighbors' property**.
- 4** When possible, **replant and repurpose trees that are taken down for a parking lot** and utilize sustainable practices when building new infrastructure. These steps will help keep your parking lot cool during hot weather events.
- 5** Continue to **hold community conversation spaces** about the work at the house and the larger trail system.



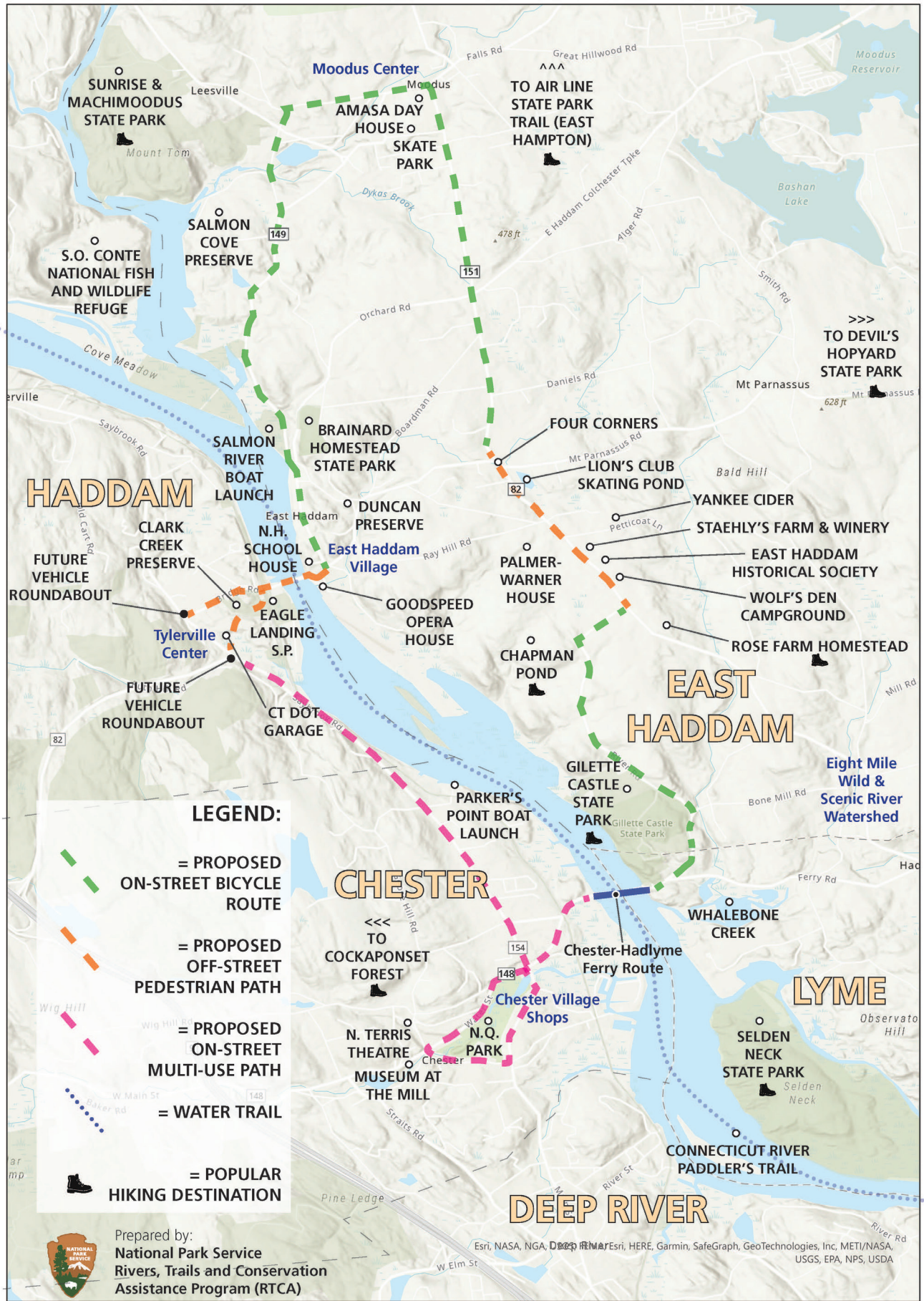
Keep up the great work hosting community events at Palmer-Warner, inviting neighbors into conversation, and taking exciting opportunities for creating a desirable community asset!



The 2023 trail ribbon cutting event with local representatives. Photo credit: Adrian Stroud.

