

Torrington Walks! CHARRETTE



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



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Pictures Courtesy of:
Martin Connor
John Monroe
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The 2013 E. Greenway Report

1. INTRODUCTION

On January 22, 2015, the City of Torrington hosted the Torrington Walks! Charrette, in the City Hall Auditorium. This charrette started at 8am and the recommendations from each group were presented to the public at 4pm. This Charrette was organized by the City's Land Use office and the National Park Service. John Monroe from the National Park Service moderated this event.

There were just over 60 people who participated in this daylong event. Participants included representatives from several different City departments such as Public Works, Engineering, Zoning, Inland Wetlands, Sullivan Senior Center, Parks & Recreation, Economic Development, the Mayor, as well as representatives from the Torrington Historical Society, Torrington Trails Network, YMCA, Housatonic Valley Association, UCONN, Conservation Commission, Main Street Torrington Program, Torrington Downtown Partners, Singer Songwriter Network, Local Business owners, ACT, Federal Highway Administration, Housatonic Valley Association, Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee, DEEP, NW Chamber of Commerce, and Economic Development Commission.

In addition, Landscape Architects, Mark Arigoni and Jason Williams from Milone and MacBroom Inc., assisted participants throughout the entire day with design on a pro-bono basis.



Mark Arigoni

John Monroe

Jason Williams

What is a Charrette?

A charrette is a French word that originally described the last-minute rush by the 19th century Parisian college students to finish major projects. Even as a horse-drawn cart – called a *char* in French – delivered their work to the Ecole des Beaux Arts they continued to work frantically *en charrette*, or “in the cart”.

Architects, landscape architects and planners use charrette principles to focus intense thinking by a team of designers and community members under a self-imposed deadline of one or several days. Successful charrettes spark creative thinking and forge new working relationships.

Key charrette principles include:

- Work Collaboratively
- Involve Stakeholders
- Cross-Disciplinary Teams
- Physical Proximity to People and Place
- Relevant Content and Measurable Results
- Sustained, Focused, Time-Compressed Work
- Multiple, Short Feedback Cycles
- Work at Multiple Scales



Purpose

The purpose of this charrette was to develop a clear understanding of challenges and opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists in Torrington; from the riverfront, to city sidewalks and the surrounding woodlands.

Participants were asked to brainstorm with each other to develop a menu of ideas for the following topics: Sidewalks and complete streets, connections to woodlands & Naugatuck River Greenway, active living for residents and visitors, downtown building and business revitalization, public works & CT DOT project and education & interpretation.

Participants were then asked to highlight any big ideas and create a list of specific recommendations including action steps needed from start to finish of the project.



Torrington Walks!
A 1-DAY Design Workshop
Torrington City Hall Auditorium, 140 Main St
Thursday, January 22, 2015

The Purpose of this Workshop is to develop:

- ◊ Clear understanding of challenges and opportunities for pedestrians in Torrington: from the riverfront, to city sidewalks and the surrounding Woodlands
- ◊ A Brainstormed menu of ideas to consider for:
 - ◊ Physical improvements ;
 - ◊ Public policies; and
 - ◊ Programming and events
- ◊ A short list of recommendations to act on first and specific next steps to continue this process through implementation.

AGENDA

- 8:00 Refreshments**
- 8:30 Welcome**
 - Mayor Elinor Carbone
 - How we'll work today by John Monroe
 - Team member introductions
- 9:00 Orientation**
 - Context by City Planner Martin Connor
 - Virtual site tour
 - Design questions to answer today
- 9:45 Focus Groups & Studio Work Begins**
 - Site tours available as needed on foot or by vehicle
- Noon Lunch will be provided on site**
- 12:45 Gallery Walk of Initial Thoughts**
- 1:30 Studio Work Resumes with additional Focus Groups as needed**
- 3:30 Set up Room for Public Presentation**
- 4:00 Public Presentation**
 - Key Recommendations
 - Q&A
- 4:45 Wrap up with Informal Conversation**

The day's agenda

Summary of Recommendations

Participants in this charrette envision Torrington as a cultural center and highlighted the public art, music, theater, art studios, housing and public events that currently exists in Torrington. UCONN was also highlighted as an asset to the community. There was unanimous support to develop a trail network utilizing the existing infrastructure (sidewalks, bridges, and parking areas) of downtown.

