



Appendix F

Public Information Meeting Comments and Responses

1) Date Received: 4/22/2021

Sender: Scott Morehouse

Comment/Question: *This destruction of a historical railway is idiotic and cost 10 times more to rip up than the 1 million dollar per mile to fix the rail.*

The Catskills and Kingston will need a train in the future, hopefully this will be just a beginning to save the railroad.

We don't need more bikes or trails. We need transportation

County Response: Thank you for your comment

2) Date Received: 4/26/2021

Sender: Susan Courtney

Comment/Question: *I'm delighted to read about your plans to add to railroad transportation in the Catskills. This past weekend, while we were in Halcottsville, we spoke with our contractor up there about railroad travel. I know this would be a HUGE project, but if the governor really wanted to help bring commerce and tourism to the Catskills, he should fund train service from Manhattan to the Catskills. It could be a division of Metro-North. When Alexander Cassatt wanted to build PA Railroad, it seemed an impossible task. But he did it. That is a dream, I know. But, the Berkshires have thriving tourism and the Catskills are just as beautiful -just lacking in the funds to create hotels, shops, and museums, etc.*

County Response: Thank you for your comment

3) Date Received: 4/27/2021

Sender: Tom Comito

Comment/Question: *I am the curator of the Empire State Railway Museum in Phoenicia. I wish to request that all mile markers and whistle post remain as historic artifacts. Also that a section of track be preserved with appropriate interpretive signage. Perhaps along the foundation wall in Pine hill where the ROW appears wide enough to accommodate both. This will show all trail users that an important railroad once ran here.*

I have a background in rail to trail maintenance. I am a retired park superintendent formerly employed by the Westchester County Department of Parks. From 2010 through 2013 I was assigned maintenance responsibilities for the North/South County trail. 38 miles, Lincoln Ave Yonkers to the Putnam County line at Baldwin Place. It was a challenging assignment. So I come at this from the perspective of railroad history and also what it takes to keep these rail to trails going.

There will be a battle with people who do not want the tracks removed. This railroad saw its last train in October 1976. The grade from Big Indian to Highmount is a steady 3 to 3 1/2 %. It was an operational headache for the railroad. It will be tough uphill pedal for a casual cyclist. I view this situation differently than the well know battle in the Adirondacks where active and well maintained tracks were pulled up for snowmobilers between Lake Clear Junction and Lake Placid. That was a sin and a waste. I have mixed feelings about seeing this section of the old U&D removed but given the length of time out of use and the fact that the steepness of the grade makes it impractical for even rail bikes such as Rail Explorers then perhaps it is time to move forward.

Commenting as a Shandaken taxpayer since 1992 I am opposed to Ulster County taxpayers footing the bill for this. Let the State build it and spread the cost out over 62 counties not one and I say that in all seriousness. Thanks for letting me comment,

County Response: Thank you for your comment. The study recommends that historic elements of the railroad corridor such as the whistle post and the mile-markers remain in place. More than 900 feet of the double track in Highmount will also remain for use by the D&U RR. It is the County's intent to preserve and highlight the historical importance of the railroad and the surrounding area. Ulster County will pursue an equitable funding strategy that minimizes county taxpayer share to the greatest extent practical.

4) Date Received: 4/29/2021

Sender: Rajesh Adhia

Comment/Question: *Hope all is well. In regards to the u and d trail is there any plans to put up fencing or privacy walls in areas where the trail is very close to houses such as along u and d turnpike in highmount.*

County Response: If a design phase commences, the County will establish a method to engage with adjacent property owners to discuss any relevant privacy concerns, including the need for screening.

5) Date Received: 5/2/2021

Sender: James Rath

Comment/Question: *Thank you for the presentation last week. I am very much interested in seeing this move forward.*

I am an abutting property owner to the railway. I own the site of the former White House Lodge. It is adjacent to the Town-owned site of the former Pine Hill Crystal Springs water bottling plant.

