



# Farmington Canal Greenway Vision Trail

## Overview

### Vision

The Farmington Canal Greenway will connect New Haven Harbor to Hamden and the entire multi-town greenway to the north along an abandoned canal / railroad right-of-way. The Greenway will be an off-road paved path wherever existing conditions permit. The Greenway will provide an additional transportation choice in the Dixwell Avenue corridor, which has the highest bus ridership New Haven. The greenway provides opportunities for recreation in an area with limited existing facilities. Fortunately, the vision for the Greenway is being realized as some portions of the trail already have been developed. Additional funding is available for Phase II of the project as well.

### Key Points

- **Adaptive reuse of an abandoned railroad right-of-way. This is a unique opportunity to preserve a dedicated, continuous right-of-way in a dense, urban environment and adaptively reuse it for pedestrian/bicycle activities. Further, this reuse will transform the right-of-way from a blighting influence to a neighborhood amenity.**
- **Link Farmington Canal Greenway to existing Vision Trail.**
- **Much of the greenway has moved beyond planning to the design and implementation phase. The process by which the Farmington Canal Greenway is developed can serve as a learning tool for future greenway development in New Haven.**

*Note: Although, the Vision Trail and the Farmington Canal Greenway are two separate trail systems, there is an opportunity to blend the routes and create one system from the Green to New Haven Harbor.*

## Existing Conditions

### FC – 1: Canal Dock – Water Street

The Vision Trail, an off-road paved trail, was built to link downtown to the harbor for the 1995 Special Olympic World Games. The Vision Trail begins at the southern terminus of Canal Dock Road beneath I-95. The trail passes by the IKEA Home Furnishing site (now under construction). After crossing Brewery Street, the Vision Trail passes between the Connecticut DOT rail yard and a US Postal Service facility to Water Street. In order to separate trail users from the abutting public service facilities, there is fencing on both sides of the trail north of Brewery.



(left) Southern terminus of the Vision Trail beneath I-95. UI's Harbor Station can be seen in the distance.  
(right) The entrance to the Vision Trail at Water Street. The rail yard is visible in the background

## Land Ownership

### Public

State: -Connecticut DOT owned passenger rail yard and maintenance area.

Federal: -US Postal Service facility

### Private

-Future IKEA Home Furnishing site (former Pirelli site)

## Connections

- Harborside Trail. Important node in City's greenway system.
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial (Long Wharf) Park
- High School in the Community – Safe routes to school.

## Opportunities

- ConnDOT replacement of I-95 bridge over Canal Dock Road.

## FC – 2: Water Street – Orange Street

Going north from Water Street is Union Street, a short, tree-lined boulevard originally intended as part of a larger, formal connection from downtown to Union Station. The west side of Union Street is Union Parkway, a small, narrow park with furniture. On the east side of Union Street is High School in the Community. Going north, the dominant feature in the area is the wide cut in which the railroad tracks lay. The cut separates the Downtown and Wooster Square neighborhoods. The area east of the cut along Olive Street is a mix of residential and commercial uses. This area features a variety of building styles from historic multi-story residential and mixed use buildings to a large factory that has been converted to residences to modern office and retail buildings. Going north and west, the area of downtown in the vicinity of Grove Street and State Street is predominantly used for surface parking. The Farmington Canal right-of-way, which would begin here, was eradicated with the construction of the large office building in 1990s that houses the FBI. The built environment becomes dense again west of Orange Street.



(left) Looking north along Union Parkway near Water Street. High School in the Community is at right. Note ample width for a share-the-streets treatment for the trail  
(right) Looking south along Union Parkway near Chapel Street.

## Land Ownership

### Public

- City: -Union Street Parkway
- Surface parking on east side of State near Grove

### Private

- Fusco-owned arena building leased to the FBI.
- The properties along Union Parkway, Chapel Street, Olive Street, and Grove Street are privately held with few exceptions.

## Connections

- Union Parkway
- High School in the Community – Safe routes to school
- Edward Zigler Head Start – Safe routes to school.

## **FC – 3: Orange Street – Lock Street**

The abandoned railroad right-of-way begins beneath the Orange – Grove intersection in a tunnel section. Going north, the right-of-way emerges from the tunnel beneath the Grove Street parking structure, abuts the Arts Center Mini-Park of the Audubon Arts Center, and is an open cut until Whitney Avenue. This one block segment presents an opportunity to link the proposed greenway to the public spaces of the Arts Center, provide parking for greenway users, and develop an interface between adjacent commercial uses and the greenway. The segment between Whitney Avenue and Temple Street passes, for a distance of approximately 200 feet, under an in-fill housing development. The tunnel appears to be in good condition. There is access from street level from the southerly side of Whitney Avenue and there is potential access from Temple Street where the right-of-way daylights.



