

**Connecticut Riverwalk & Bikeway  
Neighborhood Meeting Notes  
December 18, 2014**

- ❖ Mayor proposes second community meeting in 3-4 months
- ❖ Consider alternative meeting place for additional seating
- ❖ **Blue Light Phones** – Talk to Elms College for additional information on the campus system
- ❖ **Emergency Access** - Mile markers and street names for easy access in case of trail-users needing to call in a medical emergency
- ❖ City will accept this project upon completion and City inherits control and maintenance
- ❖ Maintenance of the levee system ongoing by Department of Public Works (DPW) and Flood Control
- ❖ Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE) has been and will continue to be involved in the design process – they have approved plans and concepts to date
- ❖ Massachusetts Access Board can approve variances to ADA accessibility requirements
- ❖ Any design issues to allow use for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing?
- ❖ Birding/Hand Cycles?
- ❖ Driving Range –
  - Liability & Safety
    - Currently has a 45-foot screen and wind does not allow for a taller screen
    - Calls police regularly to report issues
    - Crime with kids on bikes
- ❖ Why not put the whole bike path on top of the dike?
- ❖ Will there be enough parking? How much parking will there be? 100 spaces?
- ❖ How many people are going to use this bike path?
- ❖ Homeowners and tax payers:
  - ACOE issues for recertifying the dike and flood insurance requirements
  - What is the grading? Will there be impervious surfaces?
  - Review of ACOE Section 408 permitting process
- ❖ Concern regarding the hydraulic study analysis –
  - What sort of flood control measures are in place?
  - What security and safety measures will be in place?
- ❖ Police Call Logs
  - 22% of calls were from Willimansett
  - 22% of calls were from Chicopee Center
  - Review of planned parking by police staff
- ❖ Maintenance
  - Bikers who do not like path – will they cause graffiti and disrepair?
  - Bike path in Chicopee Center
    - Will there be graffiti issues?
    - Will there be ADA accessibility?
    - Will it be open all year?
    - Is it saving commuters anything?
  - Why are issues from August not addressed? Including:
    - Risking the loss of the driving range

- Will there be bathroom facilities on the path?
  - Where are meeting notes from the August meeting?
  - Why are we building something for just families?
  - What is the bigger picture? Is this going to be regional?
  - It is already very unsafe on Chicopee Street
    - Sand under bridges at Chicopee Street
  - Add bike paths on roads – make roads more bike accessible
  - Why not wait for all pieces for regional system?
    - Make a road connection
  - 1998 report is through 2014 – this data may be out of date
    - Supply updated reports
  - Residents do not want anything on top of the dike
  - Online presentation – when will online information be made available to the public?
- ❖ Why access on Paderewski?
  - Concern about increased traffic
  - Maybe add sidewalks in this area first? There are many safety concerns
  - Access at Paderewski – why? It is not necessary
- ❖ Police Patrols – there are none currently. Can this be implemented sooner than completion of the bike path?
  - Why did police have dirt bikes/motorcycles?
    - Chief addresses why police are not using their dirt bikes
    - Homeland security does not give the City these vehicles
- ❖ What is this going to cost to maintain?
  - Impact to tax rates?
  - Maintenance adds to DPW/Park responsibilities
    - It is a burden, however, departments can accommodate the requirements
  - Streets typically last 15 years with heavy vehicles, this should last much longer than a typical roadway
- ❖ Concern by abutter with vacant cars and they have been fighting for a year and a half to have this addressed – send to Problem Properties Committee
- ❖ ACOE – resident would like to see a representative from ACOE at one of these meetings
- ❖ Are residents allowed to walk the levee now? -- Yes
- ❖ Paderewski Street – Oldest street/ near sewage treatment plant – “quaint neighborhood”
  - Deal with summer odors
  - Trucks
  - Dead-end streets
  - “Additional traffic”
  - Parking under high tension wires
  - Syringes/waste/litter
    - Trash receptacles/lighting
  - Cars coming in from other cities
  - Residents are neighbors who know one another and are afraid of new people being in the area
- ❖ Resident thinks this project is wonderful:

- Concerned about parking – but she sees this as a neighborhood facility
- Concerned about trash
- This will be better for families – and take kids off the streets, addresses kids and safety concerns
- ❖ Overlooks – why is one located near Freedom Street?
  - Similar project in West Springfield as well
- ❖ Will there be gates at entrances? –Yes, gates will provide pedestrian access and will be functional to allow maintenance vehicles to access the area
- ❖ ACOE – can the project be rejected later even with initial approval?
- ❖ Portal (can a ceiling cover be installed to protect users from golf balls)
- ❖ Clark Street break ins (cars, sheds, etc.)
- ❖ Lack of trust towards police
- ❖ Cameras? -- Why only proposed at each end?
  - Spotters and radios to keep themselves informed
- ❖ Nash
  - Pumping station used as hang out
  - Drug dealers leaving drugs in the wall and selling them there
  - Murder threats
  - Undesirables at Nash Field
- ❖ Good asset; want a safe place to walk and bike with her children
  - Drivers are not following speeding laws and crosswalks
  - It will reduce crime
  - Tax payer – sees this as worth the money
  - Nice and safe once it is built
  - Reference to Easthampton project
- ❖ Sees effort being put into project
- ❖ One major flaw – Perception that the majority of residents do not want it
- ❖ Easthampton
  - “Not In My Back Yard” – Easthampton residents had the same concerns and once built, none of those concerns were realized
    - This will be good for Chicopee
- ❖ Main purpose of the levee and its future protection to the neighborhood
  - Severe storm events in the valley...massive flooding potential
  - Pioneer Valley Planning Commissions (PVPC) seems to be pursuing “massive greenway projects”
    - Last people they talk to are residents and landowners
    - Hearings are good but the process is “messed up”
  - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – zone and risk calculations
    - New Orleans – Changed zones
      - 7 zones to 3 zones
  - Conversation at Chicopee High School
  - Major concern with flooding events
  - August 6<sup>th</sup> meeting – resident comments have been documented
- ❖ Committee for Bike Paths – there was a committee for Chicopee Canal Walk
  - It is a City asset to have a riverfront along two rivers