I heard about this study and meeting from a neighbor and not the county. Is there a way I can sign up for updates about the project so I receive notice in the future? Dennis mentioned communicating with abutting property owners during planning. I hope that is the case. At the very least I would like to be notified before the county attempts to move the mile marker that has fallen over and slid downhill onto my property.

I didn't appreciate it when David read only a portion of my comments, and then it elicited a chuckle from one of the panelists. I hope that we don't have an antagonistic relationship going forward.

County Response: At this time the best way to receive updates on the progress of the project is through the UCTC website. If this project moves forward, all adjoining property owners will be notified and will have an opportunity to voice their questions and concerns with the County.

6) Date Received: 5/3/2021

Sender: James Amenta

Comment/Question: *I live in Shandaken and I wanted to thank you very much for both the presentation about the new rail trail study and also for all the work that has clearly gone into this.*

I was hoping I might be able to get a question answered. I was curious during the presentation about the trail access points' proximity to dense housing, but I don't think my question was coming across clearly, and I was thinking it may be clearer on a one to one basis.

I was wondering if the study had considered if there were any ways to make the trail more accessible to the immediate downtown of Pine Hill? It seems to me that Belleayre beach's parking area is a good distance from the center of Pine Hill and I wondered if any thought had gone into closer access points. Any "in-town" access point doesn't need parking and would be particularly nice for Pine Hill residents and could be a boon to the hospitality businesses there. Adding a pedestrian access point to the trail through the fire department's large parcel or maybe slightly less ideally Mill St seems like it would significantly increase the percentage of people who walk onto the trail instead of drive up to it. This seems like it could also drive business to the village from those who entered the trail elsewhere and might want to buy something midway through their walk - maybe a drink or a taco!

Either way, I'm incredibly happy to see the continued progress on the U&D corridor and am eager with anticipation for this next segment's work to kick off.

County Response: Please refer to section 1.6.2 of the feasibility study. Station Road and Mill Street serve as the most logical connection points between Pine Hill and the corridor. The steep embankment between the U&D corridor and Main Street in Pine Hill make a direct connection challenging. If a design phase commences, the feasibility of proposed access points will be examined further and may be adjusted if needed.

7) Date Received: 5/3/2021

Sender: Madison Wellman

Comment/Question: *Email #1: My name is Madison Wellman, I am a regional representative from Congressman Delgado's Office. One of our staff members was sat in on your Zoom conference yesterday. We were very pleased to learn more about the project.*

I am reaching out to offer whatever support the Congressman's office can extend to your project. I can connect you to potential federal funding sources and discuss letters of support to accompany grant applications.

County Response: Thank you for reaching out to offer support of the project.

8) Date Received: 5/5/2021

Sender: Brian Scanlan

Comment/Question: *I attended the presentation of the feasibility study last Thursday--thank you for putting it on. It was very interesting and I learned a lot. I'm a big fan of rails to trails and I really see it as a way to continue to bring the kind of tourism and economic development we need in the Catskills. I first started going to the Catskills from New Jersey in the mid-1970s after I met my wife, whose parents started taking her in the 1960s. My wife and I bought a bungalow in the 1980s and we are spending even more time there now that we are in the process of retiring.*

I'm writing not only to support your efforts but to encourage a look at the rail corridor west of Woodland Valley Creek. Early in 2020 I met with Chris White and Kathy Nolan about this section. The railroad is washed out until a point about 1/4 of mile west of the creek. From there it is

largely intact out west. This is a beautiful stretch of the railroad and there are several places where I believe parking could be secured (there already is a parking area adjacent to the bridge over the Esopus and at Woodland Valley Creek). I have talked the rails well west and aside from some missing bridges over small brooks (about 6-10 feet wide), the railbed was in good shape.

Please do keep this section in mind. When I and at least one other participant in the meeting last week brought it up (before the Zoom "Chat" was set to "Host Only"), I felt this part was dismissed out of hand. It shouldn't be. I suggest you take a ride to Herdman Road (which extends about two miles from Woodland Valley Road over the Woodland Valley Creek to a dead end) and park near Hummingbird Lane on your right (just shy of one mile from the Woodland Valley Creek) . From there, you can start walking west.