(left) Looking south along the right-of-way beneath the Hillhouse Avenue Bridge  
(right) Looking north along the right-of-way beneath the Prospect Street Bridge

The character of the row changes north of Temple Street. In the first two blocks from Temple Street to Prospect Street, the route is owned by Yale University and is surrounded primarily by buildings related to Yale. There is limited access from street level through parking lots and driveways adjacent to the buildings. Yale intends to build a portion of the greenway between Hillhouse and Prospect as part of site work for its new Engineering building.

### Land Ownership

#### Public

- City: -The right-of-way is owned by the City save for the two block segment between Temple Street and Prospect Street.
- Arts Center Minipark

#### Private

- The right-of-way between Temple Street and Prospect Street is owned by Yale University
- The property abutting the right-of-way is privately held

### Connections

- Arts Center Minipark
- Creative Arts Workshop – Safe routes to school



## Opportunities

-New Yale University Engineering Building at Prospect-Trumbull intersection.



(left) At-grade crossing with Webster Street. These intersection treatments enhance aesthetics, visibility, and safety.

(right) Completed section near Yale University. Monterey Holmes are visible in the background.

## **FC – 4: Lock Street – Munson Street**

The Farmington Canal Greenway has been built out in this area. The southern portion of the greenway abuts part of Yale University's campus. Going north past Webster Street, the greenway is bounded by residential areas including Monterey Place, an award-winning HOPE VI program. With the redevelopment of housing, rebuilding of the street, and completion of the greenway, this area has undergone a dramatic transformation in a short period of time. Near Munson Street at the northern terminus of the completed section of the greenway, the first large structures which make up Science Park become apparent including one currently being refurbished that abuts the trails.

## Land Ownership

Public

City: -The former railroad right-of-way is owned by the City

## Connections

-Orange Street pilot bike route.

-Ella B. Scantlebury Park

## Opportunities

-Proposed improvements to Ella B. Scantlebury Park



(left) The right-of-way is already used informally as a footpath between Hazel Street and Ivy Street  
(right) A car park encroaches upon on the right-of-way between Brewster and Bassett Street.

### **FC – 5: Munson Street – Hamden Town Line**

Beginning at Munson Street where the completed portion of the Farmington Canal Greenway ends, the right-of-way is overgrown and enclosed by a fence, thus strictly delineating the public right-of-way from the private property it abuts. The right-of-way is at its widest in this area because here there were track sidings serving the former manufacturing facilities that are now part of Science Park. North of Science Park, the right-of-way passes through an area of two- and three-story residences. The right-of-way has seven at-grade intersections with local residential streets with varying levels of traffic. At various times, the right-of-way is used as a footpath, is overgrown with vegetation and is used for automotive uses (most notably around Bassett Street).