CREATING A TRAIL





**LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY
HERITAGE TRAIL: CONCEPT MAP**
JULY 2023

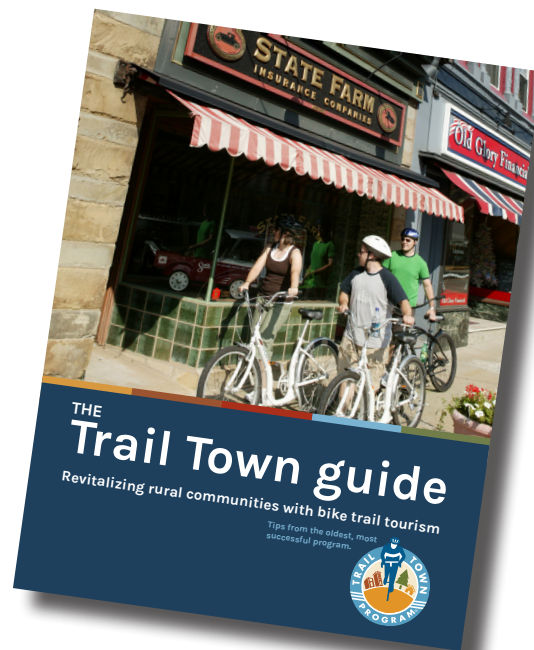


OVERALL TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS



SHORT TERM GOALS (accomplish within two years):

- **Create a trail logo and marketing package:** Hiring a local artist and/or having a logo contest is a great way to promote and engage the community around the trail and gives the trail a unique identity.
- **Create a trail website:** include contact information, an up-to-date map, updates, events and information about how to get involved.
- **Designate “trail anchor sites,”** (at least one in each town): These should be places that have maps, information, restrooms, and other facilities available for trail visitors. It could be a small business with knowledgeable staff and available amenities.
- **Create a tourism map:** Include trail route, destinations, lodging, parking, restrooms, and all forms of available recreation. Have this available at anchor sites and other key locations. Opportunity to hire a local artist to create a fun and unique map!
- **Meet with the Chambers of Commerce and host a “Business Breakfast”:** Engage local business owners and work together with the chambers to attract specific businesses along the trail. Share information about the trail and what businesses can do to take advantage of trail visitors.
- **Meet regularly to check-in:** Find a good schedule that works for trail planners to meet and discuss updates, construction projects, and on-going work on the trail.
- **Create trail standards with green infrastructure :** Work with the River COG and CT DOT to help create standards for each section of the trail. Incorporate best practices for stormwater management and green infrastructure whenever possible.
- **Begin a trail maintenance plan and funding plan:** Find what opportunities are available within each town.
- **Fund and promote trail amenities:** well-marked parking, with curb stops; trash cans and recycling bins (bonus for compost!); bathrooms (permanent or portable); water fountains; signage that names your town, includes trail rules, and maps both the trail and routes to town in appropriate spoken languages in the area; Town and trail details on a bulletin board or at a kiosk; and benches and places to rest (ideally with shade!)



The Trail Town Guide

This tried-and-true guide contains best practices and information about how to assess, make improvements, and pursue both short and long term goals for a Trail Town.

You can download a free copy of your own at:

<https://www.trailtowns.org/guide/>

OVERALL TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Provide key improvements:** bicycle repair stations accommodate bike riders who may not stop into town otherwise; bike racks-- **76.6% of riders are more likely to visit a business that has a bike rack or storage!** Signage and wayfinding with the trail's branding; welcome centers that can be an inviting centerpiece of your town; and adding public art-- a great way to create a sense of place!



LONGER TERM GOALS (2+ years):

- **Create a formal trail organization:** engage local volunteers and include representatives from each town to help maintain, fund raise, and promote the trail. Consider 501 c-3 designation or partnering with a fiscal agent.
- **Explore possibilities of expanding the trail:** After accomplishing the short-term goals, consider creating connections to larger trails in the area and expanding to other nearby towns, creating a network of pedestrian walking and biking facilities.
- **Host trail events:** consider hosting large events to activate (and fund raise for) the trail (such as a cycling or running event).
- **Pursue trail designations:** As the trail grows and continues to improve, consider pursuing trail designations to help with promotion and outreach. This could include expanding on existing State Greenways designation, a National Recreation Trail designation, or others.
- **Promote stewardship, especially with youth:** Consider engaging with youth organizations, hosting an "adopt-a-trail" program, hosting art projects along the trail, or other ideas for keeping the trail looking great and promoting stewardship with community members and future generations.



Fun and engaging events, like this ribbon cutting event in Thompson, CT for the Train Wreck Park, are great ways to invite the community to the trail, enliven a space, and keep people informed about your planning process along the way.

