

Proposal for TIP Amendment for Helderberg Hudson Rail Trail – PIN 1757.32

July 11, 2012

Background

The preliminary design of the Helderberg Hudson Rail Trail revealed numerous unanticipated conditions that have greatly impacted the cost of a shared use path. Examples of these conditions include collapsing culverts the presence of a fiber optic line that will be impacted by construction, and more than anticipated deterioration of bridges and other infrastructure.

While Albany County actively sought additional funding, the project was temporarily stalled. Albany County proceeded to negotiate with the Town of Bethlehem, seeking the assistance of a not-for-profit advocacy organization, the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy (MHLC) and its Friends of the Rail Trail (FORT) Committee, to open a 1.9 mile section of the old rail line from Veteran's Memorial park on Delaware Avenue to Fireman's Park in Slingerlands for pedestrian use. The Town and Conservancy made modest improvements by removing hazards, clearing trees and brush, correcting drainage and improving the surface, and the section was opened on National Trails Day on June 4, 2011. The trail has been a huge success and the Conservancy and Town continue to maintain and manage the trail. The Conservancy has instituted a Trail Ambassador program and is actively organizing community events for the 2012 season.

The success of the private/public partnership between Albany County, the Town of Bethlehem and the MHLC has been evident since its opening last year. Residents and businesses have rallied around the trail through its volunteer Ambassador Program as well as through the many events that the MHLC has held on the existing section of trail. In late June of this year, the MHLC welcomed over 300 residents for its first family event.

In June 2012, Albany County signed an agreement with the MHLC, the Town of New Scotland and the Village of Voorheesville to open a 2.6 mile section at the westerly end of rail line at Upper Font Grove Rd to Voorheesville Avenue using the same collaborative model as in the Town of Bethlehem. The County Executive has now pledged his support for opening the remaining sections of trail.

Albany County along with other agencies and organizations has made significant investments in the rail trail. These include funding from the Environmental Trust Fund (\$350,000) and Scenic Hudson (\$350,000) for acquisition of the rail line, and CMAQ and County funds (\$500,000 estimated) for structure inspections, environmental screenings, and preliminary and final design of the trail.

Many private organizations have contributed and invested in improvements to the trail and the goal of Albany County is to eventually open the trail in its entirety for use as a shared use path that can easily and safely utilize the old rail corridor. Grants for improvements for the trail include Mohawk Hudson Road Runners Club (\$2,000 for surface improvements), Hudson River Valley Greenway System (\$20,000 for signs, amenities and communication plan), and Voorheesville Community & School Foundation (\$10,000 for bridge improvements).

Currently, the Conservancy is using a significant portion of these donations and grants to refurbish the Vly Creek Bridge and the Bridge that spans Route 155 in the Town of New Scotland. These bridges have been excluded from the prioritization and cost of construction as the County, the Conservancy and the municipalities of New Scotland and Voorheesville anticipate the opening of the western portion of the trail to occur in the fall of 2012.

The County is currently in the process of applying for funding through the New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA process) under the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. The Helderberg Hudson Rail Trail offers a unique opportunity to walk or bike from the western portion of Albany County to the Port of Albany where it can link with the Erastus Corning Riverfront Preserve and Bikeway.

Where applicable, the County has also decided to pursue grant funding under the CFA for porous paving which will ease erosion, especially in sections of the trail close to Albany as there are steep slopes that would be susceptible to erosion. This funding that would be an environmentally friendly alternative to the trail surface and would help with run off issues on certain sections of the trail.

In summary, this trail is an excellent example of collaboration where communities, local governments and private organizations are working together to find creative ways to move forward with a project that had been previously stalled due to funding constraints. The rail trail is an important amenity, not only to Albany County, but to the entire Capital District Region because of its potential ability to connect existing trails. Usage of the Rail Trail promotes a healthy lifestyle by providing opportunities for physical activity to improve fitness and mental health thus improving everyone's quality of life. The Helderberg Hudson Rail Trail will help stimulate economic development by attracting businesses, families and individuals that prefer to work and live in a clean, connected environment. The trail will also promote livable communities providing safe, non-motorized travel throughout the community while promoting a green space initiative. Lastly, the trail will provide an alternative mode of environmentally friendly transportation into Albany that will cut down on congestion and carbon emissions lessening our carbon footprint.

TIP Amendment Request Format

Funding Template

1. TIP # A464 (PIN 1757.32): Helderburg Hudson Rail Trail

<u>TIP Project</u>	<u>Current TIP Data</u>				<u>Proposed TIP Data</u>			
	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Year</u>
A464: Partial	\$ 0.176	CMAQ	D	08-10	\$0.176	CMAQ	D	08-10
Project Descrip-	0.266	CMAQ	P	08-10	0.266	CMAQ	P	08-10
tion	0.018	CMAQ	I	08-10	0.018	CMAQ	I	08-10
	2.500	CMAQ	C	12-13	2.478	CMAQ	C	12-13
	XX-XX	-	CI	-	0.250	CMAQ	CI	12-13
	XX-XX	-	D	-	0.340	CMAQ	D	11-12
	XX-XX	-	I	-	0.050	CMAQ	I	11-12

Construction funding for this project includes inspection (supervision):

X yes no NA (please check one).