This trail network should include public art and creative features so that the feel of the trail is in harmony with the feel of downtown.

It is important that artists and arts related businesses continue to be supported in Torrington and the City should continue to encourage that type of growth.

The addition of a trail network will be a great asset to the growing cultural center. It will enhance downtown Torrington helping attract visitors and encourage people to live in downtown.

Incorporating the trail network into the infrastructure of downtown would make Torrington a world class walkable city. Walkable cities attract people to the streets which helps local businesses thrive and provide a healthy lifestyle for the residents.

The TorringtonWalks! Participants (participants) felt that in order to make Torrington a world class walkable city and the cultural center they envisioned, public transportation had to be a piece of the puzzle.

Throughout the day the participants analyzed how to make the sidewalks throughout the City safer, the appropriate locations for trails and trail heads, what amenities should be on the trails, how to increase public transportation in the area, and how to link downtown sidewalks and trails to public schools, state parks, other green spaces and UCONN.



Bicyclist in Coe Park



Danielle Mailer's Public art display



Entrance to UCONN Torrington

2. DETAILS

2.1 Trails and Trail Amenities

What is a trail? A Trail should be a safe convenient place for people of all ages; trails come in all shapes and sizes. A trail can be in the woods, along a street, by a river or in a meadow. Trails can be narrow or wide, they can be made of organic material, gravel or pavement. A trail can be short or long, a straight line or a loop. They can be called a greenway or a riverwalk, they can also be a series of sidewalks.

Having various types of trails in the community ensure that the needs of all residents are met. In order for Torrington to be a world class walkable city, trails must be thought of as more than isolated paths in the woods or places that only hikers or bikers use. Trails should be treated as an integral part of the City's infrastructure.

Trails need to be designed for multiple users, such as bicyclists, hikers, runners, walkers, as well as people of all ages and skills, including senior citizens and children. A trail network needs to include trails to accommodate all types of needs and abilities. Trails are not only used by people who live and work in Torrington, they are also attractions for visitors/tourists.

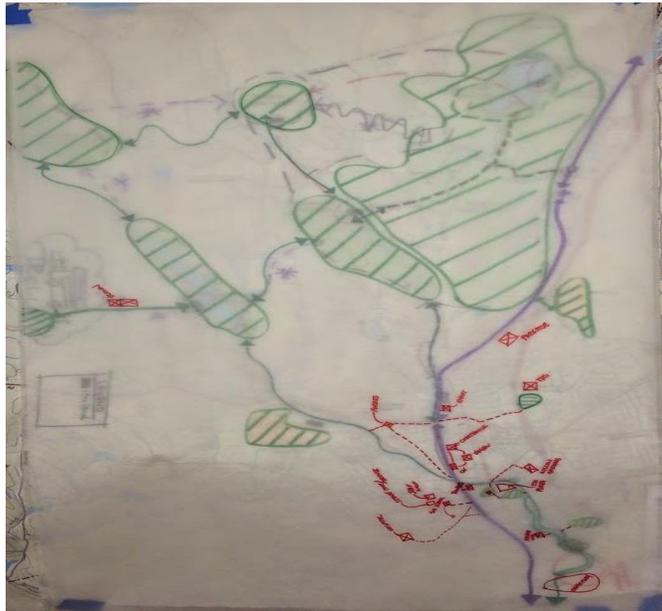


Children enjoying Sue Grossman Still River Greenway

The trail plan should designate which trails are paved, relatively flat trails, such as the Sue Grossman Trail and which ones are rough terrain, hilly wooded trails, such as the Buttrick trail, and identify everything in between. There should be trails for walkers, hikers and bikers. Whenever feasible there should be wheelchair access to the trails.

