

Mill River Greenway Feasibility Report



Mill River Greenway Committee of the Town of Williamsburg

June 22, 2013

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Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	5
2. Introduction	6
Narrative of the Committee's Work	6
Our Approach: The Concept of a Greenway.....	7
3. The Cultural and Historical Context of a Mill River Greenway	8
4 Water Resources and Ecological Assessment.....	10
Hydrology	10
Ecology.....	11
5. Points of Interest and Categorization of Values.....	13
1 Meekins Library, Williamsburg	14
2 Confluence of East and West branches of the Mill River.....	14
3 At the Country Corral.....	14
4 At the Williamsburg Pharmacy.....	14
5 At Kellogg Road	15
6 Across from the Veterinary Hospital.....	15
7 At the bridge abutment (opposite River View Bar and Grill).....	16
8 At the Brassworks.....	16
9 At the Haydenville Library	16
6. Community Forum Summary	17
7. Impact on Local Businesses	19
8. Legal Restrictions and Considerations	21
Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Map Considerations.....	21
Wetlands Protection Act.....	21
Public Trust Doctrine	22
Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program	22
Legal Liability	22
Insurance and Risk Management.....	23
9. Design and Funding Strategies	25
Informal Walking Trails Connecting the River to Businesses and Existing Walkways	25
'Riverway' Walk Within Route 9 Right-of-Way	25
Existing Sidewalk Extensions	25
Planning and Design Strategies	25
10. Funding / Financial Feasibility	29
Public Grant Sources.....	29
Federal Grants.....	29
State Grants	29
Designated Funds (Earmark).....	29
Private Funds	30
Foundation Grants.....	30
Local Business Support.....	30
11. Conclusions and Recommendations	31

12. Appendices	33
Appendix A: Community Forum comments.....	33
Appendix B: Map-Community Forum Dots Exercise Results	35
Appendix C: Map-Existing Sidewalks.....	37
Appendix D: Map-Williamsburg, Haydenville Orthographic	39
Appendix E: Map-Possible Greenway Routes	41
Appendix F: Support Letter-Florence Savings Bank.....	43
Appendix G: Support Letter-Williamsburg General Store	44
Appendix H: Support Letter-Williamsburg PTO	45
Appendix I: Support Letter-Williamsburg School Committee.....	46
Appendix J: Letter to Local Business Owners	47
Appendix K: Letter to Abutters	48

1. Executive Summary

For the past year, the Mill River Greenway Committee has been focused on putting together a feasibility report to the Select Board regarding the possibility of a multipurpose greenway along the Mill River, linking the villages of Haydenville and Williamsburg. This is not meant to be an exhaustive, in-depth study, but rather a broad overview of the various topics that we need to keep in mind as we go forward with actual planning and implementation.

This report is an affirmation of the Open Space Plan's objective to pursue ways to link the Town Centers as well as to utilize the extraordinary presence of the historically and ecologically rich Mill River corridor that runs through the hilltowns on its way to the Connecticut River.

Our study established conceptual path corridors and documented public comments, which serve as a basis for the next physical planning phase. The report identifies a number of strategic phases for competitive grant applications in order to combine our local objectives with ongoing regional planning processes to achieve the economy of scale needed to obtain economic feasibility.

The Mill River Greenway Committee concludes that such a Greenway within the Mill River Corridor is feasible, and would be of great benefit to our Town and the surrounding communities. We have refined the goal, identified community support, and affirmed the physical, ecological, technical, and economic feasibility of implementing alternative transportation linkages.

2. Introduction

Narrative of the Committee's Work

The Williamsburg Board of Selectmen established the Mill River Greenway Committee in June of 2012 to study the feasibility of a multi-use corridor connecting the two village centers of Haydenville and Williamsburg. Our work builds upon the Town's 2011 Open Space Plan and the work of the Village Centers Visioning Committee where the idea of a connection between the two village centers was a stated goal and a strong desire among those participating in their public forums.

The Committee was asked to investigate the general feasibility of creating a network of public paths and walkways within the existing Mill River corridor with the aim of connecting Haydenville and Williamsburg village centers, with an eye to promoting public safety, cultural history, economic vitality, ecological education and the natural beauty of the Mill River itself.

The Committee created a conceptual framework for decision making through the use of extensive mapping, a public forum, and analysis of physical, ecological, economic, cultural, legal and historical factors that contextualize the larger question; "Is a multi-purpose Greenway that links the two village centers feasible?"

To answer that question, we called upon a number of resources, including:

- Danielle McKahn, Land Use Planner from the Pioneer Valley Planning Council who had previously assisted in Williamsburg's Village Center Visioning process
<http://www.pvpc.org/>
- Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Sustainability for the City of Northampton
- Rachel Fletcher, Founding Director of the Housatonic RiverWalk in Great Barrington
<http://www.gbriverwalk.org/>
- Reid Bertone-Johnson, lecturer, Smith College Department of Landscape Studies/Center for the Environment, Ecological Design, and Sustainability (CEEDS)
<http://www.smith.edu/ceeds/>
- Mark Moore, Project Development Engineer from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, District 1 <http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/>
- The University of Massachusetts Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, via committee member Nick Dines, Professor Emeritus of Landscape Architecture, University of Massachusetts Amherst, and Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects (FASLA) <http://www.umass.edu/larp/>
- The invaluable knowledge and experience of many Williamsburg/Haydenville residents.

Our initial public outreach regarding a multipurpose greenway took two forms:

- We sent a letter to property owners and business owners along the Mill River corridor, describing the idea and asking for feedback (See Appendices J & K).
- We invited all town residents to a community forum, where we explained the need for a non-vehicular connection between the villages, outlined in general terms what we are

considering, and solicited feedback from attendees, using a map-centered exercise in order to identify specific places of interest and concern along possible routes (See Appendix B).

Our Approach: The Concept of a Greenway

From the outset, our group felt the concept of a greenway would best meet the Town's goal of connecting the two villages. Viewing this project through a greenway lens allows us to see the project holistically, taking into account social, economic, natural, cultural, and historical considerations beyond the stated need for a connecting pathway. Our focus quickly turned to the Mill River and its connection and centrality to the past and current transportation corridors of our area. We have a unique opportunity to re-imagine and enliven the river corridor, connecting our villages on a human scale, restoring the river's natural beauty, and honoring our history.

At their best, greenways are more than simply trails; they restore and conserve natural resources, while preserving cultural heritage and documenting unique local history. Clearly, the Mill River is the dominant natural feature that ties our communities together. Its rich – and tragic – history as an industrial engine of a young nation further establishes it as the cultural backbone of our area. While our charge was not to design a route, given the history, geography and existing transportation right of ways, our work focused largely on the feasibility of creating a greenway along the approximately 2.5 mile section of Rt. 9 that closely follows the path of the Mill River.

A greenway along this stretch would link our town centers in a way that brings residents together and provides access to the larger network of walkable and bikeable pathways that is blossoming in the Pioneer Valley and throughout the State. Williamsburg Town Meeting recently approved the acquisition of an easement that will enable a connection to the Northampton Bikeway from Haydenville (and ultimately, to this proposed stretch of greenway).

A greenway in Williamsburg would be supported and amplified by existing efforts such as the Mill River Greenway Initiative, an active local citizens' group working to coordinate efforts in all the towns within the Mill River watershed to care for and enhance access to the river corridor (millrivergreenway.org); and the Bay State Greenway, a statewide network of bikeable trails and shared roadways that currently passes through Williamsburg (<http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/GreenDOT/BikeTransportation/BayStateGreenway.aspx>).

