



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**Stratford Housatonic Greenway**  
**2023**

## 2023 Greenway/Complete Streets Committee

---

Appointed by the  
Planning Commission:

Harold Watson, Chair  
Karen Burke  
Tom Dillon  
Ellen Frait  
Christopher Green  
Nels Pearson  
George Perham  
Karen Rodia+ (*in memoriam*)  
Jennifer Sheldon  
James Simon

Planning Commission  
and Staff Members:

Brian Stirbis  
Sarah Graham

Town staff:

Susmitha Attota, Town Planner  
John Casey, Town Engineer  
Aileen Marsh, Secretary

2023 Annual Report:

Editor, James Simon

Photography and videography, Michael Murphy

A digital, hyperlinked version is available at <https://www.stratfordct.gov/greenwaycommittee#info>

The Committee thanks Mayor Laura R. Hoydick for her leadership on these many issues, Public Works Director Rayne Serra and her department for expertly guiding these many projects to fruition, and Recreation Superintendent Amy Knorr for her unflagging support.

*This Annual Report is dedicated to the late Karen Rodia, a long-time Greenway member and a model public citizen in Stratford.*

---

The Greenway mailing list topped 200 members in 2023, and 350+ people are members of the Stratford Housatonic Greenway Facebook page. To get on the Greenway mailing list, send your e-mail address to [jsimon@townofstratford.com](mailto:jsimon@townofstratford.com). You also can visit the Greenway [Facebook page](#) for an updated bicycle schedule, to post questions, and to see videos and pictures of recent rides...





## Welcome to the 2023 Annual Report by the Stratford Greenway/Complete Streets subcommittee, an advisory board to the town’s Planning Commission.

Complete Streets has several ambitious goals: transform Stratford’s streets into active, healthy corridors for all modes of travel, connect residents and visitors to major destinations, beautify the public realm, stimulate investment and revitalize Stratford Center, and promote coordination across organizations to better achieve shared smart growth goals.

Over the past [20 years](#), much of the committee’s work has focused on implementing Stratford’s portion of the Housatonic River Greenway project. This ambitious plan would make the Housatonic River – from its headwaters in Massachusetts to its mouth in Stratford and Milford -- a “greenway” where cyclists, hikers, bird watchers and others can enjoy scenic vistas along its banks. The committee also works to tie the Greenway to the town’s Complete Streets project that is supplying bicycle lanes, lane markings, and other improvements along Main Street and other major corridors in town.

The ultimate vision of the Greenway committee is to build towards the day when a cyclist or pedestrian would be able to enter a well-marked 20-mile-round-trip Greenway loop at any point, from Roosevelt Forest to Short Beach, and truly enjoy our town “from forest to shore.” The Stratford Greenway also will be part of an interconnected trail from Great Barrington, Massachusetts, down the Housatonic to our town where the river empties into Long Island Sound.

We encourage anyone who shares this dream to join us in making it a reality!

*The Stratford Housatonic Greenway sponsors a Cycling Club, in conjunction with the Stratford Recreation Department, which organizes free group rides throughout the spring, summer and fall. The trips attract anywhere from three to 30 riders; here, the group pauses on a trip from Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport to Monroe and back.*



# STRATFORD HOUSATONIC GREENWAY

## 2023 Highlights

### Overview

The Greenway/Complete Streets committee met regularly throughout the year to review the proposed design and construction phases for the Town of Stratford's Complete Streets transportation project.

The broader Complete Streets plan is to make Stratford's streets more friendly to multimodal transportation: cars, bicycles, wheelchairs, and pedestrians. The state-funded project ensures all modes of transportation are considered in the planning and design of our transportation network.

In 2023 the town began Phase One of Complete Streets which includes creating bicycle lanes along Main Street from Barnum Avenue to West Broad Street, sidewalk and curb enhancements, and a new stretch of sidewalk on Elm Street by Academy Hill. By Spring 2024, this phase is expected to be complete with the placing of stripes on dedicated bicycle lanes and improving and adding signage completed. Planning and design for Complete Streets Phase Two – with bicycle lanes running along Main Street from Barnum Avenue to Paradise Green -- is projected for completion in Summer 2024, with construction starting by early 2025.

### June 2023

The Stratford Greenway/Complete Streets Committee and the Cycling Club sponsor an information table at the Main Street Festival in downtown Stratford. Dozens of festival goers stop by to learn about the effort and sign up for additional information.