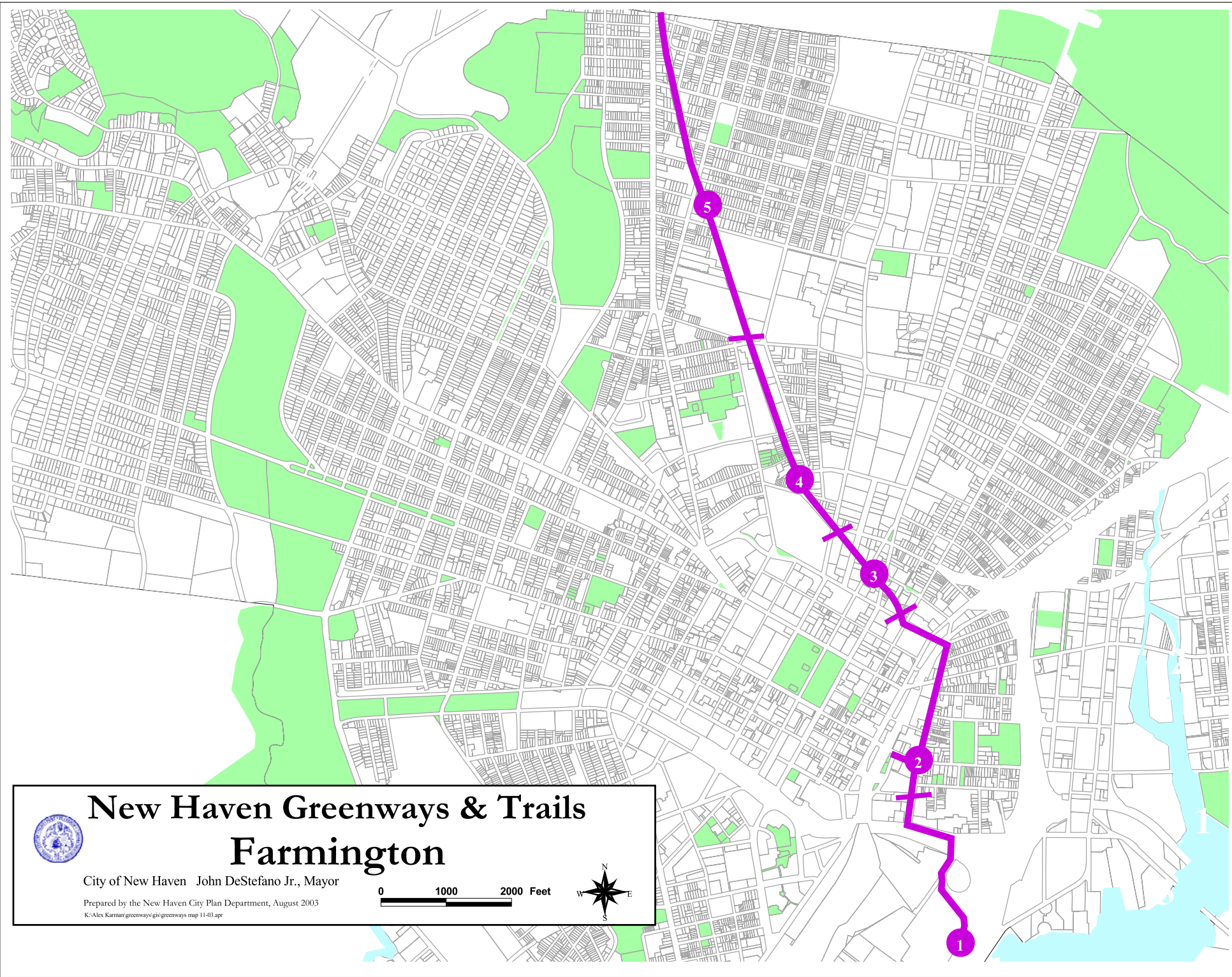
### **Land Ownership**

Public

City : -The former railroad right-of-way is owned by the City

### **Connections**

-West River Greenway (SCSU – Beaver Pond spur)  
-Proximity to Beaver Pond Park, Martin Luther King, Jr. School, Lincoln-Bassett Community School. Safe routes to school



# New Haven Greenways & Trails Farmington

City of New Haven John DeStefano Jr., Mayor

Prepared by the New Haven City Plan Department, August 2003

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## Alignment & Major Issues



### FC – 1: Canal Dock – Water Street

#### Alignment

No alternations in the alignment are necessary though the alignment of the Vision Trail is to be altered as part of the IKEA home furnishings store.

#### Major Issues

-Maintain southern terminus of Vision Trail. The reconstruction of I-95 through Long Wharf will include replacement of the bridge over Canal Dock Road and the Vision Trail. Between this project and the Canal Dock Recreation Area project, there is a need to ensure that the trail junction through this area is preserved and enhanced. This should include a better bicycle/pedestrian crossing treatment at the Canal Dock Road – Long Wharf Drive intersection. This is especially important, given the significance of this node both in the City's greenway and trail system, the regional system, and as part of the East Coast Greenway.

-Maintain the trail through the IKEA Home Furnishings and Railroad Area. Improved site and improve maintenance and appearance of the railroad area, in particular, will increase use.



(left) Looking south along Long Wharf Drive. The trail follows the right side of the street as a sidewalk.

(right) Looking south where the trail crosses Sargent Drive near Canal Dock Road.

Rebuilding the Vision Trail towards Farmington Canal Greenway standards will enhance it as a signature link between Downtown and the Harbor and create visual harmony with the northern portions of the Greenway.

