

**CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
PUBLIC INFORMATION (HYBRID)
MEETING MINUTES**

Project No.: 0108-0196
Project Name: Construction of the Quinebaug River Trail
Date of Meeting: Thursday, April 9, 2026
Location of Meeting: Town of Plainfield Town Hall
8 Community Avenue, Plainfield, CT 06374
Subject of Meeting: Public Information Meeting

Attendees:

Public Members:		
Please see Attachment A for list of attendees that signed the sign-in form.		
In-Person: 10		
Zoom: 6		
Project Team		
Name	Organization	Email
Jennifer Sweeney, P.E. – attended virtually	CTDOT	Jennifer.Sweeney@ct.gov
Thomas Lantz	CTDOT	Thomas.Lantz@ct.gov
Brett Stark	AI Engineers	bstark@aiengineers.com
Matthew Bernacki, P.E.	HNTB	mbernacki@HNTB.com
Raymond Looney	HNTB	rlooney@HNTB.com
Danielle Wong	HNTB	dawong@HNTB.com
Gabby Strain	HNTB	gstrain@HNTB.com
Jodi O'Connor, P.E. – attended virtually	HNTB	jooconnor@hntb.com

1. Meeting Purpose

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) hosted a hybrid public information meeting to provide an overview of State Project 0108-0196 that is being delivered using the design-build project delivery method. This meeting was to allow the public the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed work and ask questions to the project team.

2. Hybrid Meeting Format and Attendance

This public meeting was held in-person at the Town of Plainfield Town Hall and virtually via Zoom. The Zoom feed was a combination of the presentation materials as well as views of the presenters and in-person attendees.

During the meeting, attendees were shown a PowerPoint presentation that described the proposed project and provided an informational sheet. Following the presentation, in-person attendees as well as those using Zoom, were able to participate in a question-and-answer session. Attendees were also notified of a fourteen (14) day public comment period that would end on April 23, 2026.

The meeting was held from 6:00 pm to 6:30 pm on Thursday, April 9, 2026.

3. Hybrid Public Information Meeting Presentation

3.1 The CTDOT's Consultant team presented the following information:

3.1.1 Project Background

- a) This project stems from the 2018 Plainfield Plan of Conservation & Development Goals and CTDOT's 2019 Connecticut Active Transportation Plan Goals.
 - i) Goals for each plan prioritize enhancing opportunities for active recreation for non-motorists, developing a more complete and connected trail system, and closing gaps in the state-town trail network by coordinating with regional trail networks.
- b) Federal "earmark" funds of approximately \$2,180,000 were awarded to the Town of Plainfield through Congressman Courtney's office with a required local funding match of \$545,000. These funds are for the specific use of the trail between Wauregan Road (CT 205) and Cady Lane.
- c) The Town of Plainfield reached out to CTDOT for support in administering the project to meet the earmark deadline.
 - i) CTDOT agreed to administer the project, similar to the arrangement on the Moosup Valley State Park Project 0108-0189. CTDOT also agreed to pay the local funding match.
- d) There are multiple partners involved whose needs must be accommodated within this project.
 - i) CTDEEP's concerns about the project were shared and local resident concerns were encouraged during the Q&A session of this meeting.
- e) CTDOT efforts to date include a completed corridor survey, environmental and cultural resource screening and coordination, design build determination, and scope and cost evaluations.

3.1.2 Overview of Design-Build Project Delivery Method

- a) This is a Project delivery method where a single team, comprised of engineers and contractors, is awarded the contract based on best value.
 - i) Best value is a combination of a team's qualifications, price proposal to complete design and construct the project, as well as their technical approach to completing the project design and construction.
- b) Attendees were shown a general timeline that compares the design-build process against the traditional design-bid-build method to demonstrate the efficiencies of overlapping design and construction activities using design-build.

3.1.3 Project Purpose and Need

- a) An overview of the project area was shown, and the purpose and need of the project was shared. This project is to connect South Walnut Street to

Trout Hatchery Road via a paved, multi-use path that will utilize the existing trolley trail through Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP)-owned land. The team is also exploring options that could extend the trail further onto Trout Hatchery Road.

- b) The Purpose of the project is to enhance non-motorized mobility by providing new connections for non-motorized mobility and improve recreational opportunity and quality of life for local and regional residents.

3.1.4 Existing Conditions

- a) There is currently a dirt path of varying width on the trail, left over from the local trolley trail that has been out of service since the 1920's. The parcel is also a part of the Quinebaug River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and has public access for fishing and bow hunting.