The Greenway effort at the Main Street Festival includes a free and safe Bicycle Corral, where fair goers avoid automobile congestion by bicycling to the event, leaving their bikes safely at the corral, then picking them up when ready to depart.



The Main Street Festival also allowed Stratford Greenway officials to tie their efforts to the state [Bike Walk Connecticut](#) program, bringing statewide publicity to the Stratford Greenway and linking our program to their list of 14,000 CT members. The hope is this will increase out-of-town cyclists who choose Stratford's scenic Forest-to-Shore offerings.

### June 2023

At the conclusion of the Main Street Fair, the Cycling Club launches the first of about a dozen 2023 group rides. Riders assemble at Shakespeare Park, ride south to Short Beach, the Lighthouse and Long Beach, then return via Lordship Boulevard and the Access Road. It is one of the group's most popular rides, repeated several times in the summer. Stretches of Stratford's incomplete Greenway are most visible and accessible alongside DeLuca Field off Main Street (see cover picture) and off Ryders Landing at the [Sikorsky Estuary Trail](#).

### July 2023

The Cycling Club continued with longer trips from Stratford to Silver Sands State Park in Milford and then to Seaside Park in Bridgeport.

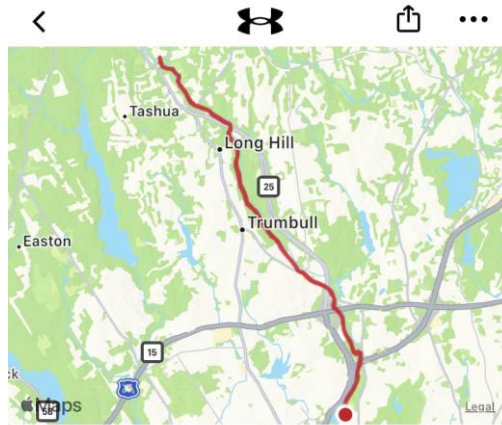
### August 2023

Many Cycling Club members said they take part in the trips because they see parts of Stratford that they had never seen. One such trip brought cyclists from Shakespeare Park, through Lordship, and then to the McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, in the Great Meadows off Lordship Boulevard (across from Duchess Restaurant). Video of this trip is available [here](#). (Many thanks to **Michael Murphy** for the dazzling photography and videography – available on the Greenway FB page -- he supplied for many of the 2023 trips such as the McKinney excursion.)



## September 2023

The Cycling Club sponsors its most ambitious ride, from the Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport, through the Trumbull Rail Trail, and to Stepney and back, a 17-mile round trip. Stratford Greenway is working cooperatively with [Pegunonock Valley Greenway Rails to Trails](#) to encourage use of the trail.



17.57mi Road Cycling  
Sunday, Sep 3 at 10:07 am

Here is the original schedule for the 2023 Greenway rides. (Revisions were made due to late additions, weather problems, and other unforeseen circumstances.)

DATE	TIME	START & END	DESTINATION	MILES	NOTES
<b>JUNE</b>					
Sat 3rd	5pm-7pm	SHAKESPEARE (after Main St Festival)	SHORT BEACH	8m 16m RT	Greenways; lots of options or shorter rides (HW)
<b>JULY</b>					
Sun 2nd	10am-1pm	SHAKESPEARE PARK	Seaside Park, stopping at Capt's Cove (Bpt.)	17m RT	Some roadways (HW, JS)
Thu 13th	6pm-8pm	DOCK SHOPPING	SILVER SANDS PARK/ DOWNTOWN MILFORD	16m RT	Over Devon Bridge (JS, HW)
<b>AUGUST</b>					
Sun 6th	10am-1p	SHAKESPEARE PARK	MCKINNEY WILDLIFE REFUGE via SHORT BEACH	12m RT	1 mile hike option at the refuge, bring a bike lock (CG)
Thu 24th	6pm-8pm	BOOTHE PARK	SIKORSKY BRIDGE/ MILFORD	8-12m RT	Some roads and hills (JS) USE BIKE LIGHTS
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>					
Sun 3rd	10am-1pm	BEARDSLEY	TRUMBULL RAIL TRAIL	12-17m RT	Park at Beardsley Zoo Free Parking Lot (HW, JS)
Thu 21st	6p-8p	SHAKESPEARE	PARADISE GREEN	6m	Through Longbrook Park (CG) USE BIKE LIGHTS
<b>OCTOBER</b>					
Sun 1st	10am-1pm	SHAKESPEARE to BOOTH PARK to	LORDSHIP LIGHTHOUSE to SHAKESPEARE PARK	20m total	(HW) POSSIBLE FUNDRAISER RIDE TBA
Sat 21st	10am-12pm	WOOSTER SCHOOL	Longbrook Loop	6m	Some small hills (NP)

