



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06131-7546



### Determination of Effect on Historic Properties

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<b>Project:</b>	State No.:	131-203
	F.A.P. No.:	PEDS(197)
	Project Title:	Farmington Canal Heritage Trail
	Town:	Southington

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<b>Finding of Effect:</b>	<b>No Adverse Effect, Conditional</b>
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#### *Project Description:*

The Town of Southington, with technical support and financial assistance from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), proposes construction of a segment of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail within their jurisdictional purview. The trail segment would consist of approximately 2.3 miles of multi-use trail between Lazy Lane in Southington and Town Line Road in Plainville. This determination is an update of a finding previously subjected to Section 106 review in November of 2014, April of 2016, and June of 2018. Given recent expansion of the project scope to include a segment of sidewalk along Newell Street, it has been necessary to revisit the previous Section 106 determination of *conditional no adverse effect* for the undertaking.

The project involves the construction of a 10-12' wide multi-use trail. Design elements will include a pre-fabricated pedestrian bridge, at-grade roadway crossing improvements, interpretive signage, bridge railing improvements, bridge masonry repointing, minor roadway drainage work, landscaping, fencing, and benches. New sidewalk is also proposed along the north side of Newell Street from Redstone Street to West Queen Street. The project begins at Lazy Lane adjacent to the Southington Police Department, and extends north along the former rail bed to Aircraft Road. The proposed alignment then heads west along the south side of Aircraft Road until it crosses the Quinnipiac River with a new pedestrian bridge that replaces an existing roadway bridge (presently closed to

vehicular traffic). Upon reaching the intersection of West Queen Street and Redstone Street, the alignment continues north following the eastern side of Redstone Street and terminates at the intersection of Redstone Street and Town Line Road adjacent to the Town of Plainville border for a total distance of approximately 2.3 miles.

One full acquisition is required from the Pan-Am Railroad and nine permanent easements will be required to construct the project. Temporary easements may be required for construction access. There are four utility poles that will require relocation, three guy wires will need to be reconfigured, and one pole is to be removed as a part of the project. Two fire hydrants will require relocation.

Under the provisions of the Programmatic Agreement concluded in October of 2012 among CTDOT, FHWA, the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Officer (CT SHPO), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regarding compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) for minor transportation projects<sup>1</sup>, the Office of Environmental Planning (OEP) intends to make a determination of effect on historic properties for the described undertaking.

#### ***Resources Potentially Affected:***

Online digital resources maintained by the National Park Service were consulted for the purpose of locating any National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-listed historic properties in the project vicinity. No NRHP-listed resources were found to lie in the immediate project area. The rail corridor involved with this project was once part of the New Haven and Northampton Railroad Main Line, which dates to 1848 and generally followed the course of the Farmington Canal. It thus became commonly referred to as the ‘Canal Line’. The former Farmington Canal itself—listed on the National Register—lay nearly ½-mile to the west of the Canal Line railroad at this point. The nearest other NRHP resource is the Southington Center Historic District, located almost a mile to the south. Neither of these historic properties will experience any foreseeable effect in association with the current undertaking.

A series of historic maps were examined to assess the potential for previously unidentified historic properties to be located within the project area of potential effect (APE). The 1930 Griswold-Spiess Map of reconstructed Native settlement in Connecticut circa 1625 presents no concentrations of population in the vicinity, although an important footpath—the ‘Tunxis Path’—did run roughly along the same route. The 1811 Warren Map of Connecticut depicts no Federal Period development in the area, though again a road runs roughly along the route—most

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<sup>1</sup> *Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding Implementation of Minor Transportation Projects*, signed October 26, 2012. Accessible online at: [www.ct.gov/culturalresources](http://www.ct.gov/culturalresources)

likely the forebear of Queen Street/Route 10. The 1855 Woodford Map of Hartford County reveals the New Haven and Northampton Railroad already in place with a considerable amount of development especially at the northern end of the APE, though almost all of this is focused on parallel Queen Street rather than the rail corridor. Fairchild Series aerial photographs from 1934 show no development along the rail corridor at that time. There was a bridge over the Quinnipiac River at virtually the same location as depicted in the Woodford Map, however. The digital archives of Tyler City Station—an online rail enthusiast group website<sup>2</sup>—reveal that there was once (19th century) a rail stop in the vicinity of the Spring Street crossing called “Millers,” apparently the name of a clock making company that was once situated near here. No indication was found that anything related to this stop remains at the intensively developed commercial location today. According to Tyler City Station, the relevant segment of railroad was in place and complete by 1848.

Digital site records maintained by the Office of the State Archaeologist were consulted for the purpose of identifying any previously known archaeological sites in the project vicinity. Only one documented archaeological resource was found to lie within a mile of the APE. State Site Number 131-5 lies about 9/10ths of a mile west of the proposed alignment near its mid-point. This poorly known pre-Colonial resource is well outside of the APE and will experience no foreseeable effects from the current undertaking.

Soil classification maps maintained by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection were examined in conjunction with archaeological predictive models developed within the State of Connecticut to assess the sensitivity of the project area for previously unknown pre-Contact resources. Most of the APE lies upon sediments classified as Urban Land, extensively developed and poor in quality for preservation of archaeological sites. One discrete section along the Quinnipiac River, however, is located on fine sandy loams predicted to be highly sensitive for archaeological deposits. The artificial rail bed is very pronounced in this area though, and visible in aerial photographs along the entire route dating back to 1934. In addition, much of the alignment has also been used for buried utilities, including a marked fiber optic cable route.