Trail Networks

While there are many different trails, participants identified three major trail systems that link all other minor trails. The trail networks are the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway and the Naugatuck River Greenway, which run north/south. The third trail runs east/west connecting the John Brown Trail to Buttrick Trail. These trails have the potential to connect all state and local parks and greenspaces.



Sue Grossman Still River Greenway

The existing portion of the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway begins in Winsted, just north of the Winsted/Torrington line and heads south along Winsted Road ending at Harris Drive. The proposed trail will continue along Winsted Road joining the Red Mountain Trail then following Main Street through downtown connecting to the Naugatuck River Greenway.

The Sue Grossman Still River Greenway is currently the most widely used trail in Torrington. By linking other trails to the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway they become part of the larger trail network and has the potential to draw more people to Torrington.

The Sue Grossman Still River Greenway should be extended down Winsted Road into Downtown Torrington. The proposed route is to go along the old rail roadbed on the West Side of Winsted Road until Kennedy Drive. In order to cross Winsted Road one option that should be explored is creating a tunnel on Winsted Road at Sink Hole Bridge. Continuing south from Kennedy Drive the greenway would utilize a series of sidewalks and trails to link to the Naugatuck River Greenway.

The extension of the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway into Winsted's downtown area would be beneficial for Torrington residents. Efforts should be made to partner with Winsted to help them extend this trail into their downtown.

All three parking areas along the existing section of the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway should be enlarged and improved to better accommodate the significant amount of users.



Harris Road Parking Lot



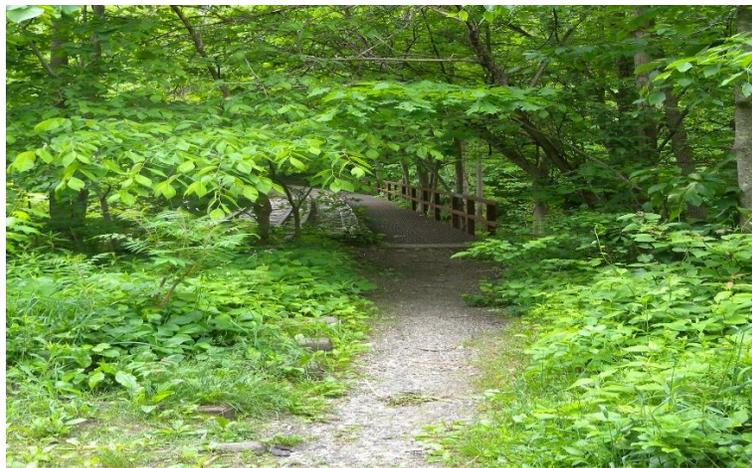
Winsted Rd Parking Lot (Winsted)



Greenwood Road Parking Lot

East to West Trail Connecting John Brown to Buttrick

This trail begins at the existing loop trail located at the historic John Brown birthplace site. The proposal is to continue through the UCONN campus, across University Drive and then down to Stillwater Pond State Park. This trail has the potential to connect to Sunny Brook State Park and then with the John Muir and Buttrick Trails, both approved Blue Blazed trails. These trails would also link to the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway, making this an extensive trail network.



Potential area for trail along Newfield Road

Naugatuck River Greenway

The Naugatuck River Greenway is a trail that is proposed to start in Torrington and follow the Naugatuck River through 11 towns all the way to Derby and stretch for more than 40 miles. This proposed Greenway is in various stages of completion in different towns, from completely finished, through design phase to no work done to date. Using the Naugatuck River Greenway as the gateway to our trail network would allow someone to bike from Derby to any of our State Parks as well as to Winsted, New Hartford or Goshen.