A greenway connecting the two village centers will:

- strengthen our sense of community;
- provide a safe, walkable route to and from the new school, our libraries, and other cultural and municipal facilities;
- increase foot and bicycle traffic to local businesses;
- highlight and improve access to historic markers and sites;
- highlight and improve access to and stewardship of the river;
- provide new and safe options for outdoor activity, with connections to town woodland trails and the larger network of local rail trails, bikeways and greenways.

3. The Cultural and Historical Context of a Mill River Greenway

Because of its significant drop in elevation (900+ feet) over a short distance (about 5 miles) descending from Goshen, the Mill River in the Town of Williamsburg was harnessed for water power from the early years of its settlement, from 1751 when its lands were first parceled out, to its incorporation in 1771, and on into the early 1800s. The earliest sketched map of 1791 shows several mills, mostly saw, on both branches. At the time there was one grist mill, which opposed a saw mill on the opposite bank, located on the East Branch just above its junction with the West Branch, where today's East Main Street becomes Nash Hill Road, approximately the site of the Hiram G. Hill grist mill (built in 1881 during the reconstruction after the Mill River Disaster of 16 May 1874) that is now owned by the Williamsburg Historical Society and used as a museum primarily of farm implements and machines. The property in that area, including that on which both those 1791 mills sat and all the land between East Main Street and the West Branch of the river was assembled into a single unit by Ephraim Hill (Hiram G.'s grandfather) by 1813 – 1814, and remained in the Hill family until 1951. A canal once diverted water from the West Branch to the East Branch in order to provide more power to that pair of mills; its intake opening gate structure is still visible in the stone retaining wall of the river bank.

This favorable and reliable source of waterpower made the Mill River one of the cradles for small manufacturing during the Industrial Revolution in Western Massachusetts, and was crucial to the actual location of the two village centers. The original center of Williamsburg was at the top of Village Hill Road, so named because it led to the village, near its junction with today's Old Goshen Road, the original route to that town before Route 9 was laid out in the 1920s. As more mills were built near the confluence of the two branches of the river, the village moved down the hill to join them, with the church moving first in the 1830s, the town Hall being built there in 1840, and other business and civic buildings such as the Grange Hall being constructed subsequently, including a Methodist church, that is now the back portion of the Grange Hall, having been moved from its site (now the Veteran's Memorial Park) and turned 90 degrees to be attached. The village of Haydenville developed slightly later and acquired its name from the family that founded and operated the Hayden & Gere Company, located in buildings that were destroyed in the 1874 flood disaster on the site of the current Brassworks building, which is the rebuilt factory that made brass plumbing fixtures and was at one point in the late 1800s the largest manufacturer of such products in the US.

The area between the two villages was known as Skinnerville because it was, prior to the 1874 flood, the site of the Unquomonk Silk Company, owned by William Skinner, whose home, designed by famous Northampton architect William Fenno Pratt (also the designer of Northampton's City Hall), was located across from the factory. Because the flood waters so severely scoured the river bed and removed the land on the north side of it in that area, it would have been prohibitively expensive for him to rebuild the factory at that site: there simply was no river bank left on which to build it and in which to create channels to bring water to the turbines that would operate the machinery and then discharge it back into the river. Skinner accepted the offer by the City of Holyoke of a full block of land beside one of the canals for the factory and a full-block house lot on the hill and moved his business there, building a factory (now gone, destroyed by fire in the 1970s; its site is today the Holyoke Heritage State Park.) and having his house disassembled, moved, and reconstructed; it is today the Wistariahurst Museum, a major

addition having been built in the early 1900s, although the original front rooms are as they were when the house was in Skinnerville.

Other than the Grist Mill and the Brassworks, there are few buildings still standing that show their industrial past, but there are numerous remnants, primarily stone work such as building foundations, ends of dams and walls of sluiceway channels, and the aforementioned canal intake gate structure, which, cleared off and identified with signage, could tell much of that history within the two village centers, and signage on or next to many current buildings, such as the Masonic Hall in Haydenville, could tell of what was on the site prior to the disaster. Many of the factory structures were wooden and succumbed to fires; such is the case of the Bradford sawmill and woodworking business that stood where the Williamsburg Shoppes Pharmacy & Hardware building now sits. But photographs exist of the former buildings that could supplement and illustrate historical marker signage, and one building, albeit among the more recent ones, of the complex, still stands, currently housing the Hilltown Auto Sales and Elbow Room Coffee firms. Other buildings in both village centers that were once shops and stores still stand, some housing other businesses, others now converted to residences. There is an opportunity for interesting self-guided walking tours in the villages, using signage (perhaps developed jointly by the Historical Commission and the Historical Society), and/or guided or self guided tours developed and lead by knowledgeable individuals, at both ends of a Mill River Greenway that could draw visitors and tourists to the area.

In Skinnerville, where the Greenway itself would primarily be located, it is difficult to determine exactly where buildings stood prior to the 1874 flood because the location of the river bed is not exactly where it was in every location and the configuration of the land bordering it is also different now. Consequently, some of what was the village with tenement houses for factory workers reverted to farm fields; the Village Green business is a prime example of the economic re-purposing of the area from industrial to agricultural, an uncommon reversal of what is the usual trend. The best one can do is to make an educated guess using the 1873 Beers Insurance Company map as a point of reference and judging locations and distances in relation to the Skinnerville bridge, which was rebuilt essentially on the site of the one destroyed, and the four houses on the south bank of the river that survived the disaster, to determine where the Skinner factory and home once stood. Nonetheless, photographs and sketches exist for those buildings and signage could be developed to tell the ‘before and after’ story of that event which was, at the time, the worst flood disaster in the history of the nation (It was surpassed just 20 years later by the Johnstown, PA, flood – an area now designated a National Memorial). A few other homes in the area, generally those further back from the road, and the original end-of-the-line brick railroad station, just beyond which a turntable once stood to turn the locomotive around, survived the disaster as well. Signage could also identify these places of significance.

A Mill River Greenway thus has the potential to be a ‘destination trail,’ in the way the Norwottuck Rail Trail in Northampton-Hadley to Amherst is, for walkers interested in immersing themselves for an afternoon in a beautiful natural setting of two 19th century industrial villages and the river that powered their industries.

4 Water Resources and Ecological Assessment

The Mill River is the natural connective thread that helps to define Williamsburg. The river's waters powered industry that helped establish the mill economy that both benefited from, and was destroyed by, the river's power. From roughly the Williamsburg Library to Haydenville Library (the focus area), the river reveals the interwoven story of the history and ecology of the town and holds the possibilities to provide future educational, recreational and economic benefits for Williamsburg and other places in our region.

Hydrology

The Mill River is the primary river in the focus area. Unquomonk Brook and Joe Wright Brook are the major secondary streams that contribute to the flow of the river. According to the 2011 Open Space Plan:

Ninety-five percent of Williamsburg drains into the Mill River within the town borders. The Mill River rises in Goshen, Conway and Ashfield and has a drainage basin of 29.1 square miles above the point at which it flows out of Williamsburg. Of that area, 16.6 square miles lie in Williamsburg. These figures do not include the basin of Beaver Brook, the only substantial brook that flows out of Williamsburg before it joins the Mill River (p. 23).

