



**TOWN OF NEWTOWN**  
**Fairfield Hills Authority**  
**MINUTES**

**The Fairfield Hills Authority held a Meeting on January 27, 2020**  
**At Newtown Community Center, 8 Simpson St, Newtown, CT 06470**  
*These minutes are subject to the approval of the FHA at their next meeting.*

**Present:** Ross Carley, Michael Holmes, Brook Clark, Terry Sagedy, Walt Motyka, Christal Preszler,

**Absent:** Andrew Philbin, Renata Adler, Melissa Beylouni

**Public Attendance:** none

**Also Present:** Brid Craddock – Chair Bike and Trails Committee, Harvey Pessin - Newtown Forest Association, Gregory Ritzinger, Charles Foster, and Brad Accettella - Bike and Trail Committee members, Mark Tambascio and David Kinglsey – Newsylum Brewery owners, Christal Preszler, Kim Chiappetta (clerk)

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m.

**Public Participation:**

None

**Acceptance of Minutes:**

Chairman Carley asked for a motion to accept the minutes of November 25, 2019. Mike Holmes entertained. Walt Motyka seconded and all were in favor.

**Bike & Trail Committee:**

Ross introduced the Bike and Trail Committee. Chair of the Bike and Trail Committee, Brid Craddock, introduced herself and Harvey Pessin – representing Newtown Forest Association (largest private land owner in Newtown), and members of the Bike and Trail Committee Gregory Ritzinger, Charles Foster, and Brad Accettella.

Brid began by explaining that the Bike and Trail Committee is a 9 member board that was appointed by Dan Rosenthal in December of 2018. The mission of the Committee is to support development, maintenance and enjoyment of interconnected sidewalks, trails and roadways for recreation and non-motorized transportations. Advisors to the Committee include Mark Lurie – Conservation Commission, Peter Cloudas – Design Advisory Board, Pat Barcsak – Parks & Recreation Commission, Amy Mangold – Director of Parks & Rec, and Rob Sibley – Deputy Director of Planning. The Bike and Trail Committee was the idea of Amy Mangold and the first meeting was held in the summer of 2018. The Moonlight Hike event held on the campus on a Tuesday night in November was very successful with 94 people in attendance. Brid told the group that during this hike she found that there were many other people walking the trail at the time. The Bike and Trail Committee has a page on the town's website (Newtown-ct.gov) and a Facebook page where they communicate information.

***National Parks Service grant:***

Brid informed the group that the Bike and Trail Committee was awarded a National Parks Service grant which provides 2 National Parks employees to work up to 3 years using resources of the National Parks department.

National Parks will work to coordinate with the Bike and Trail Committee and other commissions to help put together a plan for a network of trails. The Bike and Trail Committee is recommending Fairfield Hills to serve as the trail head providing a place for people to park. She continued to explain to the group the locations that would be included in the trail and that hiking trails can bring customers to businesses in town.

*Invitation:*

Brid invited Authority members to attend the Newtown Bike & Trail Symposium which is an open house on Sunday March 8<sup>th</sup> at which many groups will attend including Boy Scouts, CT Forests & Parks.

*CT Trail Census:*

Brid explained to members that the CT Trail Census is a UCONN based program. Their goal is to educate and engage people who use trails and administer them and encourage sound trail building techniques. She explained the benefits of collecting data on trail usage to obtain funds for preservation and expansion. One way to collect data is by using a trail counter that acts as a turnstile would, counting through infrared. This small device can be mounted on a tree or post and it measures by heat differences. Members of the CT Trail Census provided advice on where to locate the counters which would be mounted for 1 year. In addition, a member of the Bike & Trail Committee will be tasked with writing down a description of who went by. (e.g. Woman with stroller, man with dog.)