You'll be amazed at how beautiful it is.

County Response: Thank you for your comment and suggestion. This section of the railroad is designated as a future "trail only" section of the U&D corridor and may be addressed in a future feasibility study.

9) Date Received: 5/5/2021

Sender: Bethia Wateman

Comment/Question: As a resident of Big Indian I want to say how enthusiastic I am about the prospect of a public access, improved trail from Highmount to Big Indian. I commend your work in the feasibility study and the zoom meeting that took place last week. The advantage of the experience gained with the design and construction of the ART will help speed this process. I hope the funding emerges to do it at one time instead of in phases to maximize the efficiency and economy of construction.

I am a cyclist and a hiker, a former director of the Empire State Railway Museum, and a trail steward for the ART. The significance of the double horseshoe curve is important. I think there are many famous horseshoe curves, but not many double horseshoe curves in railroad history. If I can verify the idea that it is a rare artifact, I will let you know. Also important is the interpretation of Crystal Spring and it's connection with the RR, shipping water to NYC. Recently Kathleen Myers of the Shandaken Historical Museum scanned a brochure from Crystal Spring with photos and posted on Facebook. It contained lots of detailed info about the volume of water, frequency of shipments and the transition from steam to electricity on the conveyors that connected the plant to the tracks above. She would be an important resource for the historical background.

County Response: Thank you for your support and suggestions.

10) Date Received: 5/6/2021

Sender: Angel Molina

Comment/Question: Thanks for the update. I did want to suggest for your consideration an alternate entrance/parking area at the end of Bonnie View in Pine Hill. There are several areas at the end of the road that would accommodate approximately 12 plus cars and emergency vehicles if need be. We spoke to our Pine Hill neighbors about this project were very excited to have this amenity here. Anything we can do on our end please let me know.

County Response: Thank you for the suggestion. If a design phase commences, the feasibility of proposed access points will be examined further and may be adjusted if needed.

11) Date Received: 5/6/2021

Sender: Sandra Gambetti

Comment/Question: *Thank you very much for last week presentation and for the opportunity to write some comments. I live in Pine Hill, and you can imagine how I am excited about this project. I frequently go to the Ashokan rail trail, and I can't wait to have a rail trail here, so that I do not have to drive. This said, I would like to know if anybody has thought to connect the rail trail end in Highmount with the cross-country trail that, according to the maps, should exist at the lowest levels of the mountain. I say "should" because in reality nobody is maintaining those trails, let alone tourists actually using them, despite the large road signs on Galli Curci Rd. inviting skiers to explore that part of Belleayre. Best of luck with your project and look forward to hearing more about it.*

County Response: Connecting the proposed trail to the cross-country ski trails associated with the Belleayre Mountain Ski Center is one of the objectives of the project.

12) Date Received: 5/8/2021

Sender: Pete Baker

Comment/Question: *See attached letter*

County Response: Resolution 488 is the current policy regarding the U&D corridor and it is the County's prerogative to act on the terms of this resolution. The overall goal of this study was to determine the feasibility and establish practical costs for converting the existing rail corridor into a trail. This section of the corridor was designated as "trail only" by resolution 488 therefore the feasibility of repairing the tracks or a "rail with trail" option were not pursued.

13) Date Received: 5/10/2021

Sender: Jan Jaffe

Comment/Question: *We appreciated the public presentation of the draft feasibility study about the extension of the rail trail from Highmount to Big Indian. We're making our comments as one of the many Pine Hill residents who use the trails as they currently exist as well as hike on the Cathedral Glen trail. We think the rail trail concept is a good one for all the reasons cited in the report. Those of us who live next to the trail do have concerns that we hope we will address in the design phase of this project.*

1. Access to the Trail: In Pine Hill, Bonnie View Avenue is a narrow, dead end street with no sidewalks and residential properties all along the road that currently leads up to access to the trail and to the Cathedral Glen trail. Car traffic has multiplied in the last few years. Parking near the Horseshoe Curve has become more common as has constant traffic from people driving up Bonnie View Avenue and then turning around and driving back because the embankment is too steep for some to climb. The study mentions creating a few parking spots at the top of Station Road. As is, there is little room up there and it would encourage traffic through the residential part of Pine Hill as well as illegal on-street parking in a village that doesn't have the capacity to police violations.