3.1.5 General Scope of Work - Base Technical Concept (BTC)

- a) This project will create a 10-foot-wide paved multi-use trail with 1-foot-wide grass shoulders and a wooden split-rail fence on both sides. Steel bollards will be used to help deter unauthorized access to the paved trail at the northern and southern limits.

3.1.6 Natural & Cultural Resources

- a) A review of federally protected species, wetlands and watercourses was provided. Minor temporary and permanent impacts may occur, however exact areas are currently unknown. Field studies for the area are to begin in Spring 2026.
- b) The trail crosses into the Wauregan Historic District and is nearby to the Central Village Historic District. Section 106 consultation is currently ongoing and no adverse effect determination is anticipated.
- c) Consultation with the Tribal Historic Preservation Office is complete, and no adverse effects determination was received. Coordination with CTDEEP is ongoing regarding work near the Quinebaug Valley State Trout Hatchery.

3.1.7 Utility Impacts

- a) Existing condition photos were shown to illustrate that there is one utility pole and overhead wires within the project limits, but no relocations are anticipated.
- b) Coordination with Trout Hatchery Utilities is ongoing.

3.1.8 Rights-of-Way

- a) Attendees were informed there are no private property impacts anticipated and parcel impacts are limited to CTDEEP-owned parcels. Impacts will be finalized once the final concept has been approved.

3.1.9 Project Schedule & Budget

- a) The project schedule was reviewed:
 - i) Request for Proposals (RFP) – August 2026
 - ii) Contract Award – May 2027
 - iii) Notice to Proceed (NTP) – July 2027
 - iv) Estimated Construction Start – Spring 2028
- b) The project budget was shown to be between \$1 million and \$2.49 million with 80% federal funds and 20% state funds anticipated.

4. Post-Presentation Question & Answer (Q&A) Session

The following is a summary of the questions asked at the public meeting, along with answers that were provided. Questions and responses have been edited for clarity. Please visit [CTDOT's Public Information Meeting YouTube Playlist](#) to view the recording of the entire public meeting.

Question 1. Mary P.: An abutter to the trail: How is this project going to impact my property?

Answer 1. Matt Bernacki of HNTB explained that the project is not anticipating any impacts to private property and the project will stay within CTDEEP-owned property and avoid the wetlands.

Question 2. Mary P.: Will the project create a road from the entrance of the trail to the road?

Answer 2. Mr. Bernacki answered that the project will stay within the existing trail limits and connect to the asphalt sidewalk that currently exists. Survey title search is currently ongoing but impacts to Ms. Pelletier's parcel are not anticipated.

Question 3. Mary P.: There is also a ravine between the road and the trail that has overflowed before onto my property, how will you protect against that?

Answer 3. Mr. Bernacki answered, saying that once the design-build team is selected, they will finalize design that will include cleaning and inspecting existing culverts for stormwater runoff.

Question 4. Mary P.: Internet connection is not that good in that area, what will be the plan for emergencies?

Answer 4. Mr. Bernacki explained that the project does not propose any upgrades to utilities or impacts to existing utilities.

Question 5. Mary P.: If there are any impacts to my property, will I be notified?

Answer 5. Mr. Bernacki said if there are any impacts discovered to any abutting properties, owners will be notified directly by CTDOT, furthermore there is the project website.

Question 6. Mary P.: Similar to the Danielson trail, will there be benches and bars that can be lifted?

Answer 6. Mr. Bernacki noted that the project is in the early design process, and this comment will be noted regarding additions to the RFP.

Question 7. Mary P.: Will there be fences put in that limit access to the river?

Answer 7. Mr. Bernacki answered that the current plan is to have split-rail fences on either side of the paved trail to prevent trespassing, but there may be options to have gaps in the fence based on concerns that may arise.

Question 8. Mary P.: Will there be room for wheelchairs with the steel pole bollard to keep motorized vehicles out?

Answer 8. Mr. Bernacki explained that the steel bollards will be in place to deter unauthorized use of the trail. These bollards will also be removable to allow the passage of emergency or maintenance vehicles as necessary.

Question 9. Mary P.: Where are people using the trail going to park? People tend to double park on the street to access the trail, and it makes it difficult for us to use the street.

Answer 9. Mr. Bernacki stated parking improvements are not currently included in the project scope but there are parking areas near the Hatchery. He went on to note that this comment will be noted for consideration.

Question 10. A.J. O. (virtual attendee): Will the trail connect to the Killingly bike path? And if not immediately, are there future plans to make this connection?

Answer 10. Mr. Bernacki answered that the team is looking at options to connect gaps in the trails. There is no plan at this point but it is a future possibility. Mr. Brett Stark of AI Engineers, CTDOT consultant, added that connecting the trail is not part of the project being presented at this meeting.