In Torrington the Naugatuck River Greenway's major trail head is proposed to be at the Franklin Street parking lot. The Greenway would head south along the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers levee. Once at Palmer Street Bridge walkers could continue along the levee on the west side of the river or go through Toro Park to the more wooded hilly trail that is proposed along the east side of the river.



Proposed trail location near the Sullivan Senior Center



Proposed Trail location along Scoville Street

The Naugatuck River Greenway is also proposed to go north from the Franklin Street Parking lot and traverse the River until it connects with either the Sue Grossman Trail or East/West trail as described above.

Trail Planning

When designing the Trail Plan, trails should not be looked at independently, but rather an entire trail network encompassing the whole City. The existing trail plan should be reviewed to determine where trail linkages already exist and what connections can easily be made. The plan should consider both existing and proposed sidewalks as possible linkages. In some areas connection may be able to be made by simply clearing brush. In other areas more work may be required; such as purchasing land, obtaining easements or crossing wetlands. Ideally, the trail network will link all urban and natural areas such as open spaces, natural resources, and State Parks.

When designing the trails, destination points should be incorporated along the way. Destination points can be benches, fishing areas, kiosks, art work, or picnic areas. Incorporating destination points along the trail invites users to have different experiences on the same trail and attracts a wider range of users.



Destination point along the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway

Trail Wayfinding

In order for these trails to be best utilized they will need to be better identified and publicized. Participants came up with several ways in which trails could be effectively publicized to residents and visitors. Some of the ways they came up with are:

- Create paper copy maps that are readily available. These maps should be available to health care providers so that they can be distributed to patients.
- Maps of existing trails should be available on-line, City's website and "What's Happening Now".
- State of CT directional sign along Route 8 should be displayed at the appropriate highway exits to direct people to the Naugatuck River Greenway and/or other trails. Kiosks at the exit ramps can provide information on trail conditions, parking, local attractions and businesses.
- Kiosks should also be located at each trail head. Kiosks should contain information about the trail, its history, surrounding areas and destination points along the trail.
- QR codes or an application for smart phones should be created so that people can know about trail amenities, historical information, and nearby businesses and restaurants.
- Consistent signage should be displayed along all trails in Torrington



Examples of Kiosks – Courtesy Google images

Safety

It is important to make sure that people feel safe both walking in downtown and on the trails. There was a clear divide of people who are comfortable in wooded, secluded trails and people who only feel safe on trails that are flat and have open visibility.

There needs to be diversity in the types of trails to be sure people of all different ages, abilities and skills have a place to go; however, special attention should be made when determining the location of each type of trail to ensure that it is designed to meet the needs of its primary users. For example, senior citizens have stressed that they feel safest on trails that do not have a lot of trees and have clear visibility from streets; therefore it makes sense that the trails by the Sullivan Senior Center should have trees for shade purposes only, and should be visible from public spaces. Downtown trails should also have high visibility so that they are less likely to be subject to vandalism and loitering.

In order to give added security to pedestrians in the downtown area there should be police presence on the streets either on foot, bike, Segway or similar type of personal transportation.



Torrington Police Officer

Crosswalks

Where a trail must cross a street or busy driveway crosswalks must be installed and accompanied by appropriate signage. In some areas, such as East Albert Street, by the Sullivan Senior Center, and Palmer Bridge Street, by the Bridge, additional measures may be needed to raise motorists' awareness of the pedestrian crossing. These measures may include timed crossings or hawk crossings.



Hawk crossing



Crosswalk signage



Timed Crossing



East Albert Street Bridge (potential need for crossing)

Trail Amenities

In order to make Torrington's Trails superior to other trails, they should have destination points (as discussed above)

There should be safe parking at the trail heads and in the middle of the trail to give walkers the option to decide what part of the trail they would like to see and how far they would like to go. Major trail heads should include bathrooms, not just portable restrooms.

A few areas that were proposed as major trail heads are:

- Toro Fields Parking Lot
- Franklin Street Parking Lot
- Senior Center
- Former "Kmart" Plaza



Edward E. Sullivan Senior Center

2.2 COMPLETE STREETS & SIDEWALKS

What is Complete Streets?