In the 2.5 miles from Library to Library, the river drops about 25 feet, and exhibits a channel bottom with rocks and cobblestone typical of a river's middle reach, a change from the upland signature of the river, as narrow and incised with high banks to either side. Typically, in a middle reach, the banks are less steep, have less rocky material, and provide a greater access to people because of their gentle slope. The river channel in this stretch exhibits urbanization patterns, outflow pipes and walled channels, at either end of the focus areas, a historical necessity for flood control, and development of each village center and support of mill industries in town. Between these urbanized stretches, there is evidence of historic modification to the river for industrial purposes, but for the most part, the river has assumed a more "natural" look. Only one dam, at the Brassworks, remains in this stretch of the river.

In times of the fall recharge, and spring melt, the river reaches its highest levels (outside of flood events), and during the growing season maintains a low base flow. Flooding is rare as noted in the 2011 Open Space Plan:

The Water Resources Map for the Town of Williamsburg shows the 100-year and 500 year flood zones identified by FEMA flood maps. In Williamsburg, there are several floodplain areas, primarily along the Mill River. The 100-year flood zone is the area that will be covered by water as a result of a flood that has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year. Likewise, the 500-year flood zone has a 0.2 percent chance of occurring in any given year. The major floods recorded in Western Massachusetts during the 20th century have been the result of rainfall alone or rainfall combined with snowmelt. Williamsburg has experienced many flooding events over the last decade. Generally, these small floods have had minor impacts, temporarily impacting roads and residents' yards. Flooding in the 100-year floodplain particularly impacts the Town Center as the Mill River runs through it (p. 24).

With more powerful storms like Hurricanes Irene and Sandy, storm flows have the potential to cause flooding, degrade water quality with thermal pollution and suspended solids, scour the river bottom and cause serious erosion of riverbanks. Erosion is already a problem along Valley View Road where the Highway department has armored the precipitous bank with large stone to prevent the further erosion of the bank and the possible compromising of the roadway. Significant erosion of the stream bank is also visible on the southern bank of the river about 100 feet from the dam at the Brassworks.

Ecology

Plant and Animal communities are the best indication of healthy ecological systems and subsequently, water quality. The stretch of the river between the Libraries exhibits extremes of disturbance and intact native plant communities. For the most part, outside of the channelized portions of the river and a stretch along route 9, there is extensive riparian (vegetated) area to mitigate thermal and sediment pollution from roads and rooftops. This riparian area plays an important role in maintaining consistent temperatures for aquatic and amphibian life, provides habitat for birds and mammals and helps to slow and reduce the volume of water in flood events for downstream towns and cities. Some of these areas, at the convergence of the East and West branches of the Mill River, and across from Kellogg road show a diverse range of ephemeral, herbaceous plant species as well as robust, well-established trees like white oak and sycamore. On a recent walk at the end of April 2013, rare native spring ephemerals, trillium and Dutchman's breeches, Solomon's seal and Solomon's plume were present along the riparian area of the river.

Invasive plants have colonized much of the riparian areas with the exception of the area near Kellogg Road, and the stretch across from The Village Green ice cream shop. Japanese knotweed, oriental bittersweet, barberry, honeysuckle and garlic mustard are among the most pervasive of these plant species that dominate the banks, reducing plant diversity and edging out native vegetation that supports the many mammal, bird and reptile species in the area. According to the 2011 Open Space Plan:

Lowland wildlife mammals are primarily beaver, muskrat, otter and mink. Lowland birds are primarily Canada geese, several species of ducks, osprey, woodcock, green and blue herons and kingfishers.

Williamsburg is home to many common reptiles and amphibian species, including painted, box and snapping turtles, garter and milk snakes, red-spotted newts, red-back salamanders, American toads, spring peepers, bullfrogs, green frogs, wood frogs, and gray tree frogs. In its network of wetlands, small ponds, streams and rivers Williamsburg hosts the usual assortment of frogs, toads, newts and salamanders, including one salamander listed with the Massachusetts Natural Heritage program as "species of special concern": the Jefferson Salamander and, as well as the Marbled Salamander, listed as "Threatened" in Massachusetts. Private efforts are being made to protect the places where these salamanders are known to breed.

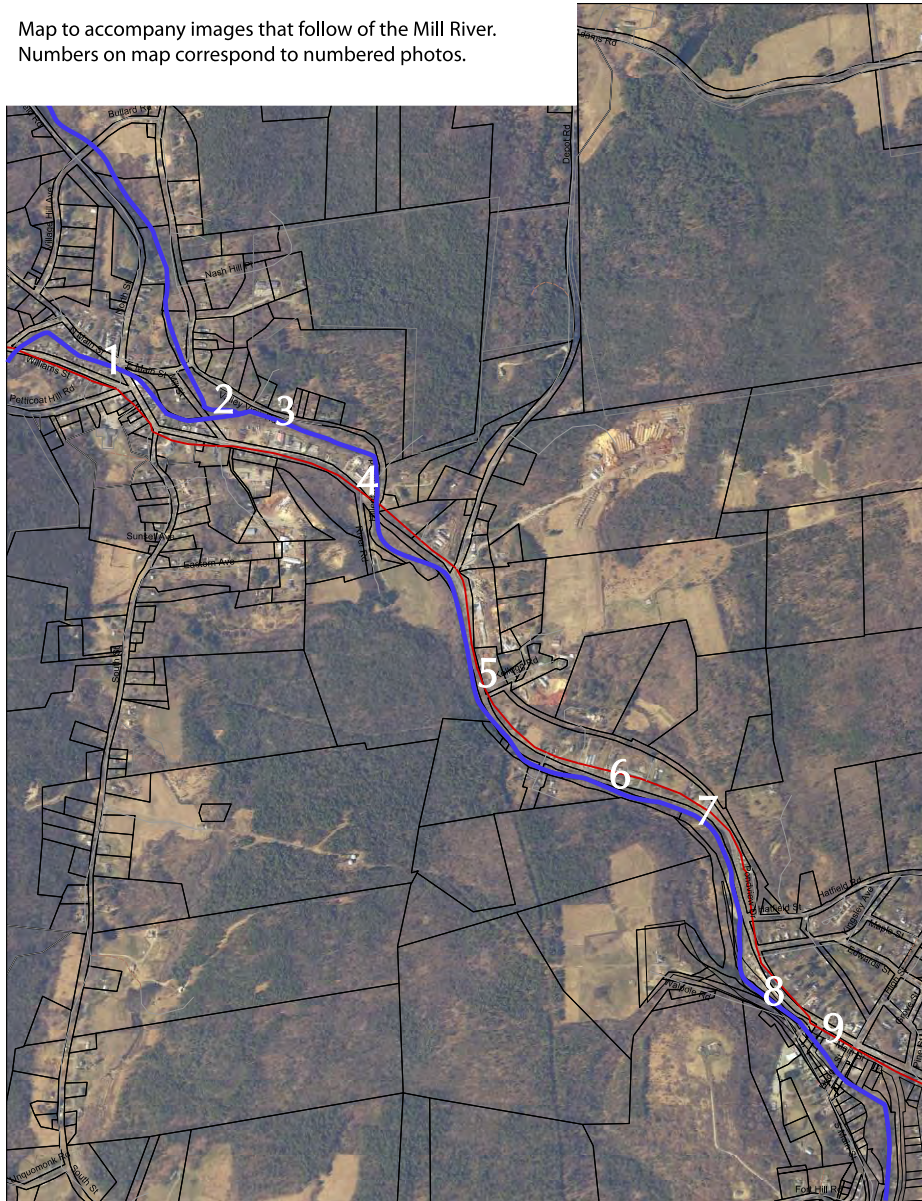
The presence of these animals indicates relatively healthy water quality.

