

# The Connecticut Greenway

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## 9/3/21 Providence RI\* to Putnam CT ...



While the day was unremarkable, the 19 mile Washington Secondary Trail, from Cranston RI to Coventry again underscored the need for expanded bike paths. Another ride from my hosts, this time from their home to the trail head eased my departure from Providence\* and made the morning more enjoyable. Recent rains swelled the waterways, seen clearly as I approached Danielson and Putnam, both preceded by bike paths. The

Danielson bike path seems to arise in the middle of nowhere. I expect the path will be continued from its current terminus when either rights-of-way are established, or finances are arranged, or both.

Once again, in Putnam, without Warm Showers or Couch Surf hosts, I found housing in a Motel 6, located on the outskirts of the city and nearer to the interstate, a common location for motels of that kind. A lengthy walk into the center of Putnam was needed for a decent dinner at [Elizabeth's Farmhouse](#). Being a solitary traveler, I was able to be seated at the bar, the second time on this journey (the first being in Hallowell, ME at Slates).

## 9/4/21 Putnam, CT – Manchester, CT ...

As it may be clear by now, early departures are preferable to later, even when the ride is shorter. An early departure seems to engender more energy throughout the day, even if the schedule feels more frantic. So, with gear loaded, off I went, as close to 7:00 AM as possible, away from Putnam and headed for the next Trail, the Airline State Park Trail. It was not easy to reach from Putnam and I now look forward to a time when the Airline Trail and the Tracy Road Sidepath are connected. After reaching the Airline Trail, a friendly greeting from walkers and runners made the entry to the trail more enjoyable. Questioning one of the runners, I found out that construction of a new bridge will allow the connection between this Trail and trails to the east.



I proceeded west along the trail, comprised of trap dust and gravel, toward Willimantic, CT. It was an enjoyable ride overall with exceptions being the big oak tree across the path and rough terrain at different road crossings. Many miles of quiet nature and a lack of motor vehicles made this a memorable ride with conditions that should be duplicated in many places. Some places would have been improved with the construction of a bridge or tunnel. On I went, arriving in

Willimantic, a town with a food cooperative, the first I have come across during this bike ride. I enjoyed an at-length conversation with one of the shoppers and, after purchasing food, sat down outside to eat a relaxing lunch.

Onward I went but was very quickly forced to re-navigate the greenway, as I found, much to my consternation, the trail was flooded from recent rains. Other cyclists described a suggested route but I ended up using DATA from the cell phone anyway. A few miles farther and I was back on the trail and headed for Manchester. I had arranged to meet friends from my younger years and was offered a ride to my overnight, about 24 miles away. The ride into Manchester comprised a long descent with many short switchbacks roughly paralleling the I-384 Highway. Manchester had seen its share of flooding with mud-slicks on the paved trail and some areas blocked off. Tires were well muddied by the end of the days riding.

### 9/5/21 Manchester CT – Southington CT ...



Another early start from Manchester and the park where I was picked up. It was a short, fairly easy ride to Hartford but construction in the city complicated matters. The forecast had promised rain later in the day but by the time I reached the city center, rain had begun to lightly fall promising a less than ideal riding day. Light drizzle and threats of rain kept up with me throughout the day and. My goal had been the next greenway – The Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, a nicely maintained trail stretching from Simsbury,

CT to New Haven, CT with a break in the middle. I found the trail after stopping at a large farm stand and rather lengthy hill which was well-traveled with minimal shoulders. The Trail was very pleasant to ride and mitigated the rain that fell. The gap between Plainville and Southington was not welcome and made for a less enjoyable trip. Filling in that gap should be a priority in future. Meeting a pair of young women headed north on their own touring bikes was a chance for camaraderie, a rear treat on this journey. They were headed for northern Vermont via Great Barrington ( if memory serves).

The rain was falling a bit more steadily as I entered Southington and it was time to seek my overnight, an AirBnB, not far on the map, from the Greenway. So, hopeful of a reasonable arrival time, I started west. The route led through interstate zones and commercial strips with abbreviated sidewalks (I was walking), and then came the HILL. 10% Grade ... about a mile long ... drenching rain ... glasses covered with raindrops. I was lucky to see anything. I started to count house numbers. I was about 3/4 of the way to the top and found the numbers I was seeking. My housing was on the opposite side. I crossed over – the number was not there. Where was it. I was rather upset with myself. I could have chosen the Econo Lodge down near the interstate with less trouble. Instead, here I was searching for a house number that did not exist. Did AirBnb give me the wrong number? Was I reading them wrong? I started down the hill again and reached the next house with very similar numbers. Was this it? No. I went back up the HILL to the very top. The numbers were completely different there. I headed back down. An apple farm was about to close up. A young fellow there was most helpful by showing on his smartphone the house I was seeking was hidden by trees.

I found the house and while it was a nice enough house, I was unequipped to leave and return again and had arranged to stay for two nights. I dried out during the next day and was back on the road the day after that.

### **9/7/21 Southington, CT – Stratford, CT ...**

There are not many hills that I will walk down, preferring to ride easily and rapidly. But, leaving the AirBnb with a 3/4 mile descent at a 10% grade – this was one of them. Even so, I arrived at the Greenway in the early hours looking forward to the long paved trail taking me to New Haven. The trail did not disappoint. Well maintained, flat, and mostly straight. I had come to realize that I prefer boring rides on paved, flat, straight trails with facilities, distance markers, wayside inns every 50 miles, and small markets selling food and other necessities.



The trail emptied out in the middle of New Haven amongst the buildings of Yale University. I walked through this area appreciating the classic architecture. From there it was a quick ride through New Haven and a longer ride along the waters of Long Island Sound. The afternoon approaching Stratford was less ideal with another rear flat. I walked the bike to the

nearest bike shop, early enough that I found it open and had the tube replaced. I proceeded then to Stratford, a “short” distance away, where I would spend three nights organizing future overnights and avoided more rain. Much thanks go to my Couch Surf Hosts for this time and the conversations we held on various topics.

### **9/10/21 Stratford, CT – Larchmont, NY ...**



I had been approaching NYC with misgivings. I knew they had greenways through the Bronx and along the East and Hudson Rivers but still... NY ... The Big Apple ... The biggest city I will have ridden through. So, staying in Larchmont was an ideal location giving me plenty of time to traverse the urban distance and move into New Jersey. Many thanks go to my hosts in Larchmont for a fine overnight, engaging conversation, and excellent dinner. The surprising aspect in today’s ride was the amount of time it took to leave Connecticut and enter New York.

Normally, I could see the trail would be a superlative piece of infrastructure. The storms had left it passable although it needed walking in some places. Once on it, I proceeded at a good pace and so found my way to Princeton and my next overnight, a Warm Showers Host. Many thanks go

to them for an excellent meal at a local Indian Restaurant where my taste for Mango Lassi’s was well satisfied.

(See the Blog for New York and New Jersey next)...