Walt Motyka asked about connecting the trails. Brid answered that National Parks are experts who will be assisting with the effort, and a steering committee will also be created. Within 18 months National Parks will have a document that will contain facts and contacts that will be used to write grants. Walt expressed concerns with motorized vehicles in open spaces. Brid said that National Parks has suggestions for design that make it unattractive to motorized vehicle users. Ross expressed concerns with the potential for overcrowding of the Fairfield Hills trail especially once the bike loan program is introduced. Brid replied that the campus trail is made to be wide enough so that there is plenty of room for passing and that the bike loan program will be for 4 to 12 year olds so it is expected that bikes will be riding at lower speeds. Walt asked how new trails will be designed and maintained if the property is open space. Brid explained that National Parks will look at the topography, walk the land and provide a recommendation. Brad added that they want trails that can be easily maintained therefore they will be designed so there is no erosion. These types of designs are not motorized vehicle friendly.

*Repurposing of Keating Farms Ave:*

Brid told the group of the recommendation to repurpose Keating Farm Ave so that the cul-de-sac is closed off to motorized vehicles. A fence could be installed and a sign noting no unauthorized motorized vehicles beyond this point. She explained that currently people continue off of the trail onto the road often because the sidewalk tends to flood in that area. If this area is closed to motorized vehicles it could also provide a location for children to ride bikes. Brook Clark asked how they would ensure people returned to the sidewalk. Brid replied that Parks & Rec could create a small gravel path around the gate that would lead back into the sidewalk.

Ross asked the Bikes & Trail Committee to submit a written proposal that could be distributed to Authority members for review. He continued that it may be necessary for the Authority to obtain other necessary approvals. Ross thanked the group for their time.

**Chairman's Report:**

**Newsylum Brewery owners:**

Ross recognized that two of the Newsylum Brewery owners were in attendance, Mark Tambascio and David Kingsley and asked if there was anything the Authority could do to help them out. Mark explained that it has been a long process with aspects like connecting water and electric to the building as well as parts of the construction. Mark mentioned concerns with parking behind the building as the area is not well paved and will

be difficult to use in the winter. People have gone to him with questions regarding parking by the building, in particular people who are not considered handicapped but have difficulty walking long distances. The group discussed parking behind the brewery and the possibility of adding parking behind the Norwalk Hall building to alleviate the issue. David noted that the area behind Stamford was already a parking area and just needed to be fixed up. Christal explained that it came down to how much the town can spend. Christal noted the lights being installed to well light the area. The group then discussed the progress made. Ross told David and Mark to feel free to contact the Authority and thanked both for attending.

**Member Updates:**

None.

**Staff Update:**

**EDA grant:**

Kim Chiappetta told Authority members that the EDA grant kick-off meeting was held last week with the EDA Project Officer assigned to the project. She is currently working on a timeline, but all other activities must wait until the referendum in April when the 50% match will be voted on.

**Events:**

Kim told the group about two fairly new events on campus: Walk 4 Water and Newtown Fire Department's Chase the Fire Truck. Both events are pending approval. There are also 4 other annual events pending approval.

**Bench:**

The campus received a bench donation in honor of Jean Wallace Pierce that was installed at the top of High Meadow in November. Installation including the cement pad was kindly donated by Clearheart Construction.

Ross asked about the status of Boy Scout Kiosk. Christal said that they may be pending installation of the solar panels and the donation of a bench.

**Fairfield Hills Community Conversation:**

Christal said next community conversation is scheduled for March 16<sup>th</sup>. This session will cover options for the campus.

Ross commented about the Bike & Trail Committee's recommendation to use a gate to close off the Keating Farms Cul-de-sac and asked members to think it through thoroughly.

**Adjournment:** With no further business, Walt motioned to adjourn, Mike seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted, Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk.*

# Bike and Trail Committee Town of Newtown



January 27, 2020 Fairfield Hills Authority Presentation

## Bike and Trail Committee

**Appointed** December 2018

**Members** We are a 9 member board

**Mission** To support development, maintenance, and enjoyment of an interconnected set of sidewalks, trails, and roadways for recreation and non-motorized transportation uses. Committee will work to assure that Newtown is a community where sidewalks, trails and roads provide a save way for residents to travel, to connect with each other and to enjoy both the town and the surrounding area by foot, bicycle, and on horseback.