People are a critical part of the hydrologic and ecological dynamic. Connecting people to the Mill River has the possibility to improve local river and stream ecological health and to provide a community amenity. Few businesses face the river, and traveling through Haydenville and Williamsburg town centers there is scant indication of the presence of the Mill River in business names, or educational signs. The change in perception of the river from something to be managed into a cultural and ecological amenity has the chance to create economic growth, a stronger sense of identity among the townspeople, and a more resilient and healthy ecosystem.

5. Points of Interest and Categorization of Values

The following photos are keyed to the inset map and illustrate the cultural, historical, ecological, interactive, commercial, educational, and aesthetic aspects of sites along the river. Written above each set of photos are the values readily apparent at each site.

Map to accompany images that follow of the Mill River.
Numbers on map correspond to numbered photos.



0 400 800 1,600 2,400 3,200 Feet

1 Meekins Library, Williamsburg

Aesthetic, cultural, historical, educational.



2 Confluence of East and West branches of the Mill River

Cultural, historical, ecological, interactive, educational, aesthetic.



3 At the Country Corral

Ecological, interactive, education, commercial.



4 At the Williamsburg Pharmacy

Interactive, aesthetic, commercial.



5 At Kellogg Road

Ecological, interactive, education, aesthetic.



6 Across from the Veterinary Hospital

Ecological, interaction, aesthetic.



7 At the bridge abutment (opposite River View Bar and Grill)

Cultural, historical, ecological.



8 At the Brassworks

Cultural, historical, ecological, interactive, educational, aesthetic, commercial.



9 At the Haydenville Library

Cultural, historical, educational, aesthetic.



6. Community Forum Summary

As part of our outreach process, the Mill River Greenway Committee hosted a community forum on May 19, 2013. As part of that forum, attended by approximately 70 people, we conducted an exercise to elicit feedback from Williamsburg and Haydenville residents. Attendees could, by using numbered stickers on a large map of the Mill River Corridor, indicate spots of particular interest and or concern. Attendees could also express general interest in and/or concern about the whole idea of a multi-use path between the villages. [See Appendix A]

While no outright opposition was expressed to us at the forum, there were some reasonable concerns about the cost and possible routes:

- "I have no idea where \$ come from."
- "This is my lawn. I live on a dead end road for privacy. I really don't want people on my lawn"
- "I like idea of a greenway but we are concerned that people will be coming right through our already small yard that is in the flood plain"
- "No taking of private property"
- "No bike path on old railroad bed"

It is not surprising that our two biggest challenges moving forward will be finding funding and designing a route that minimizes negative impacts on abutters.

That said, there were many supportive and enthusiastic comments.

- "My house is here and I would like it to go as close as possible"
- "Helen James School-we live in Haydenville. It would be wonderful for our kids to be able to safely bike to school"
- "I am very supportive of a multi-use corridor between the village centers; would like it to showcase & protect the river & encourage businesses located along it to do the same"
- "I think this is a great project"
- "I love the idea of a greenway! I want my son to be able to bike from our home in Haydenville to the library, country store in Williamsburg."
- "I love the idea of connecting the villages. Love to have access to the river."

As we had hoped, many of the comments will inform our efforts going forward, alerting us to favorite spots along the corridor as well as possible hazards and pinch-points.

- "To be able to safely look & stop at the river would be great. Bird watching, walking"
- "Village Green - who doesn't love to walk & get ice cream?!"
- "One of my favorite places is where the West Branch meets the East Branch"
- "Enjoy the river spot just north of Brassworks-great place for rock collecting, etc."
- "My concern at crossings is a safety issue. Will there be overpass or tunnels?"

- "Our only concern is for the safety of the bikers as many & all types of vehicles go in & out of our property all day."

Many people wrote in favor of having the path on the opposite side of the river from Route 9, if that can be done.

- "Keeping the path away from Rt 9 will provide a safer more relaxed experience"
- "I like the idea of the greenway on the southwest side of the river."
- "The further away from Rt 9 the better"

Finally, there were several comments from people hoping for at least an indirect link between a Mill River Greenway and the Northampton rail trail system. Care will need to be taken to make sure that walking and bicycling between the two is safe and controlled.

7. Impact on Local Businesses

In addition to its function as a transportation corridor, the proposed Mill River Greenway would also impact the members of the Williamsburg business community. In March of this year, the Greenway Committee sent a letter to the owners of all the businesses and commercial properties along the Mill River corridor in the vicinity of the proposed greenway, informing them of the existence of the committee and the greenway proposal, and asking for their input and participation as we did our work creating this feasibility report.

We have identified different types of impacts on various businesses along the proposed corridor:

Businesses that benefit directly from increased pedestrian traffic, such as retail stores, markets, restaurants, snack bars, ice cream stands, and bike shops. The impact on these businesses would be positive.

Businesses that would indirectly benefit from the presence of the greenway, through increased visibility, marketing opportunities, location, and a generally more vibrant business atmosphere in the community.

Commercial properties that are vacant or under-utilized that might find new life due to the presence of the greenway. We see a number of such properties along the proposed greenway corridor.

Businesses that could adapt in beneficial ways to the presence of such a greenway, either by offering new products or services or by “turning” their business to embrace a new set of customers brought to them by the greenway.

Businesses that would feel no impact from the presence of a greenway.

Businesses who might feel a negative impact due to concerns about security, vandalism, or loss of space.

Many of the potentially affected business owners have given the committee positive feedback, either formally or through casual contacts as committee members encountered them in their business or around town. Of the business owners who have responded to the committee’s outreach efforts, none have expressed opposition to the proposal.

Additionally, an increase in the level of pedestrian traffic in town would benefit the Williamsburg Farmers Market and ongoing efforts to create community vitality that supports local business.

It is interesting to note that several long-standing business owners expressed their support for the project, but wished for that support to remain private due to concerns related to the controversial nature of the bike path proposal several years ago.

In neighboring communities, businesses have either been created for, or successfully adapted to, nearby greenways. In many such communities, business owners also report positively on the benefits of being located in a socially active and economically vibrant town, brought about in part by the creation of a greenway. There are also examples of businesses that do not benefit directly from the greenway, but have exploited their location adjacent to it by placing benches, picnic tables, murals, and business signage for greenway users as ways of creating “feel-good” public image and marketing opportunities. There are also instances where security and vandalism concerns have been successfully addressed with the use of fencing, landscaping and signage.

In a broader view, it is now generally accepted wisdom that startup or relocating businesses are attracted to towns with amenities such as pedestrian corridors and greenways. A Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress reported that a town’s quality of life is more important than purely business-related factors when it comes to attracting new businesses.

There are many studies and reports available on the topic of the economic development impacts of trails and greenways on communities. A particularly useful website we found is:
<http://www.americantrails.org/resources/economics/index.html>

In summary, we find the Williamsburg business community to be generally quite supportive of the greenway proposal. We hear and understand that businesses have specific concerns that need to be addressed during the design and planning stages of such a project. The experiences of other towns support the notion that many businesses in Williamsburg would benefit from the presence of a greenway, and if it would help to attract new business to town, then we would all benefit from an expanded commercial tax base and vibrant town centers.

8. Legal Restrictions and Considerations

The Mill River Greenway focus area includes areas within residential, commercial, state and federal oversight. Legal restrictions and constraints not pertaining to zoning include environmental regulations, property ownership rights, liability, public safety and rights of way for highways.

Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Map Considerations

The concept of a multi-purpose pathway along the Mill River envisioned by the Williamsburg Mill River Greenway Committee is consistent with the current Williamsburg Zoning Bylaw. The pathway is in harmony with the purposes of the Zoning Bylaw to preserve the rural character of the Town and protect sensitive environmental areas for future generations.

