

Mohawk Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail

Phase I: Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design

April 2009



Summary:

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) has received a grant from the National Scenic Byway Grant Program to initiate work on a potential bicycle / pedestrian trail that will travel between the City of North Adams and the Town of Williamstown. This project is being considered Phase I of a multi-phased, multi-year project to develop the trail. The proposed trail will hopefully one day serve as a northern extension of the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail.

This Phase I project will consist of three main components: 1) conduct a detailed feasibility study to determine the preferred and alternative routes, 2) open dialogs with landowners and abutters along the trail routes, and 3) develop preliminary designs and cost estimates for the routes we identify in the feasibility study. The BRPC, partnering with the Berkshire Bike Path Council and other community interests, will take the lead in conducting the feasibility study and meeting with the public. A consultant, experienced in designing, permitting and constructing bike/ped trails, will be hired to create the conceptual designs and cost estimates.

Timeline:

This Phase I project will be conducted through September 2009. The feasibility of the routes will depend on terrain, environmental constraints, ability to secure rights-of-way and, most importantly, local residents' preferences. The consultant is currently focusing on designs and cost estimates. It is expected that Phase II will focus on finalizing the route and the engineering designs. Phase III will involve construction of the bike/ped trail.

Funding:

This Phase I project is being primarily funded by federal highway funds through the National Scenic Byway Program. The funds awarded to the project are \$110,000, 80% of which is federal funds (\$88,000) and 20% of which is state funds (\$22,000). The Fund for Williamstown, a private foundation with a focus on the Williamstown community, has generously awarded \$3,000 to the project. In addition, the Town of Williamstown and the City of North Adams are each committing \$5,000 in matching funds to the project. Grant funds for future phases could come from a combination of sources, such as federal and state transportation funds, the DCR's Greenways and Trails Grant Program, the Self-Help Grant Program and local private grant sources.