The concept of “Complete Streets” is one that is being modeled all over the country in order to promote more walkable Cities and Towns. “Complete Streets” are streets that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclist, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations (Smart Growth America).

The City of Torrington has adopted a Complete Streets Resolution that encourages new streets or street improvements to follow this concept. TorringtonWalks! Participants recommend that the City of Torrington adopt a complete streets ordinance which would include requirements, not just recommendations, on how new streets are constructed and how street improvements are made.



By showing the comparatively small amount of public space set aside for pedestrians, a Swedish artist helps make the case for more walkable and safer streets.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks should be viewed as an essential part of the transportation system and as such the sidewalks should be maintained by the City. Participants took in to account the huge financial burden this responsibility would have on the city; however they feel this is a necessary step to make Torrington a walkable city.

The City should look into a fee-in-lieu of program or develop a Business Improvement District for downtown businesses along the sidewalks. The appropriate next step would be to form a steering committee to look at ways to be fiscally responsible and meet the needs of the community.

Bike Lanes

While sidewalks are an important part of our transportation infrastructure making the roads safe for bicyclists is equally as important. Roads should be designed to have a bike travel lane and it should be clearly marked. Accommodations should be made to help keep bike traffic safe.

Installing bike racks in the downtown area and busy shopping areas would promote multi-users on our existing streets and be consistent with the existing Complete Streets Resolution. This type of action step is relatively cheap and easy to install; similar actions steps should be taken where possible.

Bike lanes and/or sharrows should be marked on the streets. A sharrow is a short-form for “shared lane bicycle marking”. This pavement marking includes a bicycle symbol and two white chevrons and is used to remind motorists that bicyclist are permitted to the full lane. There are no striped bicycle lanes on streets with sharrows.



Sharrow

Areas of Concern

Four major areas that pose a safety concerns to pedestrians or bicyclist were identified. Those areas are the 5-way and Center Bridge intersection, East Main Street, Winsted Road and Kennedy Drive. Detailed action steps for each area were developed and summarized.

5-way Intersection and Center Bridge

This area is in the heart of Downtown Torrington and provides access to East Main Street, Franklin Street, South Main Street, Litchfield Street, Water Street and Main Street. In addition there is a driveway to a busy shopping center across the street from a municipal parking lot and library. Due to the culmination of all these intersections this is currently a high traffic area and does not provide a safe effective way for pedestrians to get from one area to the next.

In April of 2013 the Northwest Connecticut Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Action Agenda was released. This study developed a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for 20 towns in the Northwest Corner. As part of this report a list of Vital (Priority) Projects was created. The number one priority for this group was *Implementation of the Downtown Torrington Revitalization Plan*. This Plan includes the re-design of the 5-way and Center Bridge intersection. This area of downtown impacts all areas of development in downtown and the region. It is important that the City work with CEDS and the Regional Planning agency to ensure this intersection remains a priority.

It became evident that you could not look at the 5-way intersection independently from Center Bridge, S. Main Street & Litchfield Street and Water Street Intersections. This entire area must be reviewed as one project. Participant came up with a complete re-design concept for this area. This design still has to be engineered and go through both the state and local approval process; however, it is intended to provide an alternate way of looking at this intersection and show different ways in which pedestrian and bike friendly features can be incorporated. A sketch of this proposal was made illustrating how all of these changes work together.



Sketch of 5-Way Intersection and Center Bridge created at the TorringtonWalks! Charrette

The Proposal includes decreasing the lane widths along Center Bridge to create room to incorporate a pedestrian node in the middle (or along one side) of the bridge and allow pedestrians safe travel along the bridge. This would also act as a traffic calming feature.

Franklin Street would be closed to vehicular traffic from Main Street to Volkman Lane. This would reduce the number of directions traffic would be travelling and provide pedestrian safe areas. It would also allow the stop bar to be moved forward allowing more room for queuing over Center Bridge. Having Franklin Street open to pedestrian/bicyclist traffic only would also provide an area to host events within the downtown area without having to shut down roads or re-direct traffic.