There are no apparent conflicts with the current zoning districts, restriction configurations, or permitted uses. Possible application of the zoning regulations would apply to the provisions of Section 9 of the Bylaw pertaining to Projections, Off-Street Parking, and Signs. If the Select Board determines that the multi-purpose pathway concept warrants further study and action, the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals are encouraged to review all applicable Town regulations and the Zoning Map for potential impacts and changes which could enhance the likelihood of successfully implementing a final plan.

Wetlands Protection Act

The Mill River is at the heart of the focus area and its flood plain and valley shape the accessible areas for possible routes. The river also serves as an attraction for people, and as indicated in the historic and ecological sections, provides cultural and scenic activities. Most of the businesses in Haydenville and Williamsburg are on Route 9 and close to the river as well. Within the riverfront resource area of 200' from the high water mark of the river, there are specific protocols mandated by the Wetlands Protection Act that must be followed when planning projects that might alter the resource area and affect the ecological function of the river.

Among the activities that the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection does exempt from the normal permitting process are highway maintenance and the creation and use of unpaved pedestrian walkways for private use within a resource area 100 foot buffer zone. The regulations address the creation of a PUBLIC non motorized access to the riverfront area in the General Provisions of section 10:53(6) of the Wetlands Protection Act through the following enabling language:

(6) Notwithstanding the provisions of 310 CMR 10.58, the issuing authority may issue an Order of Conditions for the construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of footpaths, bike paths, and other pedestrian or non motorized vehicle access to or along riverfront areas but outside other resource areas, provided that adverse impacts from the work are minimized and that the design specifications are commensurate with the projected use and are compatible with the character of the riverfront area. Generally, the width of the access shall not exceed ten feet of pavement, except within an area that is already altered (e.g., railroad beds within rights of way). Access shall not be located in vernal pools or fenced in a manner which would impede the movement of wildlife.

Public Trust Doctrine

To this day, state constitutions affirm public ownership of all running waters. They typically say that “every natural stream” or “all surface waters” are owned by the state, for use by the public. Various state courts have upheld public access to running waters, calling it an “easement,” and saying, for example, and “The capability of use of the waters for recreational purposes determines their availability for recreational use by the public. Streambed ownership by a private party is irrelevant. If the waters are owned by the State and held in trust for the people by the State, no private party may bar the use of those waters by the people.” Public access to streams, and trails along streams, is further supported by the legal doctrines of custom and prescription. Willow River Club v. Wade, 100 Wis. 86, 76 N.W. 273 (1898); Taylor v. Commonwealth, 102 Va. 759, 47 S.E. 875, 102 Am.St.Rep. 865 (1904); Day v. Armstrong, 362 P.2d 187 (Wyo. 1961); People v. Mack, 97 Cal. Rptr. 448, 19 Cal. App. 3d 1040 (1971); Montana Coalition for Stream Access v. Curran, 210 Mont. 38 (1984). (<http://www.nationalrivers.org> – visited 5.9.2013) Further study is needed to clarify how the Public Trust doctrine applies in the Commonwealth of Mass.

Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program

The Mill River and about a 200’ buffer zone are designated as Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) areas of estimated rare wildlife habitat. In those areas, plans for any new development other than the exemptions listed online are subject to review under the Massachusetts Endangered species act.

Legal Liability

Liability is a critical concern for greenways. Section 17c of the Massachusetts General Laws absolves the greenway of responsibility if a person is injured or has property damaged while on the greenway. This statute protects landowners who grant easements for the greenway to run through their property. The law states that so long as there is no fee charged the property owner is not liable for any damages that may befall a person while on their land. The full excerpt of the language follows:

Section 17C. (a) Any person having an interest in land including the structures, buildings, and equipment attached to the land, including without limitation, railroad and utility corridors, easements and rights of way, wetlands, rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, and other bodies of water, who lawfully permits the public to use such land for recreational, conservation, scientific, educational, environmental, ecological, research, religious, or charitable purposes without imposing a charge or fee therefor, or who leases such land for said purposes to the commonwealth or any political subdivision thereof or to any nonprofit corporation, trust or association, shall not be liable for personal injuries or property damage sustained by such members of the public, including without limitation a minor, while on said land in the absence of willful, wanton, or reckless conduct by such person. Such permission shall not confer upon any member of the public using said land, including without limitation a minor, the status of an invitee or licensee to whom any duty would be owed by said person.

(b) The liability of any person who imposes a charge or fee for the use of his land by the public for the purposes described in subsection (a) shall not be limited by any provision of this section. For the purposes of this section, “person” shall include the person having any interest in the land, his agent, manager or licensee and shall include, without limitation, any governmental body, agency or instrumentality, a nonprofit corporation, trust, association, corporation, company or other business organization and any director, officer, trustee, member, employee, authorized volunteer or agent thereof. For the purposes of this section, “structures, buildings and equipment” shall include any structure, building or equipment used by an electric company, transmission company, distribution company, gas company or railroad in the operation of its business. A contribution or other voluntary payment not required to be made to use such land shall not be considered a charge or fee within the meaning of this section.

Insurance and Risk Management

According to the Rails to Trails Conservancy, insurance is a necessity, even with the liability protection under the state laws. While “laws may mean a lawsuit does not ultimately prevail in the courts, they cannot prevent a suit from being filed. Insurance is necessary for both trail owners/managers as well as adjacent landowners...in the case of non-governmental organizations, there should be a comprehensive liability insurance policy in place.” (p. 11 “Rail Trails and Liability” published by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy) The most pertinent type of coverage to the Mill River Greenway effort would be comprehensive insurance and volunteer accident insurance.

The best way to avert potential law suits from injury or damages sustained on the greenway is to design the greenway to avoid hazards, and to have a stated public policy on trail maintenance and usage. Protocols like recorded inspections and maintenance of the greenway will help to ensure a safe environment for all uses.

The report specifically mentions the following key considerations:

- During trail design and development:
 - Develop an inventory of potential hazards along the corridor;
 - Create a list of users that will be permitted on the trail and the risks associated with each;
 - Identify all applicable laws;
 - Design and locate the the trail such that obvious dangers are avoided.
 - Provide warnings of potential hazards to the extent possible;
 - Complete trail design and construction by persons who are knowledgeable about design guidelines, such as those listed in American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) documents;

- Once the trail is open for use:
 - Post and enforce trail regulations.
 - Regularly inspect the trail by a qualified person who has the expertise to identify hazardous conditions and maintenance problems;
 - Maintain records of all inspections, what was found, and what was done about it.
 - Photograph and otherwise document known hazardous conditions.
 - Correct and document maintenance problems quickly.
 - Where a problem cannot be promptly corrected, provide warnings to trail users;
 - Develop procedures for handling medical emergencies. Document these procedures as well as any occurrence of medical emergencies;

Following the correct legal procedures with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DF&W) will ensure that the ecological richness and function of the Mill River will be protected through any project development. The guidelines suggested by the Rails to Trails Conservancy indicate that while there are certain legal protections for a greenway and landowners, a sound management plan and comprehensive insurance are necessary to ensure legal protection from law suits that may occur because of injury on the greenway.

9. Design and Funding Strategies

The proposed Mill River Greenway Corridor pathway options aimed at connecting Haydenville and Williamsburg Centers are based upon three models: “Informal Walking” trails along the River that link local businesses and existing sidewalks, exemplified by the “*Great Barrington Model*”; a “Multi-purpose Public Way” along the River within the existing Public Right of Way, exemplified by the “*Blackstone River Model*”; and “Existing Sidewalk Extensions” using standard funding for sidewalk construction within existing road right-of-way.