— How can the design prevent people from parking along Bonnie View Avenue and Station Road to get to the trail? At the same time, how can the design support existing local foot traffic for those living in the village or anyone who wants to walk from the village?

2. Construction: There are at least two bridges in serious, deteriorating condition on Bonnie View Avenue that are not candidates for heavy loads. They already need repair. The study mentions one and suggests the solution is to go up Station Road but that requires going up Bonnie View Avenue and over both bridges. The roads themselves —asphalt over gravel — were not designed for the kind of traffic currently seen. There are no sidewalks so everyone walks on the road. In addition, Bonnie View Avenue is streams and was once filled with wild plants and flowers. Heavy construction over the years has introduced multiple invasive plants and eradicated most of the original species that were here.

— How will the construction take place in a way that doesn't further destroy the roads and their existing bridges? How will the construction crew prevent further transplanting of invasive species? Is there a way to aid the community and include needed bridge, road and stream side restoration right off the trail with this project?

3. Drinking water: Pine Hill's water source and treatment plant is at the end of Bonnie View Avenue practically below the Horseshoe Curve of the proposed trail. There was mention in the study of potential toxic materials being uncovered from the railroad during construction but no mention of protection of the water treatment plant.

— What needs to be done to mitigate any damage to the drinking water for Pine Hill residents during construction? Post-construction, we are most concerned about human and animal waste left on site and impacting the water treatment plant. Residents have noted both most recently as the trails have been used more frequently by people who drive in and then leave the area. Will there be portable-toilets and where will they be placed? How is dog waste managed on the existing trails?

In closing, we think this extension of the trail is a good thing. Locals as well as visitors will benefit from a health perspective and an opportunity to appreciate the Catskill's beauty and history. We're sure there will be economic benefits to those who have investments in neighboring communities along the trail. However, most of the residents on Bonnie View and Station Road as well as in Pine Hill and Highmount are not running Airbnbs or commercial properties. Many already use the trails, as-is, for recreation. This will be the first time the Rail Trail is adjacent to a residential community. How can the design mitigate the concerns noted above so this development is a win/win for all.

Thanks, Brian - I believe this may be the first part of the trail that has so many residential properties adjacent to it. It's an opportunity to innovate beyond building fences and it is a challenge in terms of parking access. What I didn't say explicitly is that it would be great if our Town benefited by getting help improving the restoration of its stream beds and conserving the small bridges that cross the streams. This part of Ulster and Delaware counties seem to get the short end of the stick on resources — human and financial — to solve classic planning problems whether it is transportation or invasive species or community engagement.

County Response: Thank you for your comments and suggestions.

1. The parking issues and traffic along Bonnie View Road and the other roadways in Pine Hill will be considered during the design phase of the project. Local pedestrian and bicycle traffic will be able to access the trail through Mill Street or Station Road in Pine Hill.
2. Construction methods of the trail is ultimately up to the contractor as part of their means and methods. However, the County can require that certain precautions are put into place during construction that eliminate damage to the existing roads, structures, and further spread of invasive species. Environmental concerns such as the spread of invasive species and the structural capacity of the bridges likely to be used during construction will be fully investigated during construction.
3. Overall, the construction of the trail should have a net benefit for the drinking water supply of Pine Hill. The creosote laden railroad ties would be removed from the corridor and new stone material would be imported to cap the existing stone where contaminated may remain, thereby reducing the potential for leaching of contaminated materials into the water supply. The County recently completed the full removal of railroad tracks and ties on the shore of the Ashokan Reservoir, an unfiltered water supply to NYC, without environmental ramifications.

Human and pet waste management, as well as overall maintenance of the trail, has not yet been determined at this time and would be fully vetted during the design phase of the project.