**Advisors** Mark Lurie – Conservation Commission, Peter Cloudas – Design Committee, Pat Marsack – Parks & Rec. Land Use and Parks and Recreation staff

**Meetings** 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at the Community Center Meeting room, 7PM

**Event at Fairfield Hills 2019** – Moonlight hike, Tuesday in October at 6pm – 94 people walked the Loop Trail

<https://www.newtown-ct.gov/bike-trails-committee>

<https://www.facebook.com/newtownctbikeandtrailcommittee/>

### **Grant National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program**

Grant was received and accepted by the town in January 2020.

services in kind, it is a non-cash capacity grant. National Park Service staff with experience in trail planning, design, and implementation are coming to work with the committee for up to 3 years to help us move trail projects in town forward. The grant focuses on AI's Trail restoration and development and will also include working on developing a broader trail Network for the town.

### **Proposals** for work here at Fairfield Hills

CT Trail Census project here on the Fairfield Hills Loop Trail

Re-purpose a section of Keating Farm Avenue


**Invitation** – On Sunday, March 8, between 11:00 and 1:00 at the Community Center the Bike and Trails Committee Symposium and Open House. Non-Profits from Boy Scouts to Newtown Forest Association will have displays on Their work related to trails. The public and town committees, commissions and authorities are invited to attend.

# Connecticut Trail Census

A statewide volunteer-based data collection and education program on multi-use trails



**Encouraging data informed decision-making and promoting resident participation in trail monitoring and advocacy**

A blue geometric graphic consisting of overlapping shapes, including a large triangle and a smaller square, located in the top left corner of the slide.

**CT TRAIL CENSUS believes that the Loop Trail here at Fairfield Hills is one of the most heavily used trails in the state.**



### **Goals of a Trail Counter and Census program**

- To educate trail user groups, administrators, state and local government agencies, and the general public about trails and their impacts.
- To obtain multi-year information about trail use, user demographics, economic impacts, and trail amenities for identification of patterns and trends.
- To promote active citizen participation in monitoring and understanding the value of trails.
- To encourage sound trail building and maintenance programs based on collected data.







**Counters are an electronic turnstile, not a camera.**









**Counter Location**







# How will it work?

**Trail counters** will be purchased by the Land Use Department within their current budget. Land Use and Parks and Recreation support this project fully. Counters will be attached to posts, like the post currently on the trail with the Pollinator Pathway Sign on it. These are about 4' high, 4" x 4" wide cedar posts. 1 or 2 counters will be set on the Loop Trail, the paved trail here on the Fairfield Hills Campus. Counters will remain in place for 1 year.

**The Land Use office** will work with Western Connecticut Council of Government's, (WestCOG)

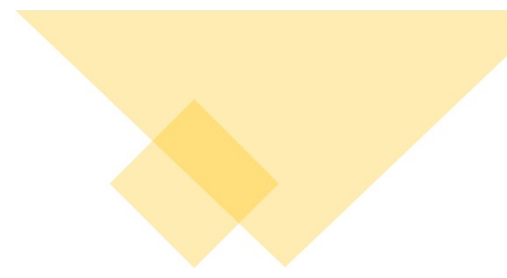
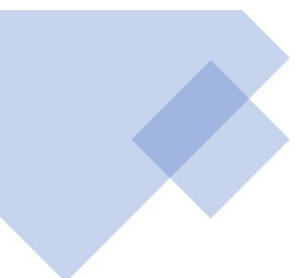
**WestCOG** will collect and analyze the data, it will be shared with CT TRAIL CENSUS. We can compare to other towns.

**The Bike and Trails Committee** will be supplied reports detailing the use, volume, time, day, and user demographics.

**Volunteers** Highschool students, Girl and Boy Scouts and others will distribute a paper census form on the trail the census is used by CT TRAIL CENSUS to determine the demographics of trail users. Volunteers would be on the trail a few days a year for a few hours at a time.