Informal Walking Trails Connecting the River to Businesses and Existing Walkways

Funding for Walking Trails that are linked to recreation, business accommodation, environmental management, education, and public health may qualify in part for funding under the Recreational Trails Program (RTP).

‘Riverway’ Walk Within Route 9 Right-of-Way

Funding for a Multi-purpose Public Way along the Mill River within the existing Public Right of Way, would qualify for both Federal and State programs aimed at promoting “integration of bicycling and walking into the transportation mainstream.” (TA- Transportation Alternatives MAP-21). This portion of MAP-21 applies to, “a new or improved lane, path, or shoulder for use by bicyclists and a traffic control device, shelter, or parking facility for bicycles.” The definition of a pedestrian includes not only a person traveling by foot but also “any mobility impaired person using a wheelchair.”

Planning, design and construction of such a multipurpose pedestrian greenway along the river would require coordination with Mass DOT, regional planning agencies (PVPC, etc.), and local government boards and officials, and could most feasibly be accomplished if implemented as part of a larger roadway improvement project to achieve economies of scale and overlapping objectives. [See Figure 1: Two Greenway Path Prototypes (Adapted from the *Boston Society of Landscape Architects Mill River Greenway Study*, April 26, 2012, “Draft Study Report,” by N. Dines, FASLA)].

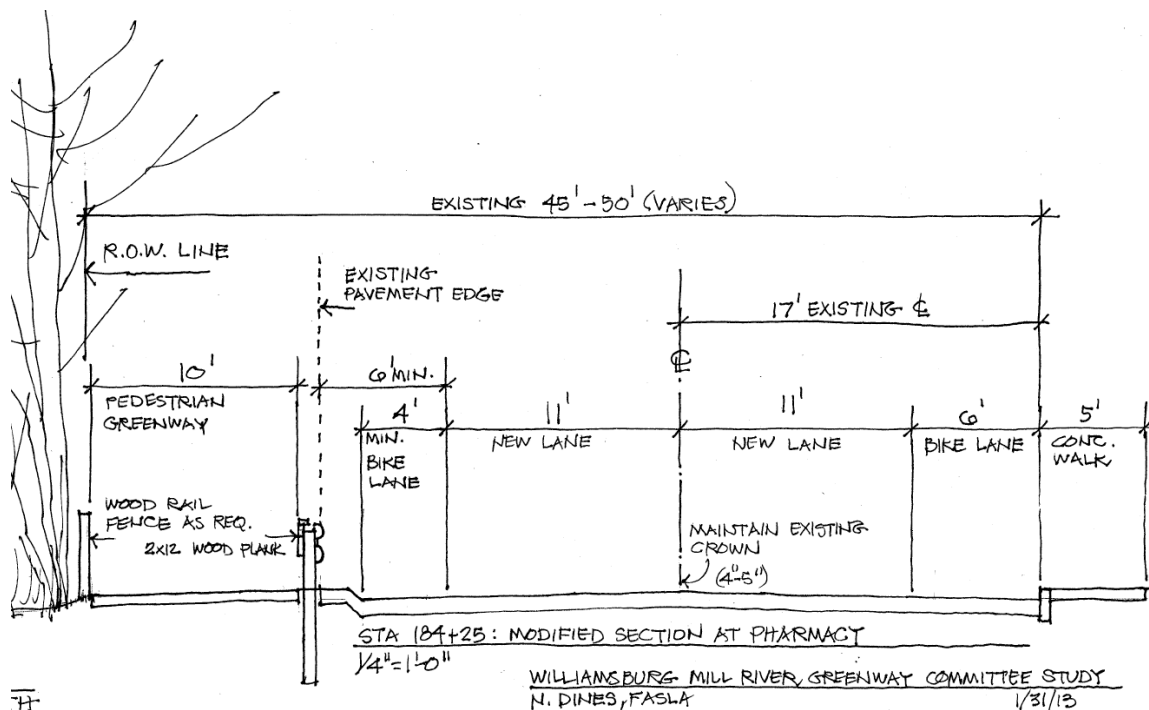
Existing Sidewalk Extensions

This model utilizes existing law (Chapter 90), for funding and construction of public sidewalks adjacent to State Roadways (Route 9), and could be installed during the next major upgrade (6-10 years). Such sidewalks would be built within the existing public Right of Way and would not encroach upon private property. Figure 2 illustrates two common conditions for new public sidewalk installation: A curb and walk with no planting strip (at Pharmacy); and a curb with planting strip separating sidewalk from curb (where space allows - at Cichy’s).

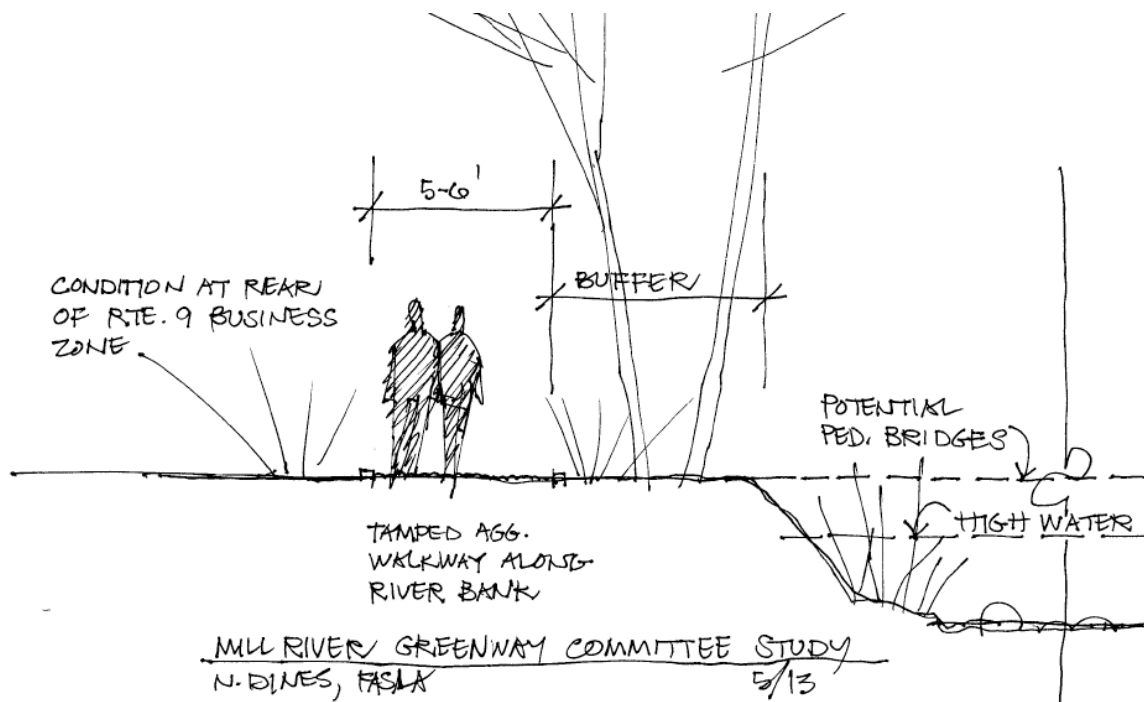
Planning and Design Strategies

Currently, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) is the regional coordinator for all area TIP projects in order to comply with federal standards and guidelines with regard to Mass DOT District 1 planning, design, funding and construction operations. (See *Transportation Improvement Program 2014-2017* at: <http://www.pvpc.org>).