14) Date Received: 5/13/2021

Sender: Tom Comito

Comment/Question: *A gent who's name I don't recall (Smith from the Woodstock Land Conservancy?) remarked during the meeting that the network of connecting trails is a major reason for the increase in visitor multi night stays. Trails are one of many attractions the region offers tourist. Living in Phoenicia I can attest that the main reason facilitating multi night stays are air B&Bs.*

County Response: Thank you for your comment.

15) Date Received: 5/20/2021

Sender: Kate O'Connor

Comment/Question: *This is an important project to serve the residents of western Ulster County and encourage four-season recreational tourism at the Belleayre Mountain Ski Center, Pine Hill Lake, and at new mountain biking and cross country ski trails to be constructed in the Shandaken Wild Forest. Connecting the hamlets of Highmount, Pine Hill, and Big Indian, this rail trail can serve transportation purposes, keeping fossil-fuel powered vehicles off Route 28 and providing a safe, hardened surface for large numbers of casual hikers who might otherwise crowd back-country trails. Catskill Mountainkeeper supports moving this exciting project forward and calls upon the Olympic Regional Development Authority and New York's Department of Environmental Conservation to join with Ulster County and provide funding for the construction of this trail.*

County Response: Thank you for your comment and support.

16) Date Received: 5/20/2021

Sender: Peter DiSclafani

Comment/Question: Speaking as a Shandaken Councilperson and a business owner, I am for the creation and expansion of Rail trails. This Highmount to Big Indian section is a great start to Ulster County's Rail Trail in Shandaken and I will be so ecstatic to see it and us work our way down and connect with Phoenicia and then the Ashokan Rail Trail... and down to Kingston!

County Response: Thank you for your comment and support.

17) Date Received: 5/20/2021

Sender: Matthew Frisch

Comment/Question: *As chairperson of the Catskill Heritage Alliance which advocates for protection of our natural habitat and sustainable, environmentally responsible development, this rail trail in our backyard is the kind of repurposing of a disused asset that our organization supports. The Big Indian to Highmount would bring a this new option for healthful recreation to the western edge of Ulster County. The new trail would take travelers up and over the famous Pine Hill Horseshoe curve. This would be a great addition to the outdoor recreation options in our area. It is development but it converts this long abandoned ruin into a a valuable community byway. It would help bring back prosperity to a hamlet- Pine Hill, which is something CHA strives for. Parking issues within Pine Hill will have to be addressed but this isn't a deal breaker. We strongly endorse this repurposing of the Big Indian to Highmount rail corridor and will help to make it a reality*

County Response: Thank you for your comment and support.

18) Date Received: 5/21/2021

Sender: Scott Gould

Comment/Question: *I Scott Gould. A resident, and a member of the local cycling community. I, and my family have been cycling, and helping to maintain these local cycling , and hiking trails for more than 20 years.*

In regards to the Ulster, Delaware rail trail proposal. I can't imagine why it would be questioned as a viable economic positive for our area, with all of the unquestionable advantages to the communities surrounding the Ashokan rail trail we have witnessed. I was present for the recent zoom call with all of the local representatives heard from. It appeared that most of the focus was on the funding of the 10, million proposed to proceed with this project. The amount seemed low, despite the high cost to certain aspects of the budget. I guess it will all balance out in the end. My personal feeling is that the focus should be on the quality of the finished project. Although ORDA was mentioned as a possible contributor, and the local communities. I think private funding resources should be explored more. Also the DEP, (CWC) the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, MARK Project. There are numerous local organizations that contribute to the betterment of our community, which all exist from local, and private funding.

Our trail systems have been overwhelmed with visitors since the Covid pandemic came about last year. I am completely in favor of seeing this project move forward. It would be a waste of a great resource not to follow through with this.

County Response: Thank you for your comment and support.

19) Date Received: 5/21/2021

Sender: Christopher Kupec

Comment/Question: *I'm writing to express my concern about the proposed shandaken rail trail. I live at 22 lasher rd & my property adjoins the railroad. My neighbors & I are very disinterested in having people hiking thru our properties.*

As currently proposed, with the trail starting at the big Indian park, would allow people to pass thru private property. We feel this would have a negative impact as in some places it passes extremely close to our homes. What if anything would be done to mitigate this situation?

