

**Meeting Minutes: Ma and PA Community Greenway Feasibility Study
Public Meeting No. 1**

Date: January 14, 2009
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Windsor Township Municipal Building
Project No.: 08MPR-01
By: Chuck Strodoski

Persons Attending: Sandra Graham, Committee Chair/Interested Citizen
Debra Hatley, York Township
Dania Ashby, Windsor Township Recreation
Jennifer Gunnet, Windsor Township
Dan Shelly, York Township
Dennis Klindedst, Red Lion resident
James Phipps, Verizon North Representative
Thomas Allar, Yoe Borough Resident
Todd Klunk, Windsor Township, resident
JoAnna Shoalin, Representative Saylor’s Office
Scott Thompson, Resident
Carl Naylor, resident
Brent Wagaman, Yoe Borough resident
Dwight Robison, Adventure Cycling and Fitness
Ryan Sanders, Red Lion Business Association
Jay Mundis Windsor Twp resident
Ronald Grove, Windsor Twp resident
Scott Runkle, Windsor Twp resident
Rob Cambell, Mason Dixon Trail System
Ron Gray, Mason Dixon Trail System
Approximately 4 other citizens
Jeff Shue, C.S. Davidson
Chuck Strodoski, YSM
Ann Yost, YSM
Ann Toole, Toole Recreation Planning

Meeting Purpose: To introduce the project and seek public input.
Of Record:

1. A. Yost began the meeting with introductions. A. Yost and A. Toole provided an overview of the feasibility study and an outline of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is gain public input on the Ma and Pa Community Greenway. The purpose of the project is to explore the feasibility of

establishing a recreation trail along the historic corridor of the Ma and Pa railroad from the northern boundary of Felton Borough to Mt. Rose Avenue in Spring Garden Township. A one mile long spur extends into Dallastown. The 12.5-mile corridor passes through seven municipalities in York County. The study will explore feasibility from three perspectives:

- Legal feasibility – Who owns the corridor and has it been fully abandoned?
- Physical Feasibility – Can a recreational trail be developed on the corridor as it currently exists?
- Operations and Management Feasibility – If a trail can be develop in whole or in part, how will it be operated and maintained?

2. J. Shue provided a summary of the legal feasibility findings to date. A legal consultant has completed the determination of the rail corridor ownership, finding that the railroad has abandoned the railroad right-of-way and that adjoining landowners own the rail bed. The following summaries the legal findings:

- The railroad right of way has been formally abandoned as evidenced by 1) removal of the tracks with the consent of the railroad company, 2) issuance of certificate of abandonment by the Public Utility Commission, and 3) formal relinquishment of the right-of-way by the railroad company by way of quit-claim deeds.
- There are approximately 290 individual properties contiguous to the right-of-way and 27 landowners have received quit-claim deeds from the railroad company.
- Per PA law the land encompassing the right-of-way becomes owned by the land owners on either side of the right-of-way upon formal abandonment.
- The railroad right-of-way has been extinguished and title to the land encompassing the easement has reverted to the contiguous property owners.

3. C. Strodoski provided a summary of the physical findings of the corridor as summarized below:

- The majority of the historic corridor is readily identified and in tact, except for the portions of the corridor through the urban areas, which has been lost to development.
- Generally, an 8 -12 foot wide level bed remains in the undeveloped portion, much of it is overgrown with vegetation. Aside from the physical obstructions, the corridor is interrupted by 28 road crossings, all but one, are at-grade crossings. The Springvale Road crossing was an overhead crossing, where the former railroad bridge has been removed.
- Other structures within the corridor include several small girder bridges crossing the creeks, the Route 83 underpass, and most interesting - the Taylor's Trestle, a 260 long timber trestle crossing a steep topographic drainage channel.
- Two improvements within the historic corridor are underway, including the Red Lion Mile and Mill Creek Preserve trail in York Township. These segments of the rail bed are improved with aggregate for trail use.