## **FC – 2: Water Street – Orange Street**

### Alignment

Between the northern terminus of the Vision Trail and the southern terminus of the right-of-way, the area is densely built up and there is no possible off-road route. While the final routing is still to be determined, the preferred alternative is as follows: North of Water Street, the greenway will become an on-road shared route. Along Union Parkway, there is adequate width to accommodate bicycle lanes. Going north from Union Parkway, an on-road signed route will proceed east one block on Chapel Street, then north on Olive Street to Grove Street. At the Olive Street – Grove Street intersection, the trail will turn towards the west and follow Grove Street across the railroad tracks to the intersection of Grove Street and Orange Street.

### Major Issues

**-Safety and signage.** Because this section is part of the much larger multi-state Eastcoast Greenway, extra attention must be paid towards the maintenance of the identity of the greenway and the safety of greenway users. A good system of signage and possibly markings in the pavement would help the trail to stand out. An appropriate share-the-streets treatment would enhance safety and be consistent with the City's other efforts to improve its streets.

### **FC – 3: Orange Street – Lock Street**

#### Alignment

At Grove Street – Orange Street intersection, an entrance that allows greenway users to access the existing tunnel is necessary. From this point on, the Farmington Canal Greenway will follow the former canal and railroad right-of-way.

#### Major Issues

**-Safety in the below-grade, tunnel sections.** As indicated in the Farmington Canal Greenway master plan, good lighting, maintenance, regular patrols by public safety officers on foot/bike, and emergency call boxes should enhance safety and the perception of safety through tunnel sections.

**-Connect to the Orange Street bike route.** The Farmington Canal Greenway and the Orange Street bike route cross at separate grades at the Prospect-Trumbull-Canal intersection. Since the City proposed a system of Greenways, connecting these two bicycle/pedestrians corridors is fundamental to creating a network of non-motorized transport routes through New Haven. Connection might be made easily at Prospect Place or Sachem Street



The Farmington Canal Greenway (left) and the Orange Street Bike Route are grade-separated at the Prospect-Trumbull-Canal intersection. Making an interchange between these two routes is fundamental to creating a network of greenways, trails, and bicycle routes in New Haven.

#### **FC – 4: Lock Street – Munson Street**

##### Alignment and Major Issues

This segment of the greenway went into operation this year. The greenway follows the former canal and railroad right-of-way. Major issues, such as the safety and appearance of street crossings, were resolved during design.

#### **FC – 5: Munson Street – Hamden Town Line**

##### Alignment

The greenway will continue to follow the former canal and railroad right-of-way. No change in alignment is anticipated.

##### Major Issues

**-Safety through at-grade intersections.** This portion of the Greenway features seven at-grade intersections on light-traffic local streets and heavy-traffic arterial streets. Safety through these intersections is key to potential greenway users.

#### **Note: Connection to West River Greenway**

As shown on the West River system map (page 75), there is also an opportunity to connect the Farmington system, through Beaver Ponds and SCSU, to the West River Greenway. From the west, the alignment follows Blake Street north to Farnham Avenue as an on-road shared route. The greenway then will continue as an on-road shared route north on Farnham towards SCSU's campus and path system. The greenway continues east along pedestrian paths and through parking lots north of Crescent Street. From there, an existing trail through Beaver Pond Park takes the greenway to Fournier Street. The greenway will turn north and follow Fournier as an on-road shared trail, reentering the park just south of Veitch Field. Past Veitch Field, the greenway will turn south onto Sherman Avenue as an on-road shared route. South of Sherman's intersection with Hazel Street, the greenway will turn east, passing through the northern side of the Martin Luther King Jr. School, then across Dixwell, and east along Hazel Street. Hazel Street intersects with the Farmington system less than a block east of Dixwell.



## Directions and Priorities

- **Fund the remainder of off-road sections of the Farmington Canal Greenway.** Funding for Phase II of the greenway has been secured and applications have been made for Phase III.
- **Reconstruct the Vision Trail towards the design standards for the Farmington Canal Greenway.** The Harbor and Harborside trail will be signature destinations for the City's greenway users. Improving and maintaining the Vision Trail at or near Farmington Canal Greenway standards, where applicable, would make this section of trail more appealing and create visual harmony with the Farmington Canal Greenway.
- **Create connections to the Orange Street bicycle route.** In order for New Haven's greenways to work as a system or network, adequate connections must be established and promoted at nodal points. This is no different from an interstate highway. Access between the Orange Street bicycle route and the Farmington Canal Greenway can easily be made at either Prospect Place or Sachem Street. Signage is needed, first and foremost.