The curb cut from the shopping plaza could be relocated to further down South Main Street, where their second driveway is currently. This would allow even more queuing to extend down South Main Street. A light, with a crosswalk, would be added at the new main entrance.

Water Street would become right turn only, both to and from Main Street which would eliminate the need for left turn only lanes on Main Street, allowing more room for pedestrian areas; Main Street would continue to have two way traffic.

A pedestrian bridge was suggested in several locations: over the river on the east side of Center Bridge, over the river on the west side of Center Bridge, from the Library municipal parking lot to Torrington Downtown Partners property, and directly over Center Bridge from the sidewalk to Coe Park. Handicap accessibility, logistics and cost still need to be researched in order to determine if this bridge is feasible, but if possible it would provide a safe alternative for pedestrians.

Currently, due to these large intersections Coe Park is detached from downtown and is potentially underutilized. If this plan was implemented Coe Park would become more connected to the rest of downtown; this would be a benefit to both Coe Park and downtown.



Coe Park

East Main Street

This area starts from Main Street and travels in a northeasterly direction to the Torrington/New Hartford line. This is also a very high traffic area and services restaurants, personal service businesses, retail stores, offices, car dealerships and shopping plazas. Currently there are very few sections sidewalks on either side of the street, even though people walk this road regularly. In order to make this area safer and easier for pedestrians to walk along East Main Street sidewalks need to be installed along both sides of the road and crosswalks need to be installed at intersections with traffic lights.

Winsted Road

Sidewalks in this area should go from the intersection of Kennedy drive and Winsted Road in a southerly direction until they intersect-with Main Street. Currently there are short segmented sections of sidewalk along both sides of this road. Some areas along Winsted Road do not have sidewalks on either section. This road services fast food restaurants, shopping plazas and other businesses. Pedestrians currently walk along the side of the road. In order to make this area safer and easier for pedestrians to walk along Winsted Road sidewalks need to be installed along both sides of the road and crosswalks need to be installed at intersections with traffic lights. The portion of Winsted Road from Kennedy Drive North to the to the Torrington/Winsted City line is proposed to follow the old Rail Road bed and is discussed in more detail in the “Sue Grossman Still River Greenway” section on page 7 of this document.



Possible location of sidewalk along Winsted Road

Kennedy Drive

Kennedy Drive has a similar problems to both East Main Street and Winsted Road, in that it is a high traffic area with little to no sidewalks along either side. This road services primarily medical and business offices. Kennedy Drive connects Winsted Road and East Main Street and would provide pedestrians a shorter route from one shopping area to the next. In order to make this area safer and easier for pedestrians, sidewalks should be installed along both sides of the road and that crosswalks be installed at intersections with traffic lights.

2.3 SIDEWALK & TRAIL MASTER PLAN

The trail plan and the sidewalk plan should be intertwined so that people can seamlessly use both the sidewalks and trails for recreation as well as a method of transportation to reach all parts of the City including the downtown area, state and local parks, the Naugatuck River, and UCONN.



Sidewalk Master Plan displayed at the TorringtonWalks! Charrette

While City Officials are in the process of creating a sidewalk master plan, they should be sure to keep in mind that sidewalks must be multi-use and that they are as important as the rest of the transportation infrastructure. In order to ensure the sidewalk plan meets the needs of all residents there should be a multi-disciplinary group established to help develop this plan.

The need for sidewalks was identified for Alvord Park Road, Charles Street, Amherst Street and sections of Winthrop Street.

Local officials should concentrate on safe pedestrian access as well as safe routes to schools. Both high school and college students should be encourage to use safe routes to walk to and from school on a daily basis. This activity will begin to foster healthy habits at an early age.

