

**Wallkill Valley Rail Trail
Community Opportunity Plan**

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC AND
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

SUMMER 2019



Photo Credit: Rails to Trails Conservancy

PROJECT TEAM

Weintraub Diaz Landscape Architecture, PLLC
Shumaker Consulting Engineering and Land Surveying D.P.C.
M.G. McLaren Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Ulster County Transportation Council
Village Of New Paltz
Wallkill Valley Land Trust
Historic Huguenot Street
Business Owners
Residents



PROJECT GOALS

- Develop plans for the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail (WVRT) New Paltz section to help secure grant funding for future trail improvements.
- Improve WVRT function as a transportation resource.
- Enhance connections to adjacent open spaces, trails and uses (River to Ridge Trail, Historic Huguenot Street, Nyquist-Harcourt Wildlife Sanctuary, retail establishments, etc.)
- Provide respectful and appropriate edge treatment at adjoining land uses.
- Identify options to optimize multimodal active transport.
- Identify opportunities for open space and recreation in more heavily used zones at heart of Village.
- Define and make WVRT distinctive within context of burgeoning regional and statewide trail system.

KEY PROJECT MILESTONES

Public Engagement

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| • Informational Meeting | June 6, 2019 |
| • Site Visit "Walkshop" | June 9, 2019 |
| • Design Workshop | June 18, 2019 |
| • Website | Ongoing |

Inventory and Analysis

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| • McLaren - Civil Engineering
<i>Traffic, Land Use</i> | June/July 2019 |
| • Shumaker - Environmental Study
<i>Land ownership, Hydrology, Utilities</i> | June/July 2019 |

Corridor Vision and Concept Plan

Fall 2019

Final Plan

Spring 2019

EXISTING CONDITIONS FOCUS

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Safety |  Drainage |
|  Maintenance |  Experiences |

COMMUNITY INPUT TO DATE



Information Meeting

06.06.2019

A kickoff meeting was held at the New Paltz Community Center to introduce the project scope and process to the community and welcome initial comments and questions.



Site Visit “Walkshop”

06.09.2019

WDLA staff and community members walked the approximately 1.5 mile section of the WVRT that runs through the heart of downtown New Paltz. Through engaging the community in discussion on site, the design team was able to document observations and community input about the existing conditions of the WVRT and potential for future improvements.



Design Workshop

06.18.2019

The WDLA design team provided a brief presentation summarizing observations and community input made during the site walk. During breakout sessions WDLA staff facilitated discussion with workshop attendees and documented community input.

COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY



SAFETY



DRAINAGE



MAINTENANCE



EXPERIENCES

SAFETY



INTERSECTIONS / TRAFFIC CALMING

- Improved safety is a priority in areas where the WVRT crosses Plains Road, Water Street, and Main Street. These intersections are currently hazardous for both trail users and automobiles.
- A combination of physical and visual prompts for traffic calming should be considered including flashing yield signs, lighting at crosswalks, trail surface treatment differentiation (color and texture), planting and bollards etc.

VISIBILITY

- Consideration of vegetation placement and management for increased visibility at intersections.

TRAIL SURFACE CONDITIONS

- Current surface condition of the trail is uneven and makes portions of the trail unsafe and unpleasant for bike riding. Opportunity to improve safety with stabilized trail surfaces and smooth transitions at road crossings.

TRAIL EDGE CONDITIONS

- Consider fencing for increased safety in areas where steep slopes abut the trail.

TRAIL WIDTH

- Trail width should safely accommodate all trail user groups.



DRAINAGE



FREQUENTLY FLOODED AREAS

- Opportunity for stormwater management in areas along the trail that frequently flood (Example: Area by Sojourner Truth Park between the trail and the river).

DRAINAGE ISSUES / STANDING WATER

- Standing water is both a drainage issue and experiential issue due to smell (Example: Area between Main Street and North Front Street often has standing water which harbors odor and insects).
- Possible approaches to address standing water/mud could be addressed by repairing, resetting and/or replacing culverts; appropriately grading and sloping the trail sections; and adding additional crushed stone top course to encourage drainage.

MAINTENANCE

STEWARDSHIP

- Desire to start a "Volunteer Trail Steward Program" for ongoing trail maintenance and stewardship; volunteers would pick up garbage, manure, and help manage vegetation.
- Opportunity to provide trash receptacles and dog waste stations at parking lots and in town area so that all trail users can easily contribute to keeping the trail clean.