**Grants** using this data seeking monetary grants will be applied for to improve and expand trails here in Newtown.

**Re-use Counters** on other trails in the future



# Re-purposing a section of Keating Farms Avenue

Non-Motorized Vehicles  
Pedestrian Use Only





Red - Loop Trail

Blue- Keating Farms section to close to cars

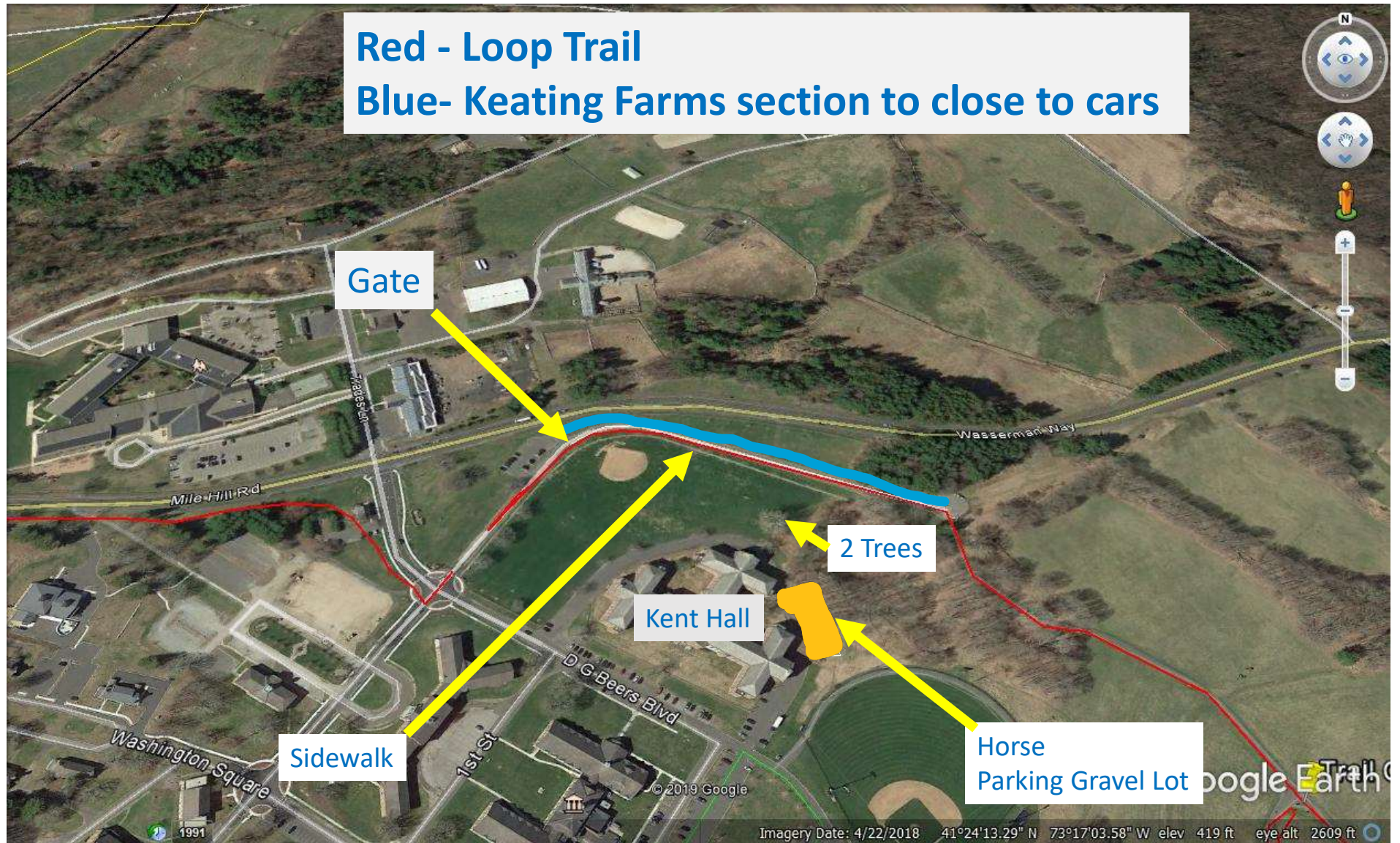
Gate

2 Trees

Kent Hall

Sidewalk

Horse  
Parking Gravel Lot











Keating Farms Ave at Corner of Trades Lane



Proposed Gate Location at Keating Farms Ave and Parking Lot



Proposed sign for the gate



Move this sign to new location at the gate on Keating Farm Avenue



## **Why Re-purpose a section of Keating Farm Avenue to a Fairfield Hills Loop Trail? Why Improve and Horse Trailer Parking?**

