



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
City of Middletown
CONNECTICUT 06457

Daniel T. Drew
MAYOR

February 12, 2019

Senator Carlo Leone
Representative Roland Lemar
Senator Alexandra Bergstein
Representative Travis Simms
Members of the Transportation Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2401
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Re: Proposed Bill No. 775, AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF THE CENTRAL CONNECTICUT LOOP TRAIL.

Dear Members of the Transportation Committee:

I am writing to express the City of Middletown's support for Bill No. 775, An Act Concerning the Creation of the Central Connecticut Loop Trail. This proposed loop will increase equitable and accessible travel connections throughout the central core of the State, help foster "Livable Places" and community development, and foster economic growth throughout the State.

The Bill looks to establish a loop linking the existing Air Line Trail State Park in the eastern part of the state to the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail in the western part of the state by providing approximately 16 miles of additional trails through the central part of Connecticut. This proposal will create a loop of 111 miles of trail through the central core of Connecticut.

Middletown has seen first-hand how trail systems can benefit a community. We have invested in trails throughout town linking densely populated areas to commercial corridors and our urban core. The trails through Middletown have given people within our community a safe way to access amenities without needing a car. This has been helpful for those who do not have the means or access to motorized vehicles. Bill No. 775 proposes to do this at the state level, creating a continual loop linking numerous communities together along with integrating to mass transit systems including the Meriden Train Station.

Trails also have a way of creating "livable places" where people can have an active and productive life without needing a vehicle to access resources and amenities. The trails act as an extension of our parks system bringing added communal space to areas of our City that are used for active recreation.


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The economic development potential is significant when trails are connected to commercial corridors and urban centers. The proposed 111 miles stretch will drive additional tourism dollars to the communities connected to the trail loop as well as the state as a whole. An economic impact analysis by Dr. John McDonald and Dr. Laura Brown in 2015 has shown that individuals spend significant dollars on day and overnight trips as well as invest annually on recreational equipment and supplies. Many small business, including Pedal Power (Middletown based bicycle shop), could see an increase in business and revenue due to the proposed 111 mile loop, expanding the tax base for communities and Connecticut.

Trails and Bikeways are great infrastructure investments for communities, they create a greenway for people to travel, they generate a sense of place and they provide economic opportunity for business within local communities. We have seen it happen in Middletown and other communities. This proposed 111 mile loop will strengthen those investments.

For these reasons, the City of Middletown strongly urges you to advance Senate Bill 775 for approval of the Connecticut Legislature.

Sincerely,



Daniel F. Drew
Mayor,
City of Middletown, CT



Joseph J. Samolis
Director of Planning, Conservation and Development.
City of Middletown, CT