

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF ALDERS OF THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF THE WEST RIVER WATERSHED AS A GREENWAY BY THE CONNECTICUT GREENWAY COUNCIL AND AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SIGN AN INTERMUNICIPAL COMPACT
REPORT: 1499-06
ADVICE: Approval

BACKGROUND

The Resolution before the Board of Alders was submitted by a member of the West River Watershed Coalition and proposes designating the West River Watershed as a Greenway, as administered by the Connecticut Greenways Council, and authorizes Mayor Harp to enter into an Inter-Municipal Compact supporting the designation.

The West River flows through several municipalities, including Bethany, Woodbridge, Hamden, New Haven and West Haven; these towns need to work cooperatively to protect this natural resource, restore or improve public access and recreation areas and ensure that human needs and environmental concerns are balanced. The West River Watershed Coalition is composed of members from these towns and has undertaken or supported several projects along the River.

In New Haven the West River runs through many neighborhoods, through twelve wards and through many hundreds of acres of open space and parks including: West Rock Ridge State Park, Amrhyn Field & Park, Edgewood Park and West River Memorial Park. In recent years the Connecticut Fund for the Environment's Save the Sound Fund has obtained funding for and implemented projects such as: Tide Gate modification at Orange Avenue and design of dam removal at the Land Trust's preserve along Whalley Ave. Previously the City worked on a Master Plan for West River Memorial Park with citizens from West Haven and New Haven and rebuilt the two soccer fields at Boulevard and Orange Ave. The Barnard School Construction project included construction of a new nature center in West River Memorial Park near Derby Ave.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed resolution:

1. Endorses the submission of a compact seeking designation of the West River Watershed as a Greenway,
2. Endorses the ongoing efforts of the West River Watershed Coalition to promote safe access to and restoration of the West River,
3. Commits municipal departments to consideration of the effects on the West River Watershed in the plans of conservation and development.
4. Authorizes the Mayor to sign an inter-municipal compact to support such designation

The active stewardship of a citizen group such as the West River Watershed Coalition is vital to progress in maintaining this important resource and their support coupled with Greenway designation will encourage inter-municipal cooperation and improve access to funding.

ADVICE

The Commission finds the Resolution and the proposed compact in the best interest of the City and recommends approval.

ADOPTED: November 19, 2014
Edward Mattison
Chair

ATTEST: 
Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA
Executive Director