A field review conducted by OEP staff on the 24th of September of 2014 revealed that the former rail bed is still clearly evident along most of the originally proposed alignment. Many if not most of the rail ties are still in place south of the I-84 overpass. OEP found signs of archaeological sensitivity however on both sides of the corridor between Lazy Lane and the Quinnipiac River crossing. There are areas of mature growth with clear understory and natural appearing ground surface, accompanied by stone alignments, coppiced trees, evidence of stone quarrying with scattered rail-related debris, etc. All work south of the Quinnipiac River should therefore be restricted to the former railbed, including any storage and layup activity.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.tylercitystation.info](http://www.tylercitystation.info)

The former rail bridge over the Quinnipiac is constructed of brownstone arkose blocks with interstitial mortar (Photo 1). Its classic arched form is typical of stone bridges from the late 19th and early 20th century, and this example may date to the mid-19th century, given that a rail crossing is depicted at this location in the 1855 Woodford Map discussed above. This structure should be considered eligible for the NRHP and any modifications to the bridge should be carried out in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures* in order to avoid an adverse effect finding.

An additional segment of proposed trail to the north of West Queen Street incorporated into the project in November of 2015 crosses two small sections of ground predicted to be archaeologically sensitive, and intersects the Quinnipiac River a second time at former railroad crossing. A second field review was therefore conducted on February 1<sup>st</sup> of 2016. OEP archaeological staff found that the entire section of affected rail corridor is thoroughly disturbed by a gas main on the east side of the tracks and fiber optic cable on the west side. The rail bed itself consists entirely of an elevated stone marl base. No areas of archaeological potential were evident.



Photo 1: Arkose Brownstone Masonry Arch Bridge over Quinnipiac River.

The second bridge over the Quinnipiac River, north of Camp Ground Road, consists of heavily weathered steel stringers set into large stone block masonry abutments (Photo 2). While the abutments appear to be of substantial age and bear divot marks indicative of having been moved and placed by antique equipment such as tongs and winches, such structures are rather common across the State and convey little historical significance in and of themselves and in isolation. These

structures therefore fail to rise to the level of NRHP eligibility in the view of OEP.

The northern section of the proposed trail alignment was re-routed away from the former rail corridor in December of 2016. When avoidance provisions requested of soils with archaeological potential could not be accommodated, formal Phase Ib archaeological reconnaissance was requested for approximately 500 meters of the west side of Redstone Street between West Queen Street and Garden Drive. This survey was carried out by Archaeological and Historical Services, Inc. operating out of Storrs, Connecticut, in April of 2018<sup>3</sup>. Excavation of 29 shovel tests produced evidence of two post-European Contact archaeological resources. Both appear to represent 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century residences. Neither was deemed to qualify as eligible for the NRHP given the lack of intact features and intensive stratigraphic mixing with roadside refuse. No further archaeological investigation was recommended.



Photo 2: Steel Stringer Bridge over Quinnipiac River north of Camp Ground Road

Review of the proposed additional sidewalk extension along the north side of Newell Street in January of 2020 revealed that sediments along the entire length consist almost entirely of Urban Land Complex Udothents or Urban Land generally considered of poor quality for retention of intact archaeological resources. Visual review using recent roadside and aerial photographs confirms extensive disturbance from suburban industrial development, artificial landscapes,

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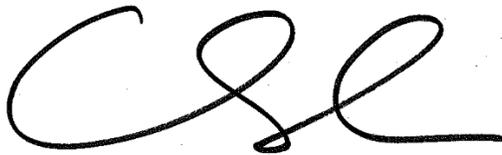
<sup>3</sup> End of Fieldwork Memorandum, AHS Inc. to Dominick Celtruda of BL Companies, dated April 30, 2018, Document on file at CTDOT Office of Environmental Planning.

and subsurface utilities including storm drainage and electrical. No NRHP-listed or eligible structures occur in the immediate area.

***Determination of Effect:***

Consultation was carried out with Federally-recognized Native American Tribal authorities with ancestral ties to the State of Connecticut for the revised scope of this undertaking in October of 2014, March of 2016, and May of 2018. Both the Mashantucket Pequot and the Mohegan Tribe originally concurred with the need for avoidance of impacts to stone features and alignments and archaeologically sensitive areas to either side of the rail bed along the southern extent of the APE. The Narragansetts never responded to invitations to consult. In the 2016 round of consultation, neither the Delaware Lenape nor the Mohegans had any further concerns with the undertaking and none of the remaining Tribes responded to FHWA's inquiry. The results of archaeological survey work were sent to the Tribal Nations for comment in May of 2018 and no concerns were expressed.

Given that the proposed route still crosses over a potentially NRHP-eligible bridge, and that archaeologically sensitive terrain lies on either side of the alignment at its southern end, OEP hereby reaffirms the determination that there will be *no adverse effect to historic properties* associated with the present undertaking. This finding remains **conditional** upon avoidance of any modifications to the bridge over the Quinnipiac River that are not in accord with the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines, and avoidance of any off railbed activities between that bridge and Lazy Lane to the south. With this determination, FHWA, through OEP, has concluded its responsibility to consider the potential effects of the described project on cultural resources under Section 106 of the NHPA via the provisions of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement referenced above.



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