NEXT STEPS FOR EACH TOWN



NEXT STEPS: EAST HADDAM

- **Host a community engagement process for the pedestrian corridor along Town Street:** host several community engagement events at Palmer-Warner House or other areas along the corridor to keep the community informed and to gather feedback throughout the feasibility and design process. Address concerns that have come up around flooding in the neighborhood through stormwater management practices. Take privacy for adjacent landowners into consideration when designing the trail near residences.
- **Create best practices for hosting large events:** Partner with local organizations to create a system for groups looking to host large events. Include lodging recommendations, information about noise, protocols for restrooms, safety considerations, and other key pieces of information. Use CT DEEP and their properties as a resource for managing large groups.
- **Connect with the town of Lyme:** meet with the town of Lyme to discuss partnership opportunities and trail efforts.
- **Creating a Visitor Center at Palmer-Warner House:** continue to partner with CT Landmarks to create a welcoming visitor center with trail amenities and historic information.



NEXT STEPS: HADDAM

- **Continue to coordinate with CT DOT on the roundabout projects in Tylerville.** Integrate pedestrian infrastructure and/or connections to the roundabouts whenever possible.
- **Explore bike and pedestrian connections through Clarks Creek and the CT DOT Garage:** reach out to appropriate partners to discuss possibilities of bike or pedestrian facilities that will provide a safe connection off of route 154.

- **Consider continuing bike and pedestrian projects north along 154:** to promote connectivity and safety for visitors to reach the loop trail, consider integrating bike and pedestrian infrastructure north towards Middletown.



NEXT STEPS: CHESTER

- **Add the LCRVHT map to the Town's website.**
- **Create an advisory committee for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure,** building on the Road Safety Audit. Focus on cost estimates from advisors and on community engagement.
- **Apply for the Community Connectivity Grant** (July 2023)



Above: Conducting a walking tour in downtown Chester in 2022.

AVAILABLE FUNDING AND RESOURCES

FEDERAL RESOURCES

FHWA Transportation Alternatives Program

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/

FOR: funding for a variety of generally smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities

SOLICITATION: typically with new federal transportation legislation (every 5-6 years)

FHWA Federal Lands Access Program

<https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/programs-access>

FOR: to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal lands.

SOLICITATION: typically with new federal transportation legislation (every 5-6 years)

RAISE/BUILD/TIGER grants

<https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants>

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) Rural Development

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs>

STATE RESOURCES

CT DOT LOTCIP

<https://portal.ct.gov/DOT/Office-of-Engineering/Highway-Design-Local-Roads-LOTICIP>

FOR: infrastructure improvements in urban areas of Connecticut

SOLICITATION: As needed depending on number of projects and funding levels

CT DOT TRIP

https://portal.ct.gov/dot/pp_bureau/trip

FOR: infrastructure improvements in rural areas of Connecticut

SOLICITATION: As needed depending on number of projects and funding

CT DOT Community Connectivity

https://portal.ct.gov/DOT/PP_Intermodal/CTConnectivity/CT-Connectivity-CCGP

FOR: to improve accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians in urban, suburban and rural community centers

SOLICITATION: typically 1-2 years

CT DEEP Recreational Trails

<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Outdoor-Recreation/Trails/CRT-Funding>

FOR: Trail planning & design, trail corridor acquisition, construction, maintenance, amenities, and outreach, etc

SOLICITATION: Typically annually

AVAILABLE FUNDING AND RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

CT OPM STEAP

https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Bud-Other-Projects/STEAP/STEAP_Home

FOR: economic development, community conservation and quality-of-life capital projects for localities that are ineligible to receive Urban Action bonds

SOLICITATION: typically 1-2 years

CT OPM Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP)

<https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/IGPP/Grants/LoCIP/Local-Capital-Improvement-Program-LoCIP-HOME-PAGE>

FOR: eligible local capital improvement projects

SOLICITATION: typically annually

CT DOT Safe Routes to School Program

<https://portal.ct.gov/DOT/Programs/Safe-Routes-to-School-SRTS-Program/SRTS---Home>

The Safe Routes to School Program empowers communities to make walking and biking to school a safe and routine activity once again. Safe Routes to School is a national program that began in July of 2005. The program encourages the “6 E’s” for safety: Education, Engineering, Evaluation, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Equity. Connecticut offers technical assistance and infrastructure support through the Safe Routes to School Program.

CT Humanities

<https://cthumanities.org/>

CT Humanities is an independent nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The organization connects individuals and communities to the humanities through programs and initiatives, grants, partnerships, and collaborative programs.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

<https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Grant-Fundraising-Resources/>

The NRPA periodically posts information about grant and fundraising opportunities that are available for park and recreation agencies and affiliated friends groups and 501(c)(3) nonprofits.

Community Foundation of Middlesex County

<https://middlesexcountycf.org/>

The Community Foundation provides grants, trainings, resources and supports for nonprofits.

THANK YOU!