- We do not take advantage of our natural resources
- Other cities across the world use these amenities
- Great for the neighborhood north of Chicopee River
- ❖ Establish Chicopee Bike Path Committee
  - Improve communications with the community
- ❖ Give this a chance to move the City forward
- ❖ DPW questions – parking on street – is it one-side only?
  - Add new parking signs?
- ❖ Medina Street Boat Ramp
  - Concern over high tension wires – users of the boat ramp have been ticketed by the City for parking under the high tension wires during seasonal fishing derbies
  - Review design process
  - Add to ballot for entire city?
  - Already burdened by pump station/etc.

Other Comments:

- ❖ Springfield Bike Path and Safety Concerns
  - Concrete wall at Plainfield Street
  - Riverfront Park example
  - No criminal acts
- ❖ Bonner Street
  - Last meeting was a disaster – nice to see this is a civil meeting
  - Would not drive to another community for 2.5 mile trail. Not likely to attract significant number of outside visitors
  - This will be used by the neighborhood
    - Safe place to play for neighborhood children
  - Northampton's bike path is 22 miles and caters to a different group of people
  - Cleanup Committee to keep the trail clean
- ❖ Graffiti/Trash on the Chicopee Center path
- ❖ Possible civilian patrols?
- ❖ Maintenance – concerns about maintenance and who is responsible?
  - Flood control
  - Parks
  - DPW
  - Parks are not being cleaned now
    - Skateboard park is messy
- ❖ Agawam and Springfield – these trails abut streets
  - Willimansett is not like Northampton
  - Privacy concerns for direct abutters' backyards
- ❖ Understands why people want this and that a shorter bike path will not draw as many people
  - Wants to see street improvements if this goes through
    - Curbs and sidewalks are forgotten at the end of streets
    - Upgrades on Paderewski – there is no room for parking
  - People will still live here
- ❖ 109 Ferry at Nash Park
  - Added activities and people at Nash

- This is a small neighborhood – that has suffered some crime and does not want crime to escalate again
- We do not know what type of riders are going to be on the bike path
- Nobody really knows what this is going to do
- ❖ Provide Hydraulic study to the website
- ❖ Parking
  - Still concerned about people coming from outside the City
- ❖ Petition of 266 signatures and is ongoing
- ❖ This meeting is great but poorly timed and too close to the holidays
- ❖ People need questions answered
- ❖ People already pick up litter when retrieving golf balls
- ❖ Safety concerns
  - Don't feel safe walking around at night
- ❖ Take care of what we have now
  - Sarah Jane Park
    - Path there is bumpy
- ❖ This will put the golf course out of business
- ❖ Accept a good thing and then meet to address complaints

### **Summary of Comments & Questions Submitted through Feedback Forms**

#### Resident #1

- ❖ Parking at Nash Park is already insufficient for games, etc. No mention of parking plans at Nash Park?
- ❖ Maintenance – Chicopee cannot keep current parks in proper repair, i.e. pools at Rivers Park and Nash Field. How can we afford to maintain added areas?
- ❖ It sounds like we are going forward with this regardless of what people want.
- ❖ Thank you Mayor Kos for attending.

#### Resident #2

- ❖ Erecting a fence along the Connecticut River for safety issues?
- ❖ Making an effort to keep the levee clean more than 4 times a year. The trash comes up the street on windy days – constantly clean-up every day!
- ❖ Fire Department needs to control fires; especially during summer months that individuals illegally burn from the neighborhood if I am walking I don't want to smell smoke!!!

#### Resident #3

- ❖ Concerns safety – need cameras.

#### Resident #4

- ❖ They do not keep the levee mowed now. What makes anyone think they will start mowing more because of a bike path? I'm sure it will deteriorate in time.
- ❖ They did not spray the levee until late this summer. People will not want to use the levee if it is too buggy.

- ❖ I think the City will have to pay for the upkeep once the Feds stop. It seems to be an awful lot for a very short distance. No wonder we are trillions in debt.

Resident #5

- ❖ We have lived in the neighborhood for almost 2 years now. I have walked the levee several times since we moved here and I believe this is a WONDEFUL addition to the City!! I feel this will promote healthy lifestyles and increase time spent with family, which is something everyone needs! Thank you!! Good luck!!

Resident #6

- ❖ Privacy of residents? Hours of operation? Why does the top need to be utilized? Money given to the City should expand the current path in the Center.
- ❖ There should be nothing on top of the levee. The neighbors want our privacy!!

Resident #7

- ❖ I would much rather ride a bike on a safe bike path, than to take my life in my hands riding a bike on the streets of Chicopee.

Resident #8

- ❖ I approve of the bike path.

Resident #9

- ❖ Please continue course for the bike path.
- ❖ Don't let a few nay-sayers stop this project. This trail is for families with kids so they can get out and enjoy the outside. The funding is very little at today's prices.
- ❖ I had to leave early because of a medical reason. So I did not get to the mic.