Question 11. A.J. O. (virtual attendee): Will there be illumination on the trail?

Answer 11. Mr. Bernacki stated that the team is still determining the applicability of installing lighting on the trail.

Question 12. A.J. O. (virtual attendee): Will there be rest stops or benches on the trail?

Answer 12. Mr. Bernacki stated that this is similar to the lighting question, the team will evaluate to determine if that could be added to the RFP.

Question 13. Michael G. (virtual attendee): What are your plans for the walkway in front of the mill?

Answer 13. Mr. Bernacki answered saying that the current plan is for the trail to be connected to the walkway in front of the mill and there are no planned improvements to that walkway at this time.

Question 14. Samantha N. (virtual attendee): What are the plans to protect private property owners in regard to fencing and additional monitoring against the existing issues of trespassing?

Answer 14. Mr. Bernacki explained that the team is looking to have the split-rail fence on both sides of the path to encourage everyone to stay on the trail. The team is looking at options for signage to enhance security but that is still in development.

Question 15. Mary P.: Is this project going to raise taxes in any way?

Answer 15. Mr. Bernacki answered saying this project is proposed to be funded 80% federal dollars and the "earmark" funds mentioned requires a local match, which CTDOT is covering for this project.

Question 16. Mary P.: Is there a plan for cameras on the trail to catch people littering?

Answer 16. Mr. Bernacki stated that the team is looking at all options and questions like this are under evaluation.

Question 17. Mary P.: I see there are surveying flags marked around the project area near my property; how close will the project get to my property? It looks like the project is going to cut directly in front of my property.

Answer 17. Mr. Bernacki explained that the survey being conducted for the project should have identified any property boundary pins in the ground. The team will investigate surveying issues brought up in this question.

Question 18. Samantha N.: Will the town be willing to install privacy fencing for property owners that are right against the trail?

Answer 18. Mr. Bernacki noted that he cannot speak for the town, but this concern is noted for future consideration.

Question 19. Anonymous in-person attendee: The steel bollards you mentioned, will that prevent motorcycles or quads from entering the trail? There are dirt bikes and quads that use the trails off the main trail. CTDEEP has previously held "stakeouts" on the trail to catch unauthorized motor vehicles in the area.

Answer 19. Mr. Bernacki explained that the space between the steel bollards will be narrow enough where quads will not be able to fit but there will be enough room for wheelchairs and strollers to get through. Split-rail fences and bollards aim to deter misuse of the trail. The team is working with CTDEEP throughout this project. Mr. Stark added that CTDEEP has expressed their concerns regarding unauthorized path usage and there will be coordination with CTDEEP moving forward regarding enforcement and maintenance.

Meeting concluded at 6:30 pm.

5. Public Comment Period

Prior to the PIM, two emails from the public were received. During the Public Comment Period of April 9, 2026 PIM to April 23, 2026, one additional email comment was received.

Email 1. Received Wednesday, April 7, 2026 from Samantha N.

Hello,

I am writing to formally object to the continuance of the project referenced in the subject line. I plan to attend the upcoming meeting via Zoom to discuss these concerns further but to start here-

As a homeowner on Charlotte Drive for the past six years, my property borders the access roads used by the trout hatchery. While I support community access to the river and fishing areas, the current situation has led to significant issues, including littering, trespassing, off-leash dogs, and unauthorized motor vehicle use. I have attached videos from yesterday illustrating recent instances of off-leash dogs and individuals cutting through private yards.

Increasing public access will further compromise the safety and privacy of local residents. Instead, I suggest focusing on improvements such as:

- Installing benches by the pond.**
- Refurbishing the boat launch area.**

- Creating additional river access points for fly fishing swimming kayaking etc.
- Establishing a fenced-in dog park where off leash encounters can be encouraged
- installing bird houses batt boxes or protected areas to support the local animals that call it home

If this project proceeds despite our growing concerns, I request that state funding be allocated for 6-to-8-foot privacy fencing to protect the property lines of all affected homeowners. As well as additional monitoring by law enforcement or local agencies to enforce regulations. My neighbors on Charlotte Drive and Marie Drive will also be in attendance. Please let me know if you have any questions or wish to discuss these points further.

Sincerely,

Samantha N.

Concerned Homeowner

Email Response 1. Mr. Richard Prescott from CTDOT responded:

Good afternoon Samantha,

Thank you for your email. I have forwarded this email to the Project Team, which many of them you will meet on Thursday.

We understand your concerns and will incorporate your email as part of the official Report of Meeting, for the Public Information Meeting, for consideration and discussion. We will welcome additional comments at the meeting on Thursday. There is an interest to promote this project and we have these meetings to gather all the information we can, to help the project come to fruition or sometimes abandon.

