Central CT Loop
ALT-FCT Study

REPORT OF EVENT

Date and Time: Saturday, December 9th 2023, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Location: Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, 393 Main Street, Middletown, CT
Event: Holiday on Main Street Sounds of the Season

1. Study Overview

The Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG) is conducting a feasibility study aimed at closing an existing gap within the Central Connecticut Loop trail. This initiative seeks to potentially connect the termination point of the Airline Trail (ALT) in Cobalt to the Farmington Canal Trail (FCT) in Cheshire, forming a comprehensive trail network. This future trail project will improve multimodal connectivity in the Region and will connect key landmarks such as the Arrigoni Bridge, the Mattabesset Trolley Trail system in Middletown, and the Quinnipiac Trail in Meriden.

Community input is important to the study. The insights and perspectives garnered from the community will guide the study's development. A thorough evaluation of various route alternatives in Middletown and Portland will be undertaken and those options will be shared with the community. This assessment will culminate in the identification of a preferred route, supplemented by a detailed cost estimate, which will aid in trail implementation.

2. Event Summary

As part of the community engagement process, the study team attended the Holiday on Main Street Sounds of the Season Event that was held on Main Street in Middletown on Saturday, December 9th. Study team members who attended included:

- Sam Gold, RiverCOG
- Robert Haramut, RiverCOG
- Phil Goff, VHB
- Dan Amstutz, VHB
- Ken Livingston, FHI Studio
- Rory Jacobson, FHI Studio

The study team engaged the community throughout the course of the day by discussing the goals of the study and providing a flyer with information and visuals. A project map and interactive boards were displayed, and participants voted on suitable facility types, on-road treatments, and desired amenities. Participants were also asked to provide feedback on the goals of the study and asked to provide any additional comments. Those who were interested in receiving study updates were encouraged to provide their contact information for inclusion on the study's mailing list. Children were engaged and were asked to use sticky dots to identify places that they like to walk or bike to

such as friend's houses, schools, ice cream shops, etc. Holiday candy was provided and child participants were also given lights for their bikes and dinosaur clip-ons for bike wheel spokes. Informational pamphlets on bicycle safety and rules of the road were also distributed. Approximately 90 members of the community were engaged during the event. Photos from the event are shown in *Figure 1* and *Figure 2* .

Figure 1: Study team members engaging the community during the event

Figure 2: Study team members engaging the community during the event

3. Engagement Highlights

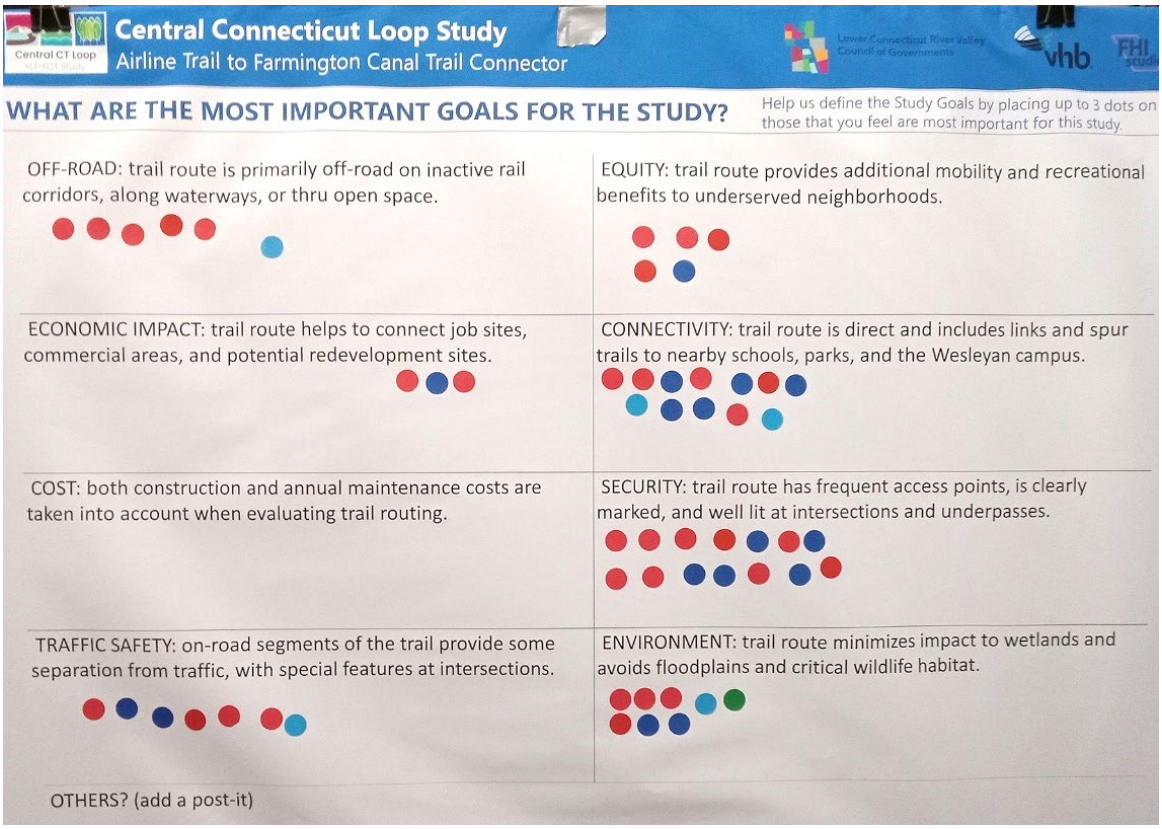
Participants were asked to identify what trail types would be suitable for the Central CT Loop Trail. The majority of participants felt that a paved path or boardwalk would be appropriate, while a paved sidepath adjacent to the road was least favorable. When asked about the on-road segments, the majority of participants preferred a street level 2-way cycle track. Only one participant liked the buffered bike lane. Trailhead parking with kiosks and water fountains were the favored trail amenities, while bike parking was least prioritized. The need to include green infrastructure and trees was noted. The study team observed approximately eight cyclists riding on the sidewalk during the event. It is assumed that riders do not feel comfortable riding on Main Street. Results from this exercise are shown in *Figure 3*.