The Route 9 riverway walk option would be the most accommodative and would require close coordination with Mass DOT District 1 with regard to planned future Route 9 improvements. The proposal calls for configuring a pedestrian Greenway along the Mill River within the existing public right of way (as indicated on the 1999 Route 9 improvement plans). Initial schematic studies stemming from the American Society of Landscape Architecture (ASLA) Charrette Study were submitted to the Lenox Office of Mass DOT for initial feasibility review with regard to design standards and physical limits. Financial feasibility for this option rests on meshing state and federal grant applications to achieve a master contract that would be supervised by Mass DOT according to the District Engineer at Mass DOT in Lenox. The realistic time horizon for the “riverway walk” is 6-10 years, and if chosen, design development and grant applications would need to begin in the very near future.

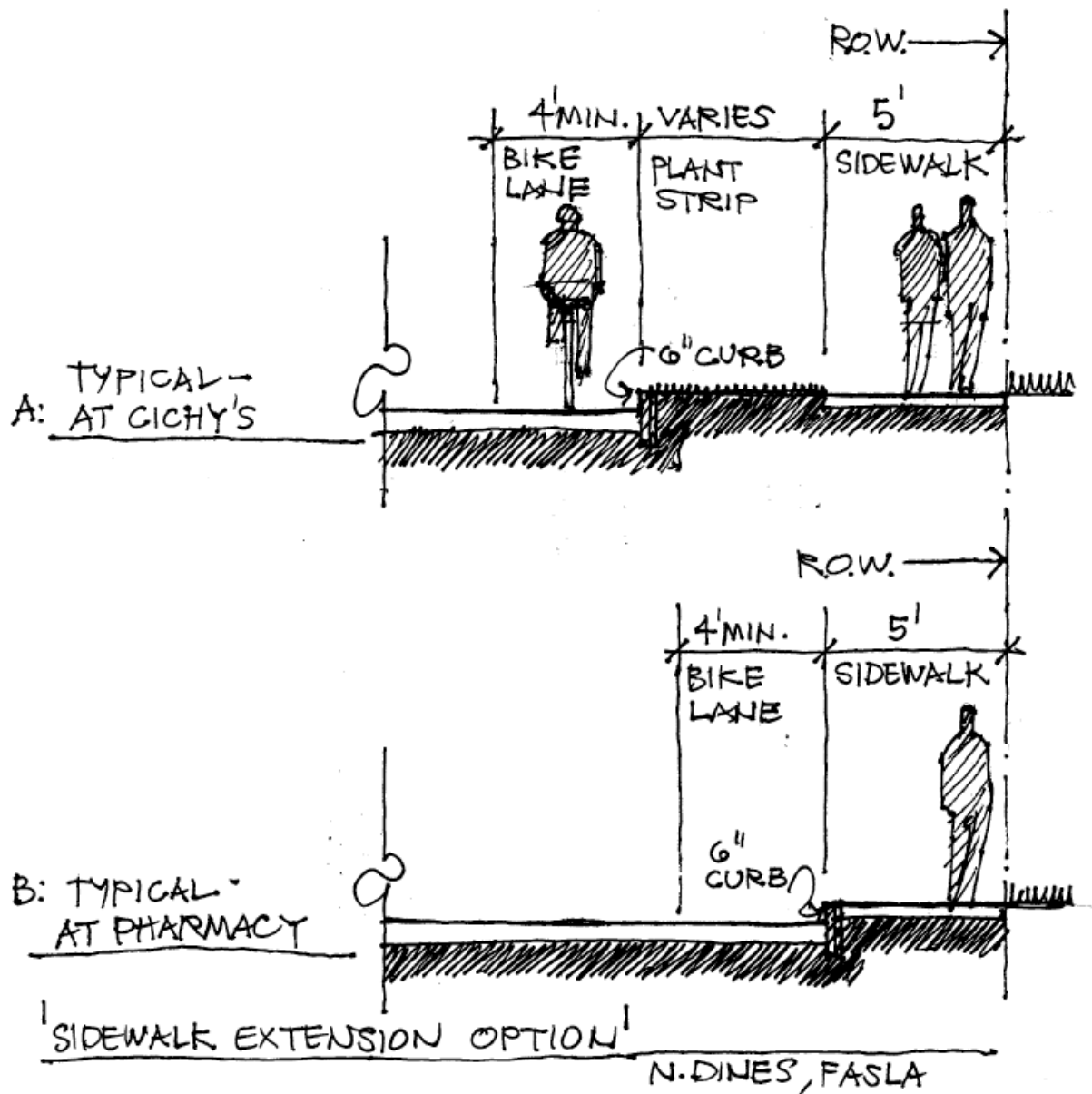


Mill River Pedestrian Greenway Within Route 9 Right of Way: Prototypical Section



Pedestrian Path Within Business Zone Along Mill River: Prototypical Section

FIGURE 1: Two Greenway Path Prototypes



Sidewalk Extension Options After Pharmacy Bridge: (Rte. 9 Road Edge Conditions Vary)

Figure 2: Public Sidewalk Extension Options

10. Funding / Financial Feasibility

The financial feasibility of the Mill River Greenway will likely depend on support from a variety of public and private sources. These include but are not limited to the following.

Public Grant Sources

Federal Grants

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): The program through which federal funds are obligated to state and local projects. The projects include highway improvements, transit, rail and bus facilities, high occupancy vehicle lanes, signal synchronization, intersection improvements, freeway ramps, etc. A Transportation Alternatives subcategory exists under TIP that could serve as an appropriate greenway funding source.

Land Water and Conservation Fund: A federal program which provides funds and matching grants to federal, state and local governments for the acquisition of land and water, and easements on land and water, for the benefit of all Americans, which may include recreational purposes such as foot and bike trails.

State Grants

Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation Recreational Trails Grants: Grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$50,000 for a variety of trail protection, construction, and stewardship projects. The fund is part of the national Recreational Trails Program, which is funded through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Funds are disbursed to states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses.

Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities Program: The PARC Program assists cities and towns in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes. Any town with a population of 35,000 or more year-round residents, or any city regardless of size, that has an authorized park /recreation commission is eligible to participate in the program. Communities that do not meet the population criteria listed above may still qualify under the "small town," "regional," or "statewide" project provisions of the program.

Designated Funds (Earmark)

Funds specifically identified within the federal and/or state budget to advance this particular project. Such an “earmark” would require a legislator and/or congressional leader who would champion this cause within the budgetary process.

Private Funds

Foundation Grants

- Bikes Belong Grant
- Kodak American Greenways Program
- REI Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Grants
- Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts
- Frank Stanley Beveridge Foundation
- Citizens' Institute on Rural Design Issues
- Walmart Foundation, Lowe's Foundation, etc.

Local Business Support

- Support from food, retail, banking and other businesses located along potential greenway routes that stand to benefit from increased foot/bike traffic and visibility.
- Local businesses committed to the Williamsburg community that would view support for the project as in keeping with their charitable goals and community relations strategies

11. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Mill River Greenway Committee concludes that such a Greenway within the Mill River Corridor is feasible, and would be of great benefit to our Town and the surrounding communities. We have refined the goal, identified community support, and affirmed the physical, ecological, technical, and economic feasibility of implementing alternative transportation linkages.