**notes:**

- Updates posted on FB: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/846384432150771>
- You must fill out a one-time registration form
- To help us gauge the crowd size, pls e-mail us if interested or let us know via Facebook "comment" : <https://www.facebook.com/groups/846384432150771/>

The Stratford Housatonic Greenway is a site that is encouraging the development and use by cyclists and walkers of the coastal greenway under development in Stratford CT. It covers the waterfront from Long Beach on the Long Island Sound to Stratford's business districts and neighborhoods to northern reaches of the Housatonic River. It is interconnected to the East Coast Greenway and bikeways in Bridgeport, Milford and Trumbull. Eventually, we expect our local trails will also become interconnected with the developing Pegunonock Rail trail that runs from the sound in Bridgeport to Newtown in the north. Join us as we build support in our town.

## Not just cyclists...

The Greenway is not limited to bicyclists. Instead, it is a multi-modal effort to provide a safe corridor where cyclists, pedestrians, hikers, bird watchers, wheelchair-bound athletes, and others can enjoy scenic vistas. While the cycling component may be its most visible effort, the Greenway also partners with other groups, such as the Healthy Stratford Council and [The Shakespeare Market](#), to promote a variety of ways to get around Stratford and enjoy “the forest to the shore.”

In 2023 Stratford received a grant from AARP for [Stratford Walks](#) to establish ten local community walking routes that give weight to our desire to have greenways used by all abilities including our seniors.



Your guide to some of Stratford's favorite walking routes



EASY

## Stratford Seawall

53 Beach Drive, Stratford, CT 06615

Waterfront walking path with stunning shoreline scenery.



### Trail Tip

Ride your bike or walk along this popular waterfront path for beautiful scenery and easy access to some of our favorite restaurants and a nearby hotel.

# STRATFORD HOUSATONIC GREENWAY

## Looking Ahead

The Greenway effort intersects with many other parts of town planning. Every 10 years the town renews its Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), and hearings were conducted in 2023 for a new Plan. Looking ahead, here are some relevant highlights from the POCD of key transportation projects that involve the Greenway:

### **Complete Streets Phase II**

The Town is currently in the process of developing technical designs for Phase II of Complete Streets from north of Barnum Avenue intersection to Paradise Green (up to Wilcoxson Avenue). The planning and design stage of this project is being funded through municipal bonds in the amount of \$250,000. Funds have also been committed to implement this project, conditional upon the state Department of Transportation's approval of the design, through the state Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program in the amount of \$2.5 million. Again, planning and design for Complete Streets Phase II is projected for completion in Summer 2024, with construction starting by early 2025.



### **Greenway / Bikeway Extension North**

This project will provide bike lane markings and other improvements from the northerly terminus of the current Hunter Haven Greenway to West Broad Street. A pedestrian sidewalk is planned on Beacon Point Road. On-road markings and/or bike lanes will be installed along the route. A spur will be provided from Elm Street to Mac's Harbor on Shore Rd. The project will join with the Main Street Complete Streets project and then continue to its terminus at the Perry House on West Broad Street near the Baldwin Center and the Stratford Library.

A future expansion project is envisioned from Elm Street along Ferry Boulevard / Housatonic Ave to bring the Greenway to the Dock Shopping Center. This project would enhance the East Coast Greenway route. The road width and sidewalks planned along with the Broad St. bridge project will be installed to facilitate this future extension.

### **Stratford Army Engine Plant Redevelopment**

The Greenway Committee also envisions a raised trail for cyclists and pedestrians extending South from the current Greenway along the shore of the Housatonic River, near DeLuca Field, to Short Beach that would make use of a pre-existing right of way. This project will be made possible with the redevelopment of the AVCO/Stratford Army Engine plant site.

