

# Resident Survey regarding a potential Mohawk Bicycle and Walking Trail

On June 7, 2007 the Mohawk Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail Advisory Committee sponsored a public forum at the Beth Israel Congregation in North Adams to publicly announce the Mohawk Bicycle/Pedestrian (Bike/Ped) Trail Project. A survey to gauge public needs and desires for a potential bike/ped trail was passed out among the attendees of the public forum. Fifty surveys were completed and deposited at the door as people left the forum. The written responses to the survey are recorded here.

All of the respondents except for one stated that they were in favor of a bike/ped trail connecting the downtown areas of North Adams and Williamstown. Ninety-two percent of respondents stated that they had used the Ashwillticook Rail Trail. This indicates that the attendees of the forum were somewhat self-selected as users and supporters of bike/ped trails. Many respondents indicated that they would use a future trail frequently – respondents who stated that they would use the trail more than once a week outnumbered those who would use the trail once per week or less by 2 to 1.

It can be gleaned from the survey results that most of the people attending the public forum envision a bike/ped trail to serve primarily as an outdoor recreational facility and only distantly as a transportation route. Respondents were asked to choose, out of a list of 11 items, the three most important aspects of a proposed bike/ped trail. The three most often selected aspects were “Safety” (selected as 24% of total responses to the question), “Accessibility” (selected as 20%) and “Scenery” (selected as 19%). It is believed that safety here is being meant to as safety from motorized vehicles (ATVs, motor bikes, etc.) and vehicular traffic, as many people stated at the meeting and in the survey that a high priority should be to stay away from roads and the railroad tracks. Safety can, of course, also mean safety from crime.

Respondents were asked what they would use a bike/pedestrian trail for. Of the six choices given, “Recreation/exercise” was the most popular (30% of the total responses), “Enjoy the Outdoors” (22% of the total) and “Spend time with family or friends” (20% of the total). Respondents were then asked to check the activities that they would participate in if a bike/ped trail were developed. Of the eight choices given, “Bicycling” (26%) and “Walking” (24% of the total) were the most often cited activities, while “Cross-county skiing” and “Wildlife viewing” were also often selected, each with 11% of the total responses.

Few responses indicate that attendees of the forum envisioned the bike/ped trail as a transportation route. Only one person selected “Proximity to my work” or “Proximity to my home” as an important aspect of such a trail. Few people selected “Commute to work” or “Use for short errands/shopping” as something that they would use a bike/ped trail for.

The last open-ended question on the survey asked respondents to share their knowledge, desires and concerns and make recommendation about a future bike/ped trail. Like the formatted questions of the survey, safety was the issue that was most often cited as a recommendation. Unlike the formatted questions, the second most cited comment involved using the trail as an alternate mode of transportation.

# Resident Survey regarding a potential Mohawk Bicycle and Walking Trail

We are interested in your thoughts about a potential bicycle and walking trail that would connect the downtown areas of North Adams and Williamstown. Envision that the trail is designed to be a trail that walkers, runners, bicyclists, rollerbladers would share, and that people of all ages and abilities could access it. We encourage you to fill out this survey and drop it off at the door.

**Are you in favor of a bicycle/walking trail connecting downtown North Adams and Williamstown?**

  49   Yes      0   No      1   No opinion

**What are the top three most important aspects of a proposed bicycle/walking trail?**

Aspect	Check Only 3
Scenery	28
Accessibility	30
Safety	36
Flatness / ease	11
Proximity to my home	13
Benches / resting areas	9
Proximity to shops	6
Proximity to my work	1
Toilet facilities	9
Parking facilities	5
Others (please list) -Isolation -low noise (shield from traffic & trains)	2

**What do you think you would use a bicycle/walking trail for?**

Use	Check all that apply
Recreation / exercise	48
Commute to work	10
Use for short errands / shopping	19
Enjoy the outdoors	38
Spend time with family or friends	35
Time alone	21
Others (please list) -Teach my son to ride a bike	1

**Please check the activities that you may participate in if a bicycle/walking trail was developed.**

Activity	Check all that apply
Walking	41
Jogging	13
Bicycling	46
Dog walking	11
Rollerblading	8
Snowshoeing	15
Cross-country skiing	20
Wildlife viewing	19
Others (please list) -birdwatching	1

**Do you think you would you participate in activities alone or in a group?**

Participate	Check all that apply
Alone	37
With spouse or partner	25
With family	34
With group or club	18
Others (please list) -friends	5

➔ ➔ Please turn over ➔ ➔

**How often do you think you might use a North Adams - Williamstown bicycle/walking trail?**

Frequency	Check only one
More than once a week	31
About once per week	15
About once per month	4
About once per year	0
Never	0

**Have you used the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail? If you answer yes, please also fill out the following question.**

  46   Yes                        4   No

**What aspects of the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail do you enjoy most? Please list 3 aspects. [Note: Responses are listed below.]**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Where do you live?**

Location	Check One
North Adams – downtown	4
North Adams – outside downtown area	15
Williamstown – downtown	8
Williamstown – outside downtown area	16
Other (please list) -Pittsfield, Florida	4

**What is the makeup of your household?**

Age Groups	Check all that apply
Under 1 year old	2
1-10 years old	13
11-18 years old	8
19-30 years old	8
31-65 years old	36
66+ years old	11

**Share your knowledge, desires, concerns and recommendations about a potential bicycle/walking trail. Please print. [Note: Responses are listed below.]**

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**Thank you for taking the time to respond to our survey!**

*We appreciate your efforts to help the City of North Adams and the Town of Williamstown plan for a future that will benefit our two communities.*

**What aspects of the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail do you enjoy most? Please list 3 aspects.**

Aspect #1 responses:

It's wide, well maintained & therefore safe.