The State of CT DOT has a program called “Connecticut Safe Routes to School (CT SRTS)”. This program will supply municipalities with a *CT SRTS support team that will assist the municipality in planning and development of Safe Routes to School. This program may also provide pedestrian and bicycle training* (CTsaferoutes.org). The City of Torrington should take advantage of this program so that Safe Routes to School can be incorporated in to the Master Plan for Sidewalks and Trails.

Dining along sidewalks in the downtown area should be encouraged and designed to handle such use. It is important to have people on the streets to help promote businesses and give the appearance that they are open.

Creating a walkable city provides benefits such as economic development and reducing the City's carbon footprint; however, it also promotes a healthy life style and can be a contributor to reducing obesity in children and adults. Educating the public of these benefits and soliciting public engagement will help develop ideas and cultivate support for the sidewalk and trail plan. Sidewalk plan meetings should be highly publicized so all interested parties can attend.

Once the plan is developed it should become a regulatory document so when administrations change, the vision of the City does not. By having an approved Sidewalk Plan it will give the City a clear and precise voice when working with CT DOT and future funding sources.



Naugatuck River in the winter – Possible Trail location

2.4 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation is a key element to building a walkable City. If you want people to walk around your downtown and visit your shops, you have to get them there. Some people will drive, but a growing number of people prefer public transportation.

Having a trolley system that was geared toward bicyclist and pedestrians would invite avid bicyclists from all over to park in downtown, have lunch, and then take a trolley that can accommodate their bike to a state park, do some biking, then head back to downtown and possibly visit another restaurant or do some shopping.

When tourists come to the City, parking should be available close to the exits with public transportation from there to the downtown or state parks. When people drive a few hours, they want to get out of their car; they don't want to have to navigate around an unfamiliar city. These parking areas should have kiosks with trail information on amenities, locations of local businesses, artists, restaurants, trails, and restrooms. There should be a regular bus, trolley, or tram schedule. This would reduce downtown parking demands and reduce traffic while increasing the number of people on the streets.

There should be a shuttle or regular bus route from UCONN campus to downtown Torrington. This would provide students and staff a quick easy alternative to come to downtown for lunch or shopping without the hassle of driving, finding a parking spot or navigating through the City.

Another regular bus or shuttle route should be a triangle starting at City Hall down Main Street to Route 4, right onto Route 4 to East Main Street, right on to East Main Street to Main Street, then right back on to Main Street to City Hall.

Having a bus station or train depot in Torrington to provide service to Hartford and Waterbury, or having the CT Fastrack service, would be a huge benefit to Torrington. This would help get people on the streets in our downtown, without the traffic congestions. All bus stops should have a bench with a roof, including the existing bus stop at the Sullivan Senior Center for NW Transit.



Picture courtesy: <http://www.nwcttransit.com/>

2.5 CREATIVE ECONOMY AND DOWNTOWN CULTURE

Since the existing culture of the downtown area is largely based on the arts, such as theater, dance, art studios or galleries and public art, Torrington should use the creative economy approach to grow the City.

According to <http://creativecites.britishcouncil.org> *at the heart of the Creative Economy are the cultural and creative industries that lie at the crossroads of arts, culture, business and technologies. Those creative industries are those industries that are based on individual creativity, skill and talent with the potential to create wealth and jobs through developing intellectual property. This include thirteen sectors: advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film, interactive leisure software (i.e. video games), music, the performing arts, publishing, software, and television and radio.* The City should encourage these Creative Industries to come to Torrington.

Torrington should partner with UCONN to help promote creative industries in the downtown.

Another way to draw these businesses is to continue to allow and promote public art in the downtown area; possibly invest in a world class public art display which would double as a tourist attraction. This kind of attraction would draw people to the local studios, art galleries and businesses.



Public Art by Danielle Mailer Displayed in Downtown Torrington

The location of all art work should be placed on the trail maps so that residents and visitors can tour the City to look at art. Some specific suggestions of how art could be incorporated into Torrington are:

- There should be sculptures placed at all major intersections.
- Tall vertical fish sculptures should be placed on all four corners of Center Bridge.
- Brass should be incorporated into public art or sculptures to highlight the history of Brass Mills in Torrington.