We look forward to meeting you on Thursday and discussing your concerns further.

Email 2. Received Wednesday, April 8, 2026 from Samantha T.

I am writing to formally express my concerns regarding the proposed trail connection from Trout Hatchery Road to the intersection of South Walnut Street and 1st Street.

My home is located directly adjacent to the existing trail area. One of the primary reasons we chose this property was its location against protected and undeveloped land, which provides privacy, safety, and a natural buffer for both residents and local wildlife. The proposed connection would significantly alter the function and character of this space.

Currently, this area operates as a low-access residential environment with limited through traffic. The addition of a connecting trail would introduce a direct pedestrian corridor between areas that are not currently linked in this way. This change raises several important concerns:

1. Increased Trespassing and Property Impact

We have already experienced instances of trespassing and off-leash dogs entering our property from the existing trail area. Expanding access will likely increase these occurrences, creating ongoing challenges for homeowners and diminishing our ability to maintain reasonable boundaries and privacy.

2. Unmonitored Rear Access to Homes

Unlike traditional roadways, trails located behind residential properties create access points that are not visible from the street. This introduces safety concerns by allowing unmonitored foot traffic directly behind homes, an environment that is difficult to supervise or secure.

3. Impact on Residential Character and Property Expectations

Homeowners in this area purchased their properties with the understanding that the surrounding land would remain undeveloped or minimally impacted. This proposal changes that expectation by increasing foot traffic and altering how the land behind our homes is used and accessed.

4. Wildlife and Environmental Disruption

The undeveloped land behind our homes serves as habitat for local wildlife. Increased traffic, noise, and human presence will inevitably disrupt these animals and degrade the natural environment that currently exists.

5. Disproportionate Impact of Connecting Areas with Different Use Patterns

While we are one community, different areas of town function differently in terms of density, activity level, and use. Creating a direct connection between these areas changes the dynamic of quiet residential neighborhoods by increasing pass-through traffic in spaces that were not designed for it.

Constructive Alternatives

I would respectfully encourage the Council to consider improvements that enhance recreational access without introducing the same level of impact on residential areas, such as:

Adding benches and rest areas along existing trails

Improving and maintaining the boat ramp area

Expanding safe fishing access to the river

Exploring the feasibility of a bridge or other access points that do not run directly behind private homes

These types of improvements would provide community benefit while preserving the character, safety, and privacy of existing neighborhoods.

Email Response 2. Mr. Richard Prescott from CTDOT responded:

Good morning Samantha,

Thank you for your email. We have forwarded this email to the Project Team.

We understand your concerns and will incorporate your email as part of the official Report of Meeting, for the Public Information Meeting, for consideration

and discussion. We will welcome additional comments at the meeting on Thursday.

We look forward to meeting you on Thursday and discussing your concerns further.

Email 3.

Received Tuesday, April 14, 2026 from Debra M.

Plainfield Quinebaug River Trail

I have concerns and questions.

Stopped by the P&Z @ PTH today, spoke with Ryan Brais and Shannon Fagan.

If you would keep me in the loop on what, when and how the trail with be designed, that would be greatly appreciated.

I have questions, and I'm well aware you are in the very beginning stages of this process. Please contact me if you have any information that will help guide me on how to post signage...

I've included a snapshot of my property border. That Ryan was nice enough to provide it for me.

My property is outlined in red...

I've also included my name, address, and phone number...thank you for your help...

Debra M

Email Response 3.

Mr. Richard Prescott from CTDOT responded:

Good afternoon Debra,

Thank you for your email. I have forwarded this email to the Project Team.

We will incorporate your email as part of the official Report of Meeting, for the Public Information Meeting held last Thursday, April 9, 2026. Since you have asked to be contacted, we will contact you shortly.

Attachment A

Public Attendees, Public Information Meeting for State Project 0108-0196

April 9, 2026

In-Person Attendees
Ryan Brais, Town of Plainfield - Town Planner
Shannon Fagan, Town of Plainfield – Town Economic Development Director
Steve D.
Jim P.
Mary P.
David C.
4 anonymous in-person attendees
Virtual Attendees - Zoom
Samantha N.
A.J. O.
Michael G.
Aaron G.
Chris Y.
Alison C.

DISTRIBUTION:

To: CTDOTPublicInvolvement@ct.gov

Cc: CTDOTMedia@ct.gov

Richard Prescott, P.E. – Thomas Lantz

Jodi-Ann O'Connor, P.E. – HNTB, Matthew Bernacki, P.E. – HNTB