Combined with Complete Streets, these planned projects will provide a continuous bike route from Short Beach to Paradise Green. Patrons of Blues on the Beach, concerts in Shakespeare Park and Paradise Green, and other town-sponsored events suddenly have another way to get to the events and avoid any traffic congestion.



An inside look:

---



Lifestyle

## Stratford Housatonic Greenway Cyclist Club

August 11, 2023 | By James Simon



Some say they join because they love bicycling and want to meet other cyclists. Others say they want to see the sights in Stratford, or relive their youth, have fun, or get more exercise.

Whatever the reason, membership in the Stratford Housatonic Greenway cyclist club has blossomed this year after seven years of steady growth.

At least twice a month, between three and 30 cyclists get together – often at Shakespeare Market on a Sunday at 10 a.m. – and pedal off to such local destinations as the beaches in Lordship, or to adjoining sites such as Silver Sands state beach in Milford, Seaside Park in Bridgeport, or over the Sikorsky Bridge to Milford.

The Greenway program’s mailing list tops 200 members, and 358 people are members of the Stratford Housatonic Greenway Facebook page. As of May 2023, our local program is now supported statewide by Connecticut Department of Transportation CTRides.com to encourage local multi-modal commuting and recreational uses. They are emailing our activities to their list of 14,000 CT cyclists. In the near future this will increase out-of-town cyclists who choose Stratford’s scenic Forest-to-Shore offerings.

The Stratford Greenway began in 1979 with an off-road section on Main Street from DeLuca Field to Short Beach and on local streets past the light house, Russian Beach, the Seawall and Long Beach. You probably have seen the Stratford Housatonic Greenway arch, located adjacent to the DeLuca softball field off Main Street, where this section of this scenic stretch of the town’s greenway have been open and available to cyclists and walkers for up to forty years.

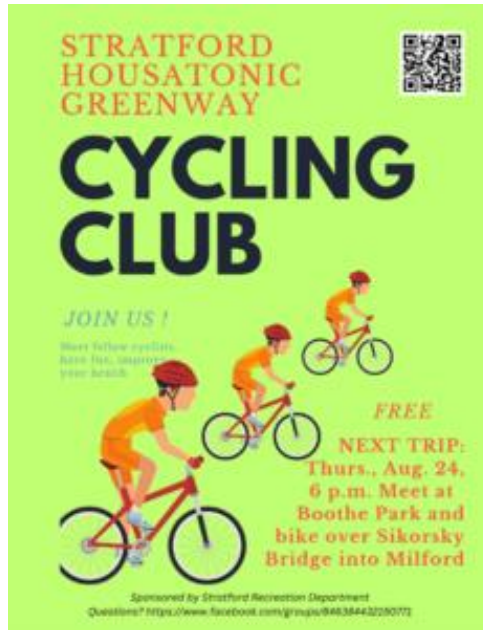
And by this December, you will be seeing many more signs of multimodal activity in town, including striped bicycle lanes and upgraded sidewalks on Main Street that are the result of Phase One of the Complete Streets Program. On-street bike and sidewalks lanes will be added from Broad Street down Elm Street through the Shakespeare Park, then onto Birdseye Street where they will connect to the existing off-road DeLuca Field portion built in the 1990s.

“It’s been a long time in coming,” said Harold Watson, who organizes the rides, in addition to his work as Chair of the town’s Greenway/Complete Streets Subcommittee of Planning, as well as being Chair of the Zoning Commission. “It makes me so happy to see so many people enjoying Stratford from a different perspective.”

Greenway member Nels Pearson from Paradise Green, a Fairfield University professor who has been on several of the rides, raved about a recent trip from Shakespeare Park to McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, and then to Long Beach, Short Beach and back. “Riding this route, you really see the links between the Greenway, ‘Complete Streets,’ and coastal conservation efforts in Stratford. Join us!” he said in a Facebook posting.

Cyclist Club member, Michael Murphy uses five bike-mounted cameras to shoot footage of many rides. He said he “loves seeing the group grow and exploring more of the beauty of our town’s coastline and Greenway.”

Riders come from all ability levels and unite in a desire to “leave no riders behind.” When we recently started our return from Seaside Park in Bridgeport, I got a flat tire. But there were experts in the group ready to fix the tire, using futuristic CO2 tire inflators, to get me rolling home again.)