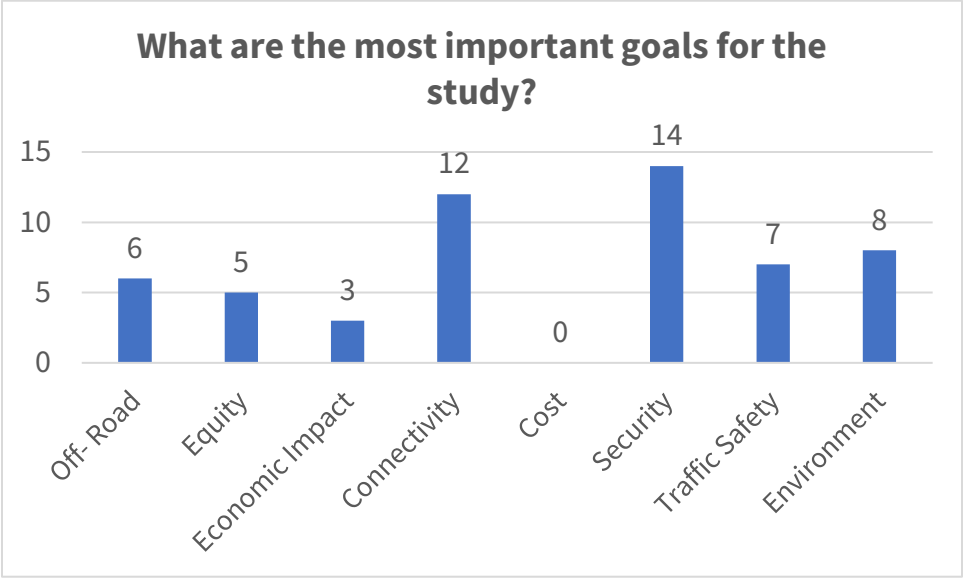
Figure 3: Vision board

What is your vision for the Central CT Loop Trail					
Trail Type	**Number**	**On-Road Segments**	**Number**	**Trail Amenities**	**Number**
Stone dust path	7	Sidewalk level cycle track (2-way bikes)	8	Bike maintenance station	7
Paved path	23	Buffered bike lane	1	Public artwork	7
Paved path with stonedust shoulders	3	Street level cycle track (2-way bikes)	12	Path lighting	6
Boardwalk	14	Trail intersection: signalized	4	Bike parking	4
Paved sidepath adjacent to the road	2	Trail intersection: raised crossing	2	Water fountain	8
Paved path adjacent to active rail	4	Trail intersection: prominent crosswalk	3	Trailhead parking with kiosk	13

Participants were asked to review the study's objectives. The highest priority among the goals was ensuring security, frequent access points, and clear markings along the trail. Additionally, prioritizing connectivity between the trail and schools or parks, as well as minimizing environmental impacts, were also highlighted. Interestingly, no one identified the management of construction and maintenance costs as a primary goal for the project. Results from this exercise are shown in *Figure 4*.