Also it would require extensive construction including 2 very expensive bridges including one over the esopus creek. After 20 years I was forced to post our property on the creek last year due to uncontrollable trespassing, swimming, and trash. What kind of monitoring & enforcement would be in place to keep people on the trail & not our land? Just look at Peekamoose blue hole & kaaterskill falls to see the impacts of unrestricted access.

As a contiguous property owner I feel that all property owners affected should be included in the planning process & our concerns addressed. Other than this email what recourse do we have to shape this process in a constructive manner? Will we be included & contacted as it moves forward?

While this would negatively impact me directly I would recommend looking at the state land at the beginning of lasher road as the starting point. It is the site of the former Greenberg hotel by the peekamoose restaurant. There is trail access to both the railroad & bellayre mountain & would negate passing thru my & my neighbors land & the need to construct 2 bridges. There is also ample room for parking , etc.

Without being a complete nimby I will say that I would love to hike the railroad in pine hill & the famous horseshoe curve!

Please keep us informed as this plan goes forward & let us know how we can be involved!

Thank you for your time & consideration!

County Response: At this point, no alternatives have been selected by the County or proposed. The report suggests several feasible alternatives for the beginning of the trail at Big Indian.

There have been no alternatives proposed that would traverse private properties. Trail stewards, fencing and signage have previously worked successfully for the County to help mitigate the potential for trespass onto private property.

The County does intend to involve all adjacent property owners during the design phase of the project, once funding has been secured.

The feasibility did investigate an alternative where a vacant property owned by Crossroads Ventures, LLC is used as a trailhead at the eastern end of the project and the Lasher Road

crossing and the Esopus Creek crossing are avoided. This alternative is still under consideration. If a design phase commences, the feasibility of proposed access points will be examined further and may be adjusted if needed.

20) Date Received: 5/21/2021

Sender: John Michelotti

Comment/Question: *I would like to comment on the proposed Highmount to Big Indian Rail Trail. In light of the enormous success of the eastern section of the rail trail on the former tracks of the railroad, I am very much in favor of the proposed Shandaken section.*

However, as a resident of Big Indian and the current Park Manager of the Big Indian Park I would like to voice my strong disagreement with the use of the Big Indian Park as the parking for the eastern end of the trail. The Park holds many community activities such as car shows, free concerts, Native American Festivals and Fire department cookouts just to name a few. Parking capacity is already strained during some of these community events. Having trail parking could very likely preclude the local community from necessary spaces. Increasing the parking spaces would definitely reduce the available open space for the said events. Also, as mentioned during the Zoom presentation, there is no direct access to the trail from the Park.

There are several parking options I hope you will consider.

1. Tax Parcel 4.-2-75 This 5.5 acre parcel just off Lasher Road is owned by Crossroad Ventures and offers many advantages. It's large and would offer plenty of parking. Its directly adjacent to the trail. It's a secluded area so residents wouldn't be affected. As the property is remote to Crossroad Ventures main focus and has power lines running thru it, they might sell it at a very reasonable price. Having this area as the terminus of the trail would eliminate the need for Lasher Road and the Esopus Creek Bridges sacrificing very little distance. Finally it would keep pedestrian activity off of Rt. 28.

2. Tax Parcel 12.7-1-20 This 1.3 acre parcel is owned by Craig Bedell. It was the original site for the Big Indian Train Station so it's adjacent to the trail. Entrance would be from Rt. 28 so it might cause some traffic issues.

3. Tax Parcel 12.7-1-18 This 1 acre parcel is owned by Charles Perez, is the site of his former gas station and is currently being used as a junkyard for damaged cars. It is across the street from the proposed terminus of the rail trail. Locals would be forever grateful if the junkyard was to be replaced. The downside is that trail users would have to cross Rt. 28 in order to access the trail.

I hope you will consider these and possibly other options for parking on the east end of the proposed rail trail. I am available at your convenience to discuss this. Thank you for your attention.