Scenery – 14 responses.

Away from traffic.

Smooth trail for rollerblading.

Quiet.

Safe.

No cars/safety – 3 responses.

Cheshire Lake – 2 responses.

Scenery & wildlife.

The views & lake.

Ease of access.

Accessibility.

Well constructed.

No traffic – 2 responses.

Picnic areas.

Setting.

It is pleasant.

It's flat – 2 responses.

Cycling.

Smoothness.

Uninterrupted route.

Great for kids to take bikes.

The views – 2 responses.

Length! 11+ miles is a great stretch.

The quiet part that is far from the road.

Exercise.

Avoiding Harbor Hill.

Aspect #2 responses:

Scenery - 9 responses

Quality of the trail.

Accessibility – 2 responses.

River.

Ease of use.

Easy/safe biking exercise.

Well kept.

Easy grade – 4 responses.

Quiet beauty.

Good access at several points.

The length – 2 responses.

Benches.

Parking convenience.

Safety.

Quiet.

Ease – 3 responses.

Riding my bike.

Picnic tables/benches.  
Teaching kids to ride.  
Family atmosphere.  
Nature walks.  
Good surface.  
Scenery – abutting the reservoir is nice.  
Seeing it used!  
Cheshire Lake.

Aspect #3 responses:

The amenities.  
Interacting with community.  
Flat – 3 responses.  
Design.  
Can pull trailer with toddler.  
Family activity (long enough to be worth it).  
Sense of community.  
Great & varied scenery.  
Multi-use aspect.  
Safety – 2 responses.  
Cleanliness.  
Wildlife.  
Proximity to our home.  
Ease – 2 responses.  
Not on highway.  
Parking.  
Well-kept.  
Walking.  
Running.  
Scenery – 3 responses.  
Closeness.  
Good stops & seats to rest along the way.  
It exists.  
Ease – makes family rides simple & enjoyable.  
The pretty wetland areas.  
Swamps north of Cheshire.

**Share your knowledge, desires, concerns and recommendations about a potential bicycle/walking trail. Please print.**

My concern is that people abutting the trail will oppose it – but I think they should find out from those along the Ash-trail how good it is to be close.

This kind of resource is an excellent use of our tax money. There are too few public, non-commercial spaces in this community and a rail trail would be a welcome addition.

Would be nice to link it to the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail. And try not to raise taxes too much!!

Please don't make it too close to a big road; close to natural beauty as possible!

Elders will really benefit from having the ability to exercise safely & in a beautiful place.

There's nowhere safe to ride in N. County – we need safe places to ride. We don't have a way to get near our river & to appreciate it: this let's [sic] us do that.

I don't want this in my back yard or front yard.

Good recreation/exercise, good tourist attraction, saves on use of cars!

I ride a lot between Williamstown & No Adams, Rt 2 or Mass Ave. Neither is really safe & never after dark. I used to ride to work at NARH! That was a workout! I'd like to see groups organize & ride together frequently.

Have safe alternative mode of transportation/recreation. Have more recreation for tourists/visiting families. I would be glad to work on this. Judy Grinnell 664-7747.

I am very excited about this idea and hope it doesn't take a long time to be completed.

This it would be a great thing for our area.

Not too close to the railroad tracks.

I am only 10. I don't know!

Benches.

No concerns. Property values ↑. Tourism ↑.

Bathrooms desired at both ends – and open.

I use Rt 2 to commute by bike 3-4 times a week from Williamstown to MCLA. This would be wonderful to have a safer, more scenic route.

If possible the trail should use the riverbank from West's to Phelps Ave. bridge. Avoid crossing Rt. 2 as much as possible. Try not to be too close to the RR tracks.

I see lots of people Bicycling on Rt 2 while I commute to work 3 days a week. If you build the trail, it will be well used, I guarantee it!!

Flat.

Ideally, I would love a trail that connected the Ashuwillticook all the way to Williamstown.

A good trail system would greatly help the tourism industry. I often wish there were good bike trails around here; this is a great area, but very car-dominated.

Should be scenic – which would make it a destination for both locals and those visiting. For that reason, I don't favor the Rt 2 bike land option. Along the Hoosic River would be the most desirable route once out of the downtowns of North Adams or Williamstown.

Good provisions for safely crossing active roads is #1 concern/recommendation. The button-activated light on Rt 8 is a perfect example of this done right.

I'm totally excited about the prospect – in part as alternative transportation to vehicles and also as a recreational trail. In my experience, bike paths are enhancements to communities as well as an attraction to tourists. I hope it's possible to have a trail that is not in too close proximity to the active train paths or the highway (Rt 2).

Wide enough for walking/riding lane.

Connect the dots NGHSP → MassMoCA, fairgrounds, YMCA → Braytonville School → Greylock School → Stop & Shop → The Spruces → Cole Ave, Williams College → Clark Art Institute.

Transaction cost of organizing ROWs. For me, the worst part of riding on Rt 2 is the areas with poor sight lines. Cemetery, nearby residential neighborhoods on slope. Similarly, the section of Mass Ave by the quarry/gravel pit is the least friendly. The wide ROW on Rte 2 already exists – that might be the path of least resistance. No pun intended.