

**MERRYMEETING TRAIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2010  
TOPSHAM TOWN OFFICE**

**Present:**

Amanda Bunker, Wright-Pierce  
Andy Hendrickson, Kennebec River Rail Trail Board  
Bert Singer, Bowdoinham resident  
Bob Bruce, Merrymeeting Wheelers  
Burnham Martin, National Park Service  
Greg Bakos, VHB  
Jason Bird, Midcoast Council of Governments  
Jon Edgerton, Wright-Pierce  
Lynne Sanford, Bowdoinham resident  
Nicole Briand, Bowdoinham Planner  
Rich Rothe, Hallowell resident  
Rod Melanson, Topsham  
Tim Doyle, Topsham resident  
Tom Reeves, Gardiner resident  
Victor Langelo, Topsham resident

**Review of Alternate Routes.** Greg Bakos presented the results of his study of alternate routes.

**Overview.** The reason for studying alternates is that portions of the rail corridor have severe environmental constraints and/or would be very costly. If all alternatives are built, average trail costs would decline from \$2 million/mile to \$1 million/mile. The trail would be along the rail within villages, but many sections outside villages would be away from the rail.

**Cathance Road/Fisher Road/Route 125, Topsham and Bowdoinham.** This would be a 10-foot shared use, paved path, preferably separated from the road by vegetation or guardrails (when close to the road). Length - 4.9 miles; cost - \$2.5 million for a savings of \$4.3 over the rail with trail. It would avoid a number of challenging areas including the rail crossing of the Cathance. There would be a number of property impacts; it's moderately hilly, and it would add ½ mile to the trail length. There are several constrained areas where the trail would have to go close to the road, and in Bowdoinham Village there's not enough room for a shared use path.

**Comments:**

- There is a trail on the power line which could be used, but there is no cover and people might be exposed to herbicides; a power line trail might be a poor quality trail; CMP doesn't want trails on its power lines;
- A shared use path can be on one side of the road; paved shoulders would have to be on both;
- The path may have to be narrow and close to the road where homes are near the road;
- There may be a right-of-way from Fisher Road to the rail;
- In Bowdoinham Village, bikes could use the road and pedestrians could use the new sidewalks.

**Browns Point Road/Pork Point Road.** Length- 5.3 miles. This could be a shared use, paved path parallel to the roads or an on-road bike route. Cost: \$4.1 million for a \$2.8 million savings. It would avoid some severely constrained areas. There would be property impacts, and running the path through the constrained

causeway and bridges north of the village would be difficult and costly.

Comments:

- Serious issue with houses and steep along 24;
- Might be able to use a boardwalk in back of the houses;
- West of Route 24 there are a lot more hills;
- A trail/boardwalk east of the rail might make more sense

**Richmond Village to Riverside Road Shared Use Path – east side of 24.** This would be a 10-foot shared use, paved path, probably along the east side of Route 24. Length - 4.4 miles; cost - \$2 million, for a savings of over \$10 million. It would avoid some areas with severe constraints. However, it would result in some property impacts and would be close to the road. OR

**Richmond Village to Riverside Road Shared Use Path – west of rail.** This would be a 10-foot shared use, paved path that would meander outside the railroad right-of-way where there are constraints.

Comments:

- Frontage costs are \$30,000/acre, backland costs are \$20,000/acre;
- The "west of rail" alternative has a lot more hills;
- A license instead of easement may appeal more to property owners

**Riverside Road in Gardiner.** The existing, gravel road would be used to avoid costly construction along the river. Length - 1 mile; cost - \$0.1 million, for a savings of \$1.5 million.

**Route 24 from Riverside to past Riverview Drive.** This would be a 10-foot shared use, paved path adjacent to Route 24. Length: 1 mil; cost - \$0.8 million with minor cost savings. It would provide good access to River View Community School and would avoid constrained areas. There would be property impacts. North of the school is very constrained; retaining walls would be required. OR

**Route 24 from Riverside Road onto Riverview Drive.** This would be a 10-foot shared use, paved path adjacent to Route 24 from Riverside Road, then onto Riverview where cyclists would use the road and the sidewalk would be improved for pedestrians. A short, shared use path would be built to River View School. Length- 1 mile; cost \$0.5 million, for a cost savings of \$0.5 million. This would be easier to construct than rail with trail and would avoid the constrained sections of Route 24 north of the school.

**Route 24 from Riverview Drive to Waterfront Park in Gardiner.** This would be a 10-foot shared use, paved path along the west side of Route 24. Length - 3.4 mile; cost \$3.5 million, for a cost savings of \$5.5 million. It would avoid areas with severe constraints but would not be as scenic as the rail with trail. The path will likely need to cross Route 24 twice.

## Schedule

It was generally agreed that VHB would provide a draft of the final report to the study group by January 7. There would be a study group meeting on January 10, a meeting of the full group in February, followed by a big presentation to the public in March.

**Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned about 1:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted  
Rich Rothe