Complete Streets is part of a broader town-wide Greenway plan to make Stratford's streets more friendly to the American with Disabilities Act and multimodal transportation – cars, bicycles, and pedestrians – and to better allow cyclists, hikers, bird watchers to enjoy the scenic vistas. This year Stratford received a grant from AARP to establish ten local community routes that give weight to our desire to have greenways used by all abilities including our seniors.

The Stratford Housatonic Greenway/ Complete Streets covers the waterfront from Long Beach on the Long Island Sound to Stratford's Business districts and neighborhoods to northern reaches of the Housatonic River. Stratford currently is interconnected to the national East Coast Greenway system running from Stratford Avenue in Bridgeport, and in Stratford from Ferry Boulevard up Main Street to Long Brook and down East Main Street then over the Devon Bridge into Milford. We also are supporting the developing Pequannock Rail trail that runs from Long Island Sound in Bridgeport to Newtown in the north.

The Stratford effort received a big boost in October 2022 from a \$6 million state grant for Main Street upgrades.

- The Construction Phase of Complete Streets Phase 1 will be beginning this December, Watson said by Spring bicyclists will see dedicated bike lanes and sidewalk upgrades on Main Street between Barnum Avenue to almost Stratford Avenue.
- At the same time, we will see the completion of our local town-Greenway project of on-road bike lanes and sidewalk upgrades starting from the historic Perry House on Broad Street then across Main Street to Elm Street, through the Shakespeare Park down Birdseye and finally connecting to the existing Greenway.
- Phase Two of Complete Streets – a bike lane on Main Street, from Barnum Avenue to Paradise Green — is now also funded. It is in the design stage and expected completion is set for summer 2024.
- Those improvements will be followed by upgrades in the planning stages to include on-road sharrows (Sharrows or shared lane pavement markings are bicycle symbols that are placed in the roadway lane indicating that motorists should expect to share the lane with bicycles and vice-versa. Sharrows also serve to guide bicyclists away from the hazardous “door zone” beside parked cars, and function as positioning cues) on Ferry Boulevard, a new Greenway segment on Stratford Avenue where a traffic circle is being installed by the CTDOT.
- The Greenway/Complete Streets sees a priority need to develop a signage and marketing program to include bicycle racks at local businesses.



The Greenway/Complete Streets effort intersects with many other parts of town planning, such as the new Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) which has been released in draft form.

Watson, also a veteran of the town Planning Commission, has waged a long effort to encourage alternative transportation in Stratford. Bicycle advocates have had to deal with such hurdles as gaining local and state transportation approval, town budgetary concerns, and the slow cleanup of the AVCO / Stratford Army Engine Plant (where a right-of-way for the Greenway would be included).

Watson says the town Recreation Department, which now sponsors the rides, is a supportive ally, along with Town Engineer John Casey and officials in several other departments like Public Works and the Police. Both the Planning and Zoning Commissions regularly include consideration of the Greenway in matters that come before them.

“It’s like anything else,” he said. “You need to show town leaders that there is a group of people who feel strongly about an issue like bicycling, then convince the leaders – who face a lot of competing proposals for their time and money – that your idea is beneficial to the town and deserves approval. But the proof is in the pudding: Stratford, with the full support of both Mayor Hoydick and the Town Council have voted in a model Complete Streets ordinance and are proactive in securing CT State multi-modal funding.”

The next ride: Thursday, August 24th, at 6 p.m., starting at Boothe Memorial Park. Bicyclists will ride the path through the Sikorsky estuary alongside Ryders Landing, then move onto the bike lane across the Sikorsky Bridge and into Milford.

(To get on the Greenway mailing list, send your e-mail address to [jsimon@townofstratford.com](mailto:jsimon@townofstratford.com). Visit the Stratford Housatonic Greenway Facebook page for the bicycle schedule, to post questions, and to see videos and pictures of recent rides.)

*(reprinted with permission of The Stratford Crier)*

---

*Interested in learning more?*

- *To get on the Greenway mailing list, send your e-mail address to [jsimon@townofstratford.com](mailto:jsimon@townofstratford.com)*
- *Visit the Stratford Housatonic Greenway [Facebook page](#) for an updated bicycle schedule, to post questions, and to see videos and pictures of recent rides*
- *Look for a list of our next group rides, coming for Spring 2024!*