### **Problems and Goals**

#### **1. Improve the safety of pedestrians on the Fairfield Hills Loop Trail.**

Pedestrians use this section of Keating Farms Avenue as a trail. This is done to avoid using the sidewalk that parallels the road. The sidewalk is narrow, uneven and often flooded. The narrow sidewalk causes conflict on the trail when users such as persons with baby strollers and persons with large dogs meet head-on and do not have room to avoid face to face encounters. Pedestrians choose to walk in the road as they believe it is safer and easier to use than the sidewalk.

**2. To reduce car and pedestrian inter-actions** As pedestrians regularly use the road as a trail, cars and pedestrians are sharing the same route, which is dangerous. A reason pedestrians come to use the Loop Trail is to avoid sharing the road with motor vehicles. Keating Farms Ave. is a dead end, a sign installed at the corner intersection indicating it is a dead end would be helpful. Many drivers unfamiliar with the FFH campus drive down the road at speeds acceptable for a through road, but not for a dead end road.

**3. To save mature native trees.** The proposed changes to the loop trail as shown on the May 12, 2009 concept plan as approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission moves the trail to a steeper grade than the road and requires the removal of two large Sycamore trees. Utilizing the road as a trail results on a level grade allows for the two trees to remain in place.

**4. To create a safe, wide space on the loop trail as a training area.** A training area which could be reserved classes and training, such as for bike safety classes and learning to ride a bike, dog training classes, outdoor exercise classes and more.

**5. To improve parking for horse trailers** and give better access to trails for equestrians, on trails located across Wasserman Way. Current parking on the cul de sac results in horse trailers being blocked in by cars parking too close the back of the trailer. This makes it impossible for the rider to load the horse in the trailer at the end of their ride. Unloading the horse from the trailer when cars, people and dogs are near can result in conflicts and creates a stressful situation for the horses, dogs and people. We propose the grading of an area behind Kent Hall, and creating a gravel parking area. The Newtown Bridle Lands organization strongly supports the changes proposed by the committee.

### **Support for the proposed changes**

We have met with and have the support of Rob Sibley, Land Use Department, Amy Mangold, Parks and Recreation Department and Carl Samuelson, Parks and Recreation Department. They support the proposed changes.

They believe the work can be done within Parks and Rec's existing budget including the installation of a gate as they have a gate ready for use, currently in storage.

In a conversation with Newtown Police Department, they would like Keating Farms Avenue closed entirely. They support efforts that would reduce the possibility of cars accidentally driving on the trails. The committee thinks a gate on Keating Farms Avenue would reduce the illegal driving problem.



Thank you.

David Siroky  
*Vice Chairman*  
Bike and Trails Committee

Brid Craddock  
Chairman  
Bike and Trails Committee  
203-448-0758  
Bridcraddock@gmail.com