TRAIL SURFACE MATERIALS

- Current trail surface condition between Water Street and Mulberry street is uneven and unsafe. Opportunity to improve surface conditions with a combination of crushed stone, unit pavers, and transitions between trail and road with asphalt aprons.
- Overall preferred surface material is stabilized gravel with unit pavers in select areas such as area by Water Street Market and seating areas.

FENCE / TRAIL EDGE

- Fencing along edge of trail should be sturdy/secure so that trail users feel safe on path adjacent to sloped sides (Example: Existing fence by Water Street needs repair).

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

- Opportunity to remove and replace existing Ash trees to buffer trail while maintaining safety and visibility.
- Consideration of tree canopy height to ensure optimal safety and usability.
- Consider clearing invasive plants and establish native vegetation along trail.

EXPERIENCES



TRAIL CHARACTER

Existing Character

- Keep the WVRT true to the New Paltz community by enhancing existing character along trail through materials and highlighting significant features such as views, historic areas, vegetation, and connections to downtown etc.

“Linear Park”

- Opportunity to envision the New Paltz segment of WVRT as a “linear park” through enhancing existing trail character and by introducing distinct elements like murals to reflect New Paltz’s identity (Example: Potential for mural on Salvation Army building wall).

Tree Canopy

- Opportunity to embrace tree canopy shade as a character-defining feature for this segment of the trail while finding a balance between screening, celebrating the shade and existing tree canopy and opening up views.

Social Connections

- Opportunity to foster social connections by providing places to gather along trail (Example: benches that face each other, enabling conversation).

WAYFINDING / SIGNAGE

Destinations

- Opportunity for wayfinding signage along trail highlighting destinations such as restaurants and shops downtown, Water Street Market, the River to Ridge Trail, Historic Huguenot Street, publicly accessible restrooms
- Opportunity to add wayfinding signage from existing parking lot at WWTP towards trail via Huguenot Street

Trail Rules & Etiquette

- Signage that clearly displays trail rules and etiquette for various trail users. (Examples: Slower traffic having the right of way. Bicyclists communicating with “On your left” when passing others on the trail).



EXPERIENCES



WAYFINDING / SIGNAGE

Historic Interpretation

- Opportunity for historic interpretation signage and preservation of historic elements such as remaining rail track and historic stone wall.

Environmental Education

- Opportunity for environmental education signage such as plant ID for poison ivy, native specimen trees etc.

Materiality

- Distinctive signage design using wood and graffiti resistant materials.



CONNECTIONS / ADJACENCIES

Viewsheds

- Opportunity to enhance scenic views from trail overlooking the river (Example: area by Sojourner Truth Park between the trail and river and area by North Front Street).

Moments Along Trail

- Opportunity to highlight significant areas along trail with decorative unit pavers (Examples: Memorial, seating near baseball field, park-like setting adjacent to Huguenot open space).

Formalize Desire Paths

- Opportunity to formalize desire paths and spur trails connecting the trail to the neighborhood. Instances identified by community include: connecting to Historic Huguenot Street, Nyquist-Harcourt Wildlife Sanctuary, existing informal path to post office, and the "Social Trail" from the BOCES parking lot.

Screening

- Opportunity to screen portions of the trail from unwanted views and noise from adjacent properties (Example: Noise from car wash).

EXPERIENCES



AMENITIES (SEATING, PARKING, BIKE RACKS ETC.)

Seating

- Opportunity to provide improved and additional social seating along select areas of trail. Placement of additional seating should take trail adjacencies into consideration (Example: Potential for seating at river outlook areas and seating to be respectful of residential properties).



CONNECTIONS / ADJACENCIES

Transportation

- Opportunity to fill in gaps in sidewalk system and provide safe pedestrian access.
- Consider potential connections to other modes of transportation (Example: Potential bus node at Water Street Market).
- Consider an additional crossing opportunity between Mulberry Street and Huguenot Street.

Parking Areas

- Opportunity for parking areas to include amenities such as trash receptacles and bike racks, and to accommodate access to trail for users on horseback.
- Consider formalizing parking areas that are currently used as informal access points to the trail (Example: BOCES parking is informal access to "Social Trail").
- Consider any additional parking areas or parking expansion with regard to how it may impact the character of the trail.
- Consider additional signage for existing WWTP parking lot to direct visitors towards trail.

Bike Racks

- Opportunity to provide bike racks at key gateways or WVRT trail nodes.

Comfort Stations / Restrooms

- Opportunity to have a "Welcome to New Paltz" area / welcome center with water, restrooms etc. to orient visitors.
- Desire for more comfort stations and/or access to existing restrooms in the neighborhood.

Lighting

- Opportunity for additional lighting in downtown/ urban area of the trail while keeping the wooded areas free of lighting after dark.