Purpose and Goals of the TIP Amendment

The purpose of the TIP amendment is to refine the scope of project and increase the estimated project cost so that the goals of the project can be completed in a cost effective manner.

The overall goals of the TIP Amendment are to 1) develop the trail in a manner that will result in the greatest cost-effective transportation value, and 2) preserve the infrastructure and overall continuity of the trail along the old D&H corridor so that the County, Towns and local municipalities can continuously upgrade the trail facility as resources and funding becomes available

Approach

The approach to refining the scope of the project was to define criteria for prioritizing the major items of work identified in the Final Project Design Report so that a final scope of work and project cost that would achieve the goals could be identified for the amended TIP.

The criteria for the assessment of the items of work are:

1. Reduction of potential risk – Items of work that reduce or eliminate risk of personal injury or property loss to the public as a result of failing infrastructure or to future users of the trail
2. Continuity of corridor – Items of work that are either on the old rail line or on parallel roadways that would assure trail continuity for all users
3. Preservation of Infrastructure – Items of work that would substantially decrease the rate of deterioration or risk of failure of infrastructure.
4. Increase transportation opportunities – Items of work that would result in value as a transportation facility.

Prioritization and Costs of Construction Items

The following table represents the prioritized list of major work items:

Priority	Work Item	Objective	Cost (\$K)	Accumulated Cost	Comment
1	Rehabilitate Delaware Avenue Bridge	Reduction of potential risk	290 ¹		Loose concrete will become an ongoing safety and maintenance problem and represents a risk to travelling public beneath bridge

¹ The complete cost of rehabilitating this bridge is \$1.294 million. Although the condition of the steel beneath the concrete encasement is unknown, the future risk of spalling concrete may be eliminated by not painting the bridge. The cost of rehabilitation of the bridge does not include lead containment and painting.

2	Rehabilitate Normanskill Bridge	Continuity of Corridor Reduction of potential risk Preservation of Infrastructure	285	575	No alternative route around the Normanskill Presently a risk in its present condition with gaping holes in the deck East abutment undermined and needs to be repaired
3	Rehabilitate culverts between Rockefeller Road and Rt. 32	Reduction of potential risk? Preservation of Infrastructure?	94	669	Some culverts have collapsed. Others could be dropped from the project and addressed as maintenance if necessary.
4	Construct shared use trail (paved) between Delaware Avenue and Port of Albany	Increase in transportation opportunities Reduction of potential risk	1,679 ²	2,348	This work provides the greatest transportation value ³ Remote nature of this section encourages illegal use – improvements will increase monitoring
5	On-Road alternative to New Scotland Avenue Bridge	Continuity of corridor	130 ⁴	2,478	This work would provide a 1,250 feet of off-road path around the New Scotland Avenue Bridge and a major encroachment, the old rail station that is privately owned ⁵
6	Partial rehabilitation of Elsmere Avenue	Reduction of potential risk	202	2,680	Prone to impact from substandard vertical clearance

² This cost is based on a simple l.f. estimate of \$100/l.f. based on dividing the total trail costs by the length of the trail

³ This work will provide the greatest transportation value as there is no alternative route or parallel road within the rail corridor that could provide continuity or serve all non-motorized users. The westerly limit could be changed to Elsmere Avenue if cost dictates as Delaware Avenue could serve as an alternative route between Delaware Avenue crossing and Elsmere Avenue. This section also connects regional and local destinations such as the Delaware Plaza, the Delmar CBD, Downtown Albany and the Hudson Mohawk Greenway.

⁴ Cost of the off-road path is based on \$75/l.f., \$25K for a culvert and \$10K for incidentals.

⁵ The proposed alternative would leave the trail before the bridge onto adjacent Mullens Road, then on the north side of New Scotland Road for a distance of approximately 550 feet to the intersection with Surrey Mall, then across New Scotland Avenue to Fireman's Park, then along the south side of the park to a proposed crossing of an intermittent stream onto the trail. The section of trail along New Scotland Avenue would cross a driveway providing access to two residences and would be separated from the roadway by guiderail. A marked crosswalk and pedestrian refuge island is possible at Surrey Road. The crossing of the intermittent stream would provide valuable access to the adjacent Fireman's Park.

	Bridge	Preservation of infrastructure			Leaking deck accelerating deterioration No lead containment or painting
7	Partial rehabilitation of Pearl Street Bridge	Preservation of infrastructure	159	2,839	Deck improvements only Eliminate painting and raising of bridge ⁶

Estimate of Design and Construction Inspection (thousands)

Preliminary Design and Advanced Detail Plans	\$550
Additional alternative, PS&E, and bid	250
Additional Survey	50
Construction Inspection	250
TOTAL- \$1,100	

Proposed Scope Change – Shared Use Path from Delaware Avenue to Pearl Street with alternative route around New Scotland Avenue (Items 1 -5)

Work Items 1 thru 5 - Construction	\$2,478
Design and Construction Inspection	1,100
TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$3,578	

Proposed TIP Amendment	\$ 618
County match of Total Project Cost	\$ 716

1.

⁶ The vertical elevation is only 6” less than the desirable height and raising the bridge will not be cost effective.