Red - Loop Trail

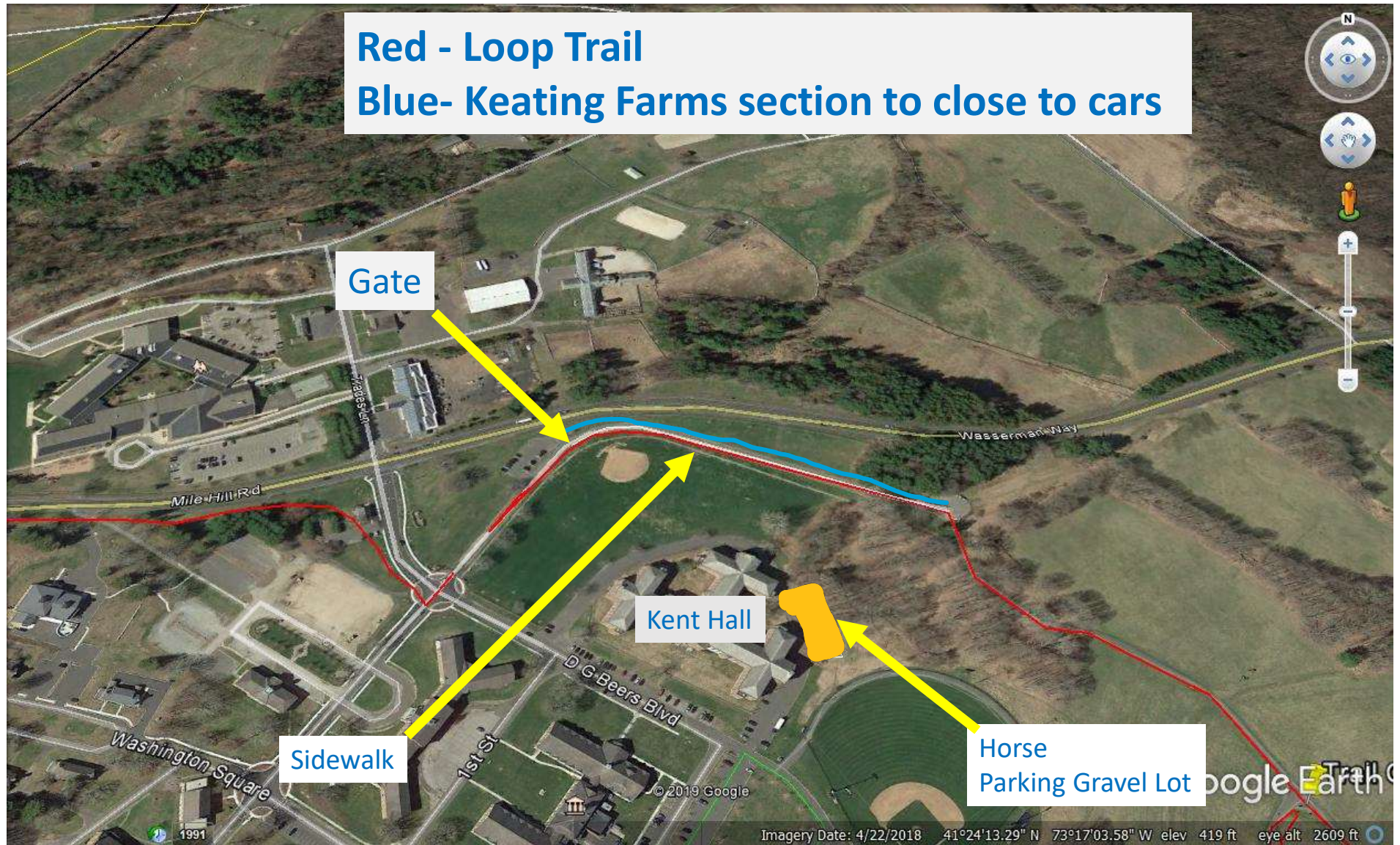
Blue- Keating Farms section to close to cars

