



Meeting Notes

Attendees: Dan Driscoll
Trish Domigan
Anne Fiesinger
Val Stegemoen
Chris Hookie
Scott Brunner
Senator Richard Moore
Public
(See Sign-In Sheet)

Date/Time: 4/3/14 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Project No.: 11296

Place: Blackstone Town Hall

Re: Blackstone River Greenway – Public Status Meeting

Notes taken by: Scott Brunner

A meeting was held to discuss the latest status of the project with the public and to answer questions and concerns that the Public may have. The following was discussed:

1. Dan gave a welcome and introduction to those in attendance. Then he and Trish gave a summary presentation on the current Blackstone River Greenway Segment 1, Phase 1 Project. An overview of the other segments in Massachusetts and Rhode Island were also covered.
2. A member of the public asked what was planned for the existing granite block walls at Church Street. It was explained that the fill currently there will be removed and a box culvert will be placed connecting the Greenway to both sides of Church Street. The granite block walls will remain except where required to be removed in order to place the culvert. The culvert opening will be 14' wide by 14.5' tall. The outside dimensions will be 16' wide by 17' tall.
3. A resident on West Street in Millville asked about possible screening issues between the proposed greenway path and abutters' back yards. Dan discussed that the current design has planned for certain known areas. Dan welcomed the public to contact DCR with concerns and other possible locations where some kind of screening could be placed. DCR will work with abutters after the initial construction to add elements to demarcate where a greenway path user should be and should not be.
4. A member of the public asked what the clearance of the Main Street bridge would be. It was explained that the bridge clearance had changed as the design has progressed. The current proposed bridge clearance is 15-8".
5. A concern was voiced by a member of the public for the business/residences by the proposed Mendon Street park area. They were worried that the loss of the parking area would put the shop out of business. It was explained that a large portion of the existing parking area is encroaching onto DCR property (public land). It was mentioned that the business owner is aware of this. Another

- member of the public stated that by bringing the Greenway through that area, it should also bring more business instead of less.
6. A member of the public asked if there would be interpretive signage and/or graphics along the Greenway for areas like Church St. Dan explained the current elements of the design and how there will be elements like the gateway granite pillars which will have a graphic of a steam locomotive to commemorate the railroad corridor. It was also explained that there will only be some locations for interpretive signage for now and that there are placeholders for additional signs and graphics to be placed along the corridor over time.
 7. Another member of the public mentioned that Main Street is not well maintained. It was explained that Main Street is not under the jurisdiction of DCR, but that the Greenway would be a step in the right direction in terms of cleaning up some of the surrounding area.
 8. A public member brought up a Northeastern Capstone project and study that had recently been done for Main Street. They asked if that was coordinated with the Greenway work. Trish explained that she did hear about the study and how it looked into bicycle accommodations, cycle tracks etc. However, it was described that the Greenway project and the Northeastern study are not related to one another.
 9. State Representative Kevin Kuros asked why the proposed parking lots were using paved asphalt instead of pervious pavement. Dan stated that for parking lots as small as these, the cost of building and maintaining pervious pavement far exceeded the environmental benefit. It was discussed that even with asphalt pavement the project met and exceeded all environmental requirements. Asphalt pavement will also aid in snow removal.
 10. A concern for equestrian use along the Greenway was discussed. Equestrian advocacy groups want the bridges to be equestrian friendly. DCR is concerned because the bridges do not meet Federal standards for bridge width (19 feet) when accommodating horses. There were multiple concerns that DCR has on the issue including cleanup of horse defecation, the safety of families and children if a horse gets frightened while on the bridge, the sub-standard bridge width for equestrian users, and how to make sure that people dismount and walk their horses across each and every bridge. It was discussed that the bridges could not be made wider to accommodate the horses because it would have required superstructure repair and replacement that would cost additional millions of dollars. Dan discussed that he and other representatives from DCR have a private meeting with the equestrian group to come to a compromise. Currently the Greenway will accommodate horses from Central Street in Millville to the end of the trail near 146A in Uxbridge.
 11. Senator Moore asked why the project is late compared to the original date promised. Dan explained the complexities of the project design and the project scheduling. As the design progressed it was found that the project had to be broken into parts (Maintenance of bridges, Greenway & Triad and Church & Main St). For instance, the Greenway & Triad contract cannot start until the maintenance of the bridges is complete. This is so there are not two contractors working in the same location at the same time. If this were to happen, there would be liability issues and questions on which contractor would be responsible for the work in those areas.
 12. A member of the public asked why so many of the existing bridges had been removed in the past. Although there was no exact answer on why particular bridges were removed, it was discussed how some of them may have been removed due to low clearances and vehicle collisions with the bridges. Compared to most other bridges, railroad bridges usually have lower clearances because it is more difficult to get higher elevations due to grade restraints. Combine that with the fact that today's trucks are much larger than the trucks that the bridges were originally designed for.
 13. A public member asked when the design of Phase 2 was scheduled to start and if the great cost of Phase 1 would impact what could be done on Phase 2. Dan pointed out that the design will begin this

summer of 2014. He also mentioned that the budget for Phase 2 will be tight and it will affect the analysis of alternatives to reach the Rhode Island border.

14. A copy of the viaduct study was requested by a public member and their contact information was obtained. A copy will be sent to them as they requested.
15. A member of the public voiced their concern over the amount of trash that is dumped along the corridor. They wanted to know how that was going to be stopped and enforced. It was discussed that once the Greenway is constructed, the area cleaned up and people start using the corridor, the problem of illegal dumping should decline or go away completely. People are much less likely to commit a crime like this when the area is more heavily used and does not look run down. Anyone caught would be fined and held responsible. Also, vehicle access will be very difficult due to landscaping and other site features. Emergency vehicles like ambulances will know and be allowed to go over portions of the landscaped areas in order to gain access. It is very unlikely that someone wanting to illegally dump materials would do the same, simply because it is not easy. Furthermore, there are cleanup groups that graciously assist in the cleanup of corridors like the Blackstone River Greenway.