County Response: Thank you for reaching out and expressing your concerns. The County would like to have further discussions about the existing use of Big Indian Park and the other tax parcels that you have mentioned. If a design phase commences, the feasibility of proposed access points will be examined further and may be adjusted if needed.

21) Date Received: 5/21/2021

Sender: Larry Roth

Comment/Question: *I have attached a pdf file with my comments on the proposed Shandaken trail. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or wish to discuss any points.*

County Response: Resolution 488 is the current policy regarding the U&D corridor and it is the County's prerogative to act on the terms of this resolution. The overall goal of this study was to determine the feasibility and establish practical costs for converting the existing rail corridor into a trail. This section of the corridor was designated as "trail only" by resolution 488 therefore the feasibility of repairing the tracks or a "rail with trail" option were not pursued.

22) Date Received: 5/21/2021

Sender: Carla Scheele

Comment/Question: *We are writing regarding the rail trail feasibility study that was published last month. We live on Lasher Road, along the proposed rail trail, and we are concerned about what we see.*

We would preface our comments by saying that we believe that railtrails are a good use of abandoned track-beds. We use the Ashokan Rail Trail often. The difference between that one and this is that the Ashokan Rail Trail never passes through a residential area, as the proposed Shandaken trail would.

The trail as it has been proposed is contiguous to the back of our entire property on Lasher Road in Big Indian, including within fifty feet of the rear of our house. It will look down, with no sight barrier, on the windows of a bedroom (which is used by our daughter when she is home from college), a bathroom, exercise room, and home office, as well as our patio, which we use extensively from April to November.

We are concerned for at least two reasons. One is that in completing the feasibility study no one from the engineering firm seems to have studied the effect on the environment, including the possible damage to our water supply, which is at the bottom of the hill from the proposed trail and could be affected by the deconstruction, re-construction, and use of the trail. Disturbance of decades-old material could have a very harmful effect on our water; the run-off could also affect the surrounding earth, animals, and plants. The effect on the environment needs to be studied, as the economics has, perhaps even more so.

Two, a rail trail so close to our property would negatively affect our privacy. If the usage projections are correct, there will be a steady stream of people close to our house with views into our windows and our patio, with, in our opinion, a negative impact on the quiet use of our own property. One expects this type of interaction from the front of the house, but not in the backyard. We have spoken to our next-door neighbors (on both sides) about the proposal. They own dogs, who will be subjected to intrusions and, we expect, would be barking continuously. We assume that the owners of other contiguous properties will have other questions and objections, and their voices need to be heard and published.

We would respectfully request that before this plan is adopted in any way the Town perform an environmental impact statement--including any effect on the water supply--and a property impact study, with input from anyone with residential property contiguous to the trail and that these studies be published, as well.

We would be happy to discuss this with you at any time, and provide photographs and measurements of my property.

County Response: Overall, the construction of the trail should have a net benefit for the drinking water supply of Pine Hill. The creosote laden railroad ties would be removed from the corridor and new stone material would be imported to cap the existing stone where contaminated may remain, thereby reducing the potential for leaching of contaminated materials into the water supply. The County recently completed the full removal of railroad tracks and ties on the shore of the Ashokan Reservoir, an unfiltered water supply to NYC, without environmental ramifications.

Wood stockade fencing or plantings are two alternatives that could be used to shield views of the trail from houses and vice-versa.

The County does intend to involve all adjacent property owners during the design phase of the project, once funding has been secured and discussions pertaining to specific concerns can be held. Ulster County will progress this project in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act which will determine if a Draft Environmental Impact Statement is required for this project.

The impacts of rail trails, bike paths, greenways and other similar bicycle/pedestrian facilities on adjacent property values of has been extensively studied and well-documented. Properties near such facilities tend to appreciate more in value as compared to those located further away after accounting for other measured factors. Such facilities are commonly considered to be amenities that help to sell homes, increase property values add to quality of life.

23) Date Received: 5/21/2021

Sender: Carla Scheele

Comment/Question: *See Attached Letter (submitted past May 21 deadline.)*

County Response: Thank you for the comment and support.