4. A. Yost provided a brief summary of the proposed planning participation process. Public participation will include:

- Study Committee
- Key Person Interviews
- Community Focus Group meetings
- Surveys
- Public Meetings

- Open House
5. A. Yost presented a PowerPoint overview of benefits of community trails. Information provided was based on the 2007 Users Survey and Economic Impact Analysis of The York County Heritage Rail Trail, as it is a well known local trail. The presentation included statistics on trail users, typical times of trail use, safety and security, economic impact. The survey can be viewed at www.yorkcountyparks.org.
 6. A. Toole led a workshop to gather public input. The audience was divided into three groups. Each group provided answers to three questions regarding the project. The questions were documented as summarized below, by group:

Question No. 1 – What are your concerns regarding the development of the greenway?

Group No. 1

- Duplication of other recreation facilities in the area.
- The use of eminent domain for recreation
- Conflicting users (trails/driveways/etc)
- Loss of parking area (Yoe Parts)
- Public funding
- Privacy rights
- Safety at road crossings.

Group No. 2

- Noise
- Livestock/property rights
- Trash
- Vandalism
- Physical development
- Loss of parking area (Yoe Parts)
- Costs
- Environmental impacts
- Safety at road crossings
- Amount of trail use with two trails in the county
- Privacy
- Patrols
- Inappropriate after hour use
- Flooding
- Hunting/safety

Group No. 3

- Ability to secure easements from the property owners
- Do not want trail right behind my house (house is sandwiched between road and rail corridor)
- Keep my rights and ability to say what is placed on my property
- Loss of parking area for Yoe Parts
- Ability to work with landowners
- Do not want people walking thru my property

- Vandalism
- Safety at road crossings
- Congestion and traffic at road crossing in Yoe.

Question No. 2 – What are the opportunities for the greenway?

Group No. 1

- Continuous trail.
- Local recreation
- Commuting
- Economic benefits
- Safe passage for children
- A linear park
- A sense of community
- Natural beauty
- Health benefits

Group No. 2

- Scenic
- Economic potential (tourism/business)
- Safe connections to parks
- Convenient opportunity to exercise
- Historic, educational, interpretative
- Clean up certain areas.

Group No. 3

- Connections
- Safe bike riding
- Safe passage for children
- Economic opportunities
- Historic preservation

Question No. 3 – If you could get one thing out of this feasibility study, what would it be?

Group No. 1

- Accurate information
- Alternative “work arounds”.
- Phasing opportunities
- Community cooperation
- Land rights
- Spend taxpayer money wisely

Group No. 2

- A bike route
- Have nothing built
- Have people see the idea is ridiculous

- Have open minded property owners
- Define “Can it be built?” and “Is it worth building?”
- Weight the positive and negative economic impact
- Define how to offset the negative impact.

Group No. 3

- What are the effects on property values specific to York County?
- Green space preservation
- A recreation outlet
- How will the trail impact my property?
- Improve non-motorized recreation opportunity
- ADA access and accommodations
- No rail trail (3)
- Safe passage

7. Additional meeting discussions included:

- Ownership was questioned. The legal feasibility completed to date has determined that the railroad right-of-way has been formally abandoned by the railroad company and land of the right-of-way has reverted to the underlying land owners. The underlying land owners do in fact own the portion of the rail corridor adjoining their property.
- A participant suggested that future presentations include supporting statistical data regarding the Heritage Rail Trail County Park 2007 User Survey and Economic Impact Analysis be included to assist the public in making an informed decision.
- The York Heritage Rail Trail has an Ambassadors Program which uses volunteers to patrol and help maintain the trail. The program has been very successful providing a friendly presence along the trail. In 2007 875 volunteer hours were logged as part of this program.
- A. Yost presented the findings of a 2008 study completed in rural Ohio called “The Impact of the Little Miami Scenic Trail on Single Family Residential Property Values”. The study found that the trail positively impacts single family residential values with sale prices increasing by \$7.05 for every foot closer a property is to the trail.
- Participants provided a mix of opinions about the potential trail, ranging from opposition to supporters.

8. A. Yost thanked everyone for their input and attendance and concluded the meeting and outlined the next steps in the project. The next steps will be for the consultant team to continue gathering public input through key person interviews, working with the designated study committee, holding focus group meetings in each of the seven municipalities, conducting an open house and reaching out to individual property owners along the corridor.