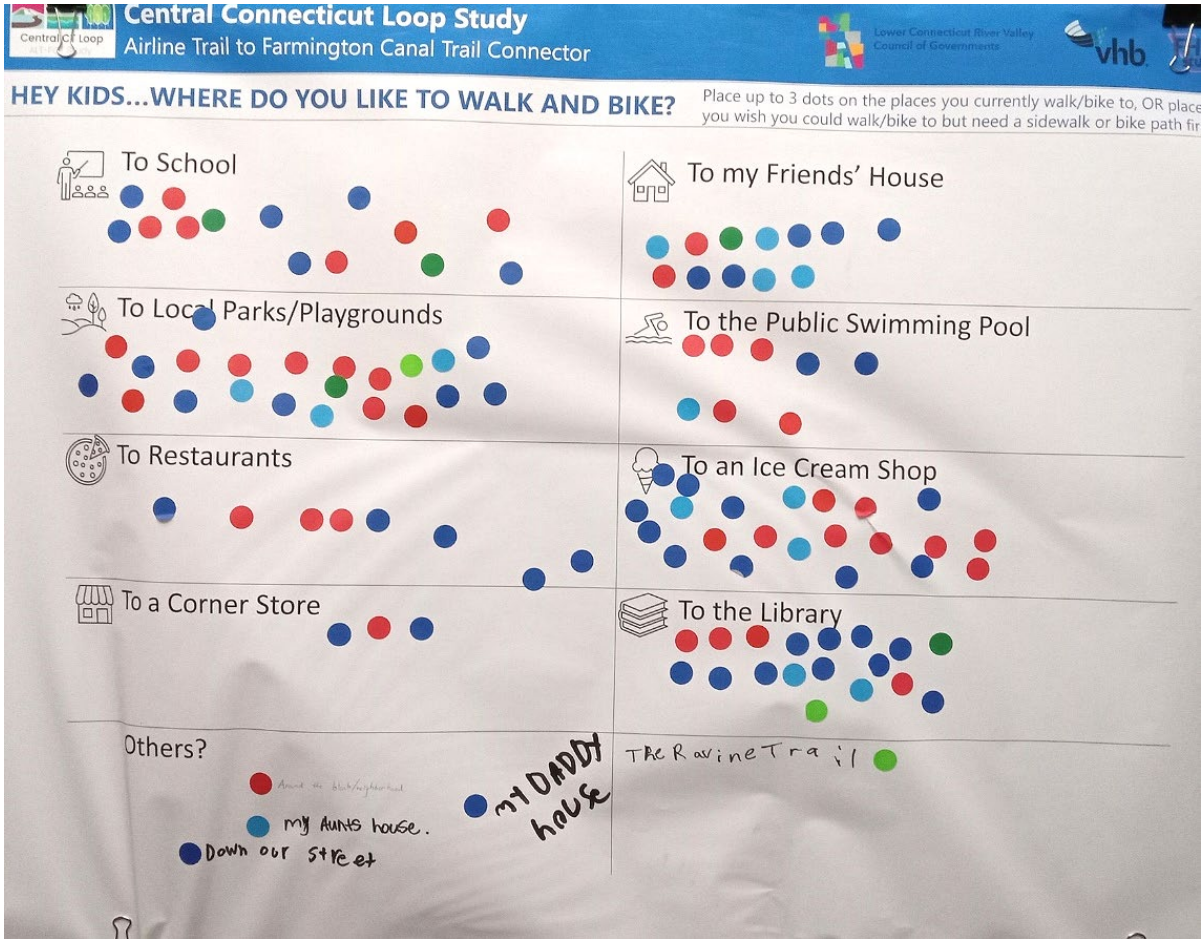
Figure 4: Goals board

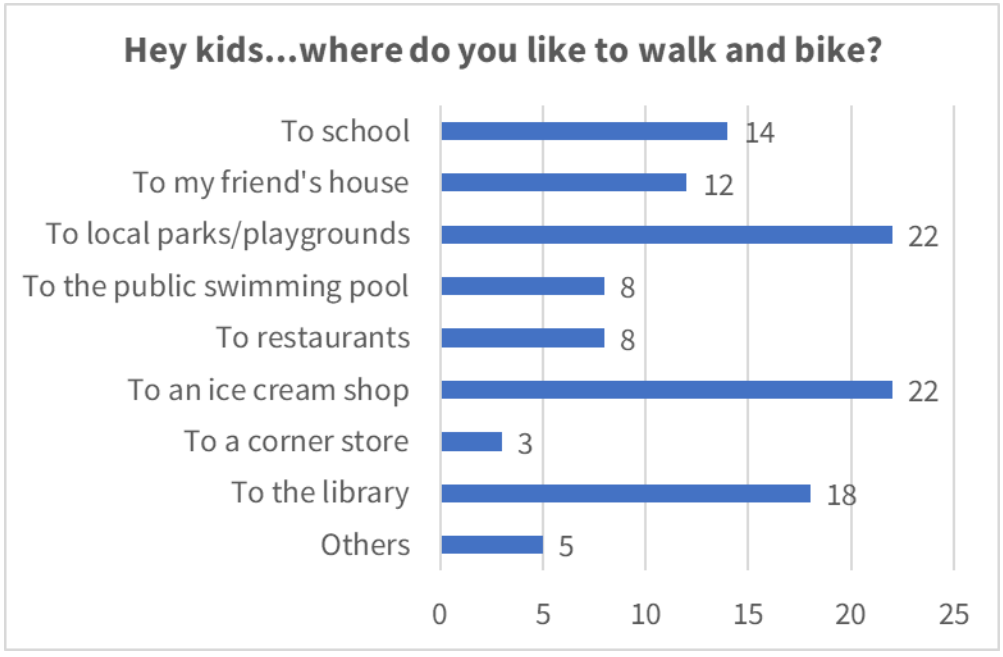




Children were also engaged during this event. Local parks and playgrounds, the library, and ice cream shops were popular locations that kids like to walk and bike to. Interacting with kids during this event was intended to stimulate interest from both children and parents and to raise awareness of the study. Results from this exercise are shown in *Figure 5*.

Figure 5: Kids engagement

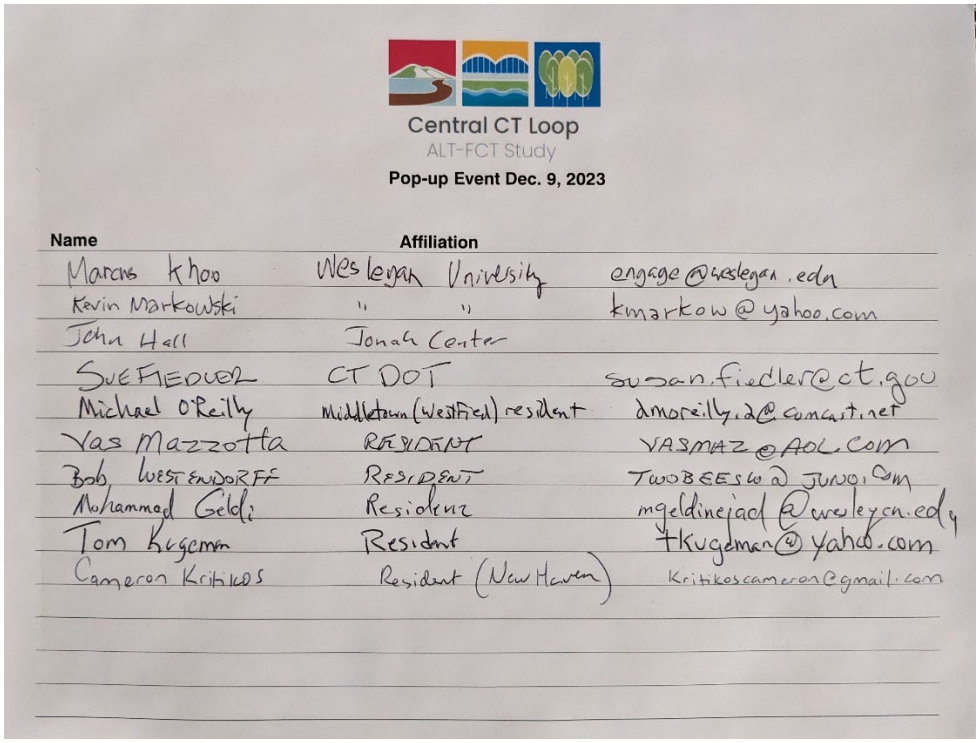




4. Mailing List

Ten members of the community signed up to be included in the study's mailing list. Their names and emails have been added to the study's contact database and are shown in *Figure 6*. The contact database will be continuously updated throughout the course of the study. Those who signed up will be emailed at key milestones in the project such as before engagement events and when project documents are made available to the public.

Figure 6: Sign-in sheet



Central CT Loop
ALT-FCT Study
Pop-up Event Dec. 9, 2023

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