



ASHBURNHAM RAIL TRAIL: PROJECT OVERVIEW & PRELIMINARY DESIGN

Public Information Meeting

November 28, 2007 – Overlook Middle School Library

Eric Smith, AICP - Ashburnham Town Planner
Sallie Thoma - Chairman, Rail Trail Committee
Paula Gorrell - Rail Trail Committee
Bernadette Hines - Rail Trail Committee
Chris McNabb - Rail Trail Committee
Art Pinsoneault - Rail Trail Committee
Sherisa Sterling - Rail Trail Committee
John Hendrickson, FST Project Manager
Jen Shemowat, FST Project Engineer
Marshall Dennis, Wetlands & Wildlife, Inc.

What is the Ashburnham Rail Trail?

The Ashburnham Rail Trail is a proposed shared-use path (rail trail or multi-use trail) along the former Fitchburg Railroad corridor. Phase 1 of the rail trail follows a 1.3-mile section of Town-owned corridor from Turnpike Road north to Willard Road. As envisioned, the Ashburnham Rail Trail would eventually extend north to the Ashburnham Village Center, south to South Ashburnham and provide a connection to Briggs Elementary School. Ultimately, the Rail Trail plans call for a connection to the North Central Pathway in Winchendon via the former Cheshire Branch of the Fitchburg Railroad.

What is the goal of this meeting?

The chief purpose of this meeting is to solicit input from residents on the proposed rail trail and to present the preliminary design plans. The ideas, comments and concerns raised by residents will help guide the next phase of project development.

What type of information was collected as part of the preliminary design phase?

The preliminary design phase included the preparation of a complete topographic survey, including delineation of environmental resources, as well as the development of preliminary alignment plans, profiles and typical cross sections along the 1.3-mile corridor. The preliminary design is the first step in the project design process and results in the submission of 25% Design plans to the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway). The Town is currently awaiting comments from MassHighway on the preliminary design plans.

Also, as part of this project, Wetlands & Wildlife, Inc. prepared a Wetland Resources Delineation Memorandum and filed an Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) with the Ashburnham Conservation Commission which was subsequently approved on October 23, 2007.

How was the preliminary design phase funded?

The funds for the preliminary design phase were approved at the January 2006 Special Town Meeting.

Where I can I send my comments in follow-up to this meeting?

Comments can be emailed to esmith@ashburnham-ma.gov or mailed to:

Ashburnham Rail Trail Committee
Eric R. Smith, AICP, Ashburnham Town Planner
Town Hall, 15 Oakmont Drive
Ashburnham, MA 01430

Please include your full name and mailing address with correspondence.