- Art should also be placed along the trail so that the trail also becomes an attraction.
- Areas along the bridges, streets and river should be landscaped to visual enhance the area.
- Areas where landscaping is not possible, such as floodwalls, colored solar lights can be used to reflect images on flat surfaces or color into water.



Five Points Gallery on the corner of Main Street and Water Street



Warner Theater and the Nutmeg Conservator of the Arts on Main Street

2.6 EVENTS AND ATTRACTIONS



Fountain located in front of City Hall, Main Street

In order to increase the amount of residents and visitors that walk around downtown there needs to be attractions and events that draw people to this area. Having events along the River and in downtown will support our local businesses and help our arts community thrive.

Since the arts should play a large role in the way Torrington is defined, attractions and events should be centered on the arts. Anyone organizing this type of public event should look at what other towns or cities have had success with instead of reinventing the wheel. Some suggestions are:

- Laser Light or Laser Sculpture shows, such as E. Rock Park, Connecticut
- Fire Water, providence, Rhode Island
- River Light show, North Adams, Massachusetts

Some other suggestions for events to be held in the downtown are:

- Year round indoor/outdoor farmer's market
- Have food trucks set up along the river or park one day during the week (possibly Monday when other restaurants tend to be closed), to allow people to have lunch/dinner outside by the river or in the park.
- Main Street Market Place
- Car Shows
- Have the YMCA or Senior Center host annual walks / runs, Litchfield Road Race or similar
- Have bus tours from Torrington of the Naugatuck River Valley
- Offer League of American Bicyclists safe cycling courses
- Offer guided tours of the City, highlighting its history and culture, such as the Flood of 1955, brownfields, brass mills and John Brown. Possibly have high school or college students be tour guides.

In addition to having these one day events there should be some permanent attractions that draw people to Torrington. Participants came up with a wide range of attractions to draw people such as:

- An arts and/or industry museum in Torrington,
- Public gazebo with live music and picnic areas
- Dog park
- Skate board park
- Zip lining
- Disk golf
- Mountain bike trails
- Kids bike park
- Indoor climbing wall
- Boating and kayaking (if possible) and
- Bike rental kiosks located around the city.

The flood of 1955 played a huge role on how Torrington is developed today and is a great example of how a community came together to rebuild after a devastating natural disaster; therefore, it is very important to commemorate the flood of 1955. Some ways this can be done is by placing blue ribbons on buildings that still exist or shine blue lights or use water safe blue paint on flood walls, bridges and levees to indicate how high the water rose.

In addition to drawing people to visit downtown Torrington, there also needs to be a focus on drawing people to live in downtown Torrington. Live/Work space needs to be created and should cater to artists, UConn Students and employees of Torrington businesses and institutions such as CHH.



Car Show on Main Street



Road Race through Torrington

2.6 CONSERVATION AND GREEN INITIATIVES

In addition to the arts, Torrington takes pride in becoming environmental friendly and providing opportunities for Torrington Residents to be more “green” as well. Torrington has installed an electric car charging station, participated in the CT Solarize program and has updated Zoning Regulations to include Low Impact Development requirements.

The City of Torrington is encouraged to continue “green” initiatives; some additional green initiatives they may want to consider are:

- Enhance fish habitat on the river (which will increase fishing opportunities and draw people to Torrington)
- Promote local businesses to install Green roofs
- Add trash and recycling bins along the river, trails and sidewalks.

The City should work with Northwest Conservation District to create a center for environmental conservation and sustainable development in downtown. This center would be the home to governmental and non-profit organizations such as NW Conservation District, USDA, Land Trusts, etc... and provide office space as well as meeting space for these organizations.



Electric Car Charging station in front of City Hall



The City of Torrington's Solarize logo