

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
NORTHFIELD RIVERWALK PROJECT
WORKING GROUP MEETING
Minutes of January 21, 2026
Full meeting recording is available at
<https://youtu.be/535tjVAAU7E>

Riverwalk Project Status & Budget

- \$50,000 remaining in ARPA budget for riverwalk project
- Funds officially allocated as “surplus” to meet federal deadline requirements
 - o Status remains “sketchy” - need Plan B if Cross Brothers Dam removal gets cancelled again
- Dam removal timeline uncertain - kept getting delayed throughout 2025

Path Section Options Analysis

- Section A: Senior center parking lot to pedestrian bridge
 - o Requires negotiation with Green Mountain Apartments residents
 - o Concerns about parking usage and privacy (fence needed)
 - o Most direct connection to existing infrastructure
- Section B: Pedestrian bridge to railroad track area
 - o More earthwork required, higher construction costs
 - o Less residential pushback expected
 - o Access challenges - starts “in middle of nowhere”
- Section C: Behind businesses near Fernandez stores
 - o Estimated 5x cost of other sections (\$250k vs \$50k each)
 - o Requires extensive retaining walls and grading
 - o Lowest priority due to existing sidewalk alternative

Construction Cost Considerations

- Original Timber & Stone estimates: ~\$50k per section (A & B)
- Additional costs not included in original estimates:
 1. Fencing for privacy/security
 2. Solar lighting systems
 3. Security cameras
 4. Legal/attorney fees for easements

- Surface material options discussed:
 - Stay-mat over compacted stone (recommended by local contractors)
 - Permeable pavers with witch grass (Burlington bike path model)
 - Standard gravel (not wheelchair accessible)

Permitting & Regulatory Requirements

- Municipal flood hazard permit needed for river-adjacent sections
- Open space/recreation projects may be exempt from restrictions
- “Net neutral” fill requirement - no net increase in materials
- Rose Watts (Regional Planning Commission) supportive of project
- Vermont Housing Authority approval required for both Section A & B

Community Engagement Needs

- Green Mountain Apartments residents haven’t been contacted recently
- Previous concerns about vandalism and fence maintenance
- Need police chief consultation on actual crime statistics
- TDS building sold to Martha Mahen - potential parking discussion needed

Next Steps

- Get revised construction estimates from local contractors (James, Mike McGuire)
 - Include fencing, lighting, and surface material costs
 - Compare Section A vs Section B total costs
- Contact Vermont Housing Authority for easement discussions
- Follow up on bird walk coordination with Carl Pinkham for March event
- Caitlin to contact Jason again about passport project
- Forward flood hazard permit information to Patrick for GIS analysis