Gate

Kent Hall

Sidewalk

Horse  
Parking Gravel Lot



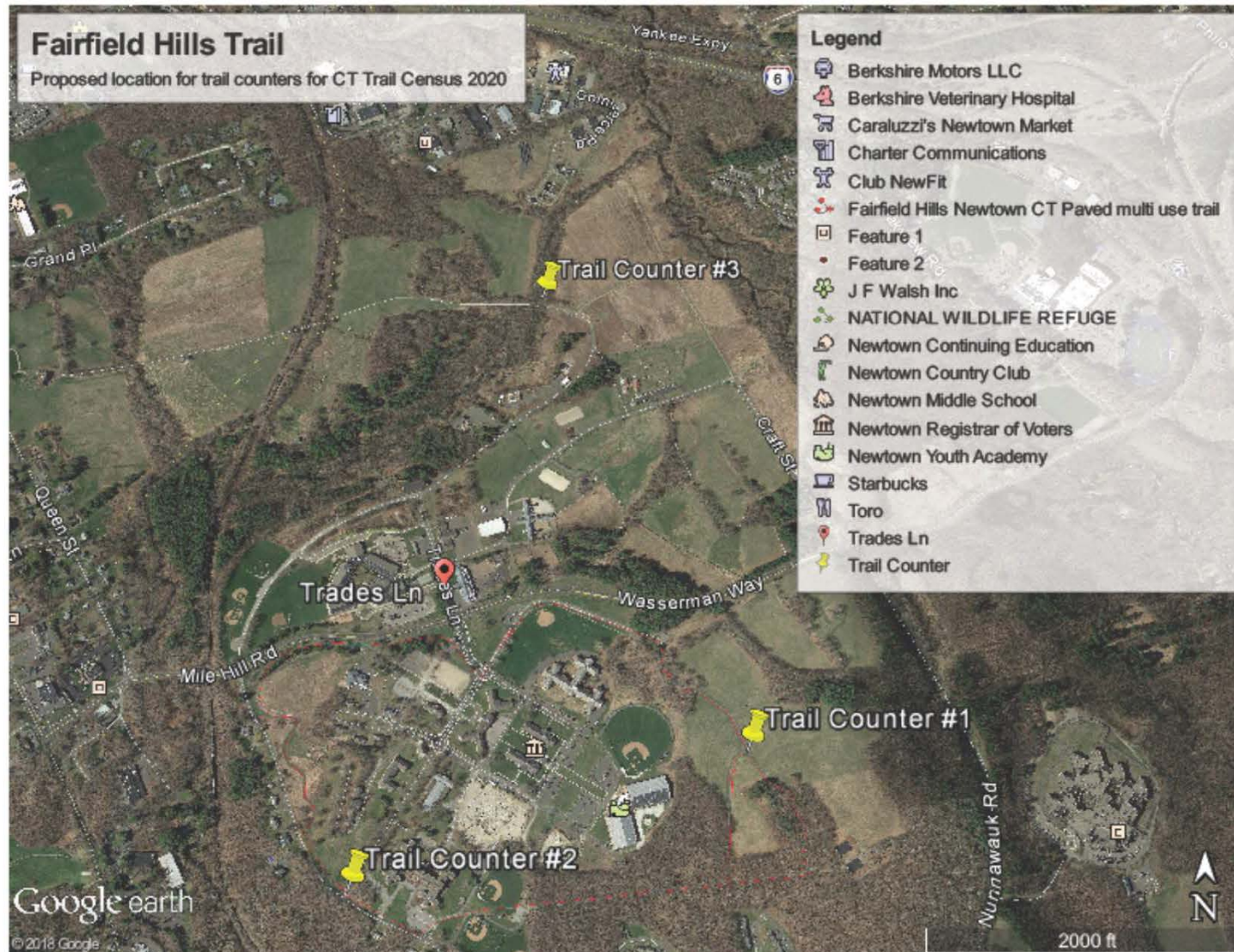


## Fairfield Hills Trail

Proposed location for trail counters for CT Trail Census 2020

### Legend

- Berkshire Motors LLC
- Berkshire Veterinary Hospital
- Caraluzzi's Newtown Market
- Charter Communications
- Club NewFit
- Fairfield Hills Newtown CT Paved multi use trail
- Feature 1
- Feature 2
- J F Walsh Inc
- NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
- Newtown Continuing Education
- Newtown Country Club
- Newtown Middle School
- Newtown Registrar of Voters
- Newtown Youth Academy
- Starbucks
- Toro
- Trades Ln
- Trail Counter





Location #3

TBD

Capture Non Motorized traffic on:

Al's Trail

Trail of Angels

Deep Brook

Old Farm Road