We recommend that the Select Board continue the Committee and reaffirm its mission statement:

The Mill River Greenway Committee exists to coordinate efforts in Williamsburg and Haydenville regarding the creation of a multipurpose greenway following the course of the Mill River. The Williamsburg-Haydenville Mill River Greenway will link the village centers and provide public access to adjacent natural settings, historically important cultural landmarks, and local businesses.

The Committee will do this by:

- Focusing and encouraging local enthusiasm, input, and participation in the project
- Respectfully working with local property owners
- Encouraging, gathering, and further developing design concepts into a proposed Williamsburg-Haydenville Mill River Greenway Plan
- Teaming up with related town committees and organizations, including but not limited to:
 - Conservation Commission
 - Historical Society and Historical Commission
 - Open Space Committee
 - Recreation Commission
 - Woodland Trails Committee
- Identifying and tapping into private and public resources, on local, regional, state, and federal levels, including but not limited to:
 - local volunteers
 - Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
 - student and professional resources from local colleges
 - Mill River Greenway Initiative
 - other towns along the Mill River
 - private and public grants and other funding sources

We recommend that the Select Board amend the scope of this Committee to address safe connectivity between the terminus of the Northampton Rail Trail at South Main St. in Haydenville and the southern terminus of the Haydenville-Williamsburg Mill River Greenway.

In the coming year, this committee proposes to pursue a planning and design initiative to establish optimal routes for the three path types as described in this report (see Section 9. Design and Funding Strategies).

12. Appendices

Appendix A: Community Forum comments

Williamsburg - Haydenville Mill River Greenway Committee

Comments from Public Forum re: Greenway Path Connecting Haydenville & Williamsburg

May 20th, 2013

Name	Town	Dot ID	Comment
Emmet Anderson	H	1A	I want to be able to bike to the Village Green
		1B	This area has no sidewalk so I can bike here
		1C	My house is here and I would like it to go as close as possible
		1D	NONE!
		1E	NONE!
Mary Dudek	W	2A	nice area
		2B	nice area
		2C	nice area
		2D	close to Route 9
Melissa Adams		3A	Great to have connectors from schools to the path
		3B	Great to have opportunity to see the river- a scenic resource for Williamsburg that is not often visible
		3C	Would be great to have bridge over river from Mill St to the other side
		3D	Would need a crosswalk & maybe a crossing guard on South St to ensure safety of our students & pedestrians
		3E	I like the alternative that is farther away from Rt 9 to reduce noise, visability of traffice from the corridor
		4	Continue your outreach to community!
Sally Loomis	W	4A	I like this location
		4B	If you can make this work w/an easement this would be a great location
		4D	Putting a trail here between the river & Rt 9 seems too tight. How could it work & wouldn't the trail be at risk in flood/storm events
Melissa Adams		5	I am very supportive of a multi-use corridor between the village centers; would like it to showcase & protect the river & encourage businesses located along it to do the same
		6	Thank you for your time & consideration to this project. I am happy to be a contact for input , occasional meetings, grant review, etc.
Barbara Pelland	H	6A	I live on Depot Rd & would love to access the entire town but w/possible path we would still be on Rt 9
		6B	Other side of Rt 9 along the river would be lovely.
		6C	Would also like to get to town line
		6D	My concern is that there is so much traffic here that a path may be a safety issue near here
		6E	Concerned there aren't more access from side streets to the path

Name	Town	Dot ID	Comment
Peter Pelland	H	7A	Opportunities for commercial property overviews
		7B	Best to avoid less scenic commercial properties
		7D	Needs to be separate from sidewalks
		7E	Narrow areas should be avoided
Heather Warner	Florence	9A	Would like my kids to be able to bike to Hilltown Charter School from Florence. Would like safe connection between Leeds bike path into Haydenville & Williamsburg center for multi-use
		9B	Very much supports multi-use path between Haydenville & Williamsburg
		9C	I would shop at the market in town if I could bike to it from Florence
		9D	Safety concerns about bus stop (PVTa) for kids from Hilltown Charter School
		9E	Currently when I bike on roads it is difficult to cross Rt 9
—		10A	best route-public land
		10B	best route away from center traffic and future fire station site
		10C	good route with bridge over river at Riverview corner, but on to private land?
		10D	Traffic pinches- need to move foot & bike traffic somewhere different
		10E	Traffic pinches-same as 10D
Bobbin Young	W	11A	being away from Rt 9 on this stretch a plus
		11B	love access to river & businesses
		11C	prefer less intrusion on riverbank
		11D	terrible place for a crossing unless major overhead bridge is built
		11E	river intruder[?]
		12	In general- the less intrusion the path could be on both the riverbanks & on homes, the better the chance of getting this done!
Eric Weber	W	12A	I would love to have public access to the lovely riverside meadow in connection with the greenway
		12B	I wish the old bridge that once spanned the river here could be restored, the invasive plants on the old millpond bed exterminated, & the floodplain opened for picnicking & passive recreation
		12C	I've thought for a long time that this dumping ground in the center of the village would make a lovely park
		12D	I love the idea of a greenway, but if I lived in one of the houses across the bridge in Skinnerville, I sure wouldn't want a greenway routed between my house & the river. On the other hand, getting the greenway off Rt 9 & across the river has enormous appeal. Perhaps it could pass behind these houses?

Name	Town	Dot ID	Comment
Fran Kidder	W	13	I like idea of a greenway but we are concerned that people will be coming right through our already small yard that is in the flood plain
		13A	Would be great to have path here as it's the worst part of road for biking/walking
		13B	The wooded area behind White Lightning, Hilltown Cars (?) & the "venom" ATV business has been used for camping, bike jumps, etc. The kids left a mess there last year. I think it would be an ideal place for a public way but not if many trees are cut down. I live across the river. I'm concerned because my house is 4th on the right of Valley View
		13C	Great location for path on this side of river
Marion Hoar		14	Try across the Mill River-I have no idea where \$ come from. ? rd right of way expanded use
		14B	Good luck. Safety concerns in general-traffic, equipment
		14E	The use of existing sidewalks is problematic crossing Rt 9-anywhere is not good
Daphne Phelps	H	15A	Would old railway track be utilized between village centers?
		15B	I am pro path...as a teenager I was hoping to have the rail trail go in and was bummed when it didn't...I used to ride from S Main St to Goshen on Rt 9 & also to ride either River Rd or Rt 9 to N'ton/Florence. I now have an 18 year old who has had to do the same...
		15D	Anywhere there would be a potential road crossing I would have the issue/concern of road crossings at Rt 9...a plan like Hadley's or E'ton would be prudent here..or a light like N'ton...
		16	I would like to be notified of meetings/plans
—		18A	Use this path frequently-walking-it's beautiful compared to 9 but there is a section that's fallen away. Still I use it as do others
		18D	Always a place to hold my breath-seen more near misses on this stretch
representatives of W. Carey, River Rd	W	19A	We represent W Carey, River Rd. It's a good stretch! How would the Greenway proceed from Carey Farm to Brassworks?
		19B	Are you aware of trails on the hill that lead to Haydenville?
		19C	A trail west of the river would be pedestrian-friendly
		19D	What about floods? Carey Farm is flood plain + the whole river is vulnerable
Paul Wetzel	W	20	I think this is a great project. Have the Smith students investigate the economic impact of a greenway, especially if the greenway is connected to Northampton. I think that there could be + benefits. This greenway could have an enormous historic component to it. From the flood, to the mills, to a biological component, too.
		20A	This is an obvious comment, but the greenway should connect to the Northampton bike path. That connection would be great.
		20B	I would like to see as much of the greenway away from Rt 9 as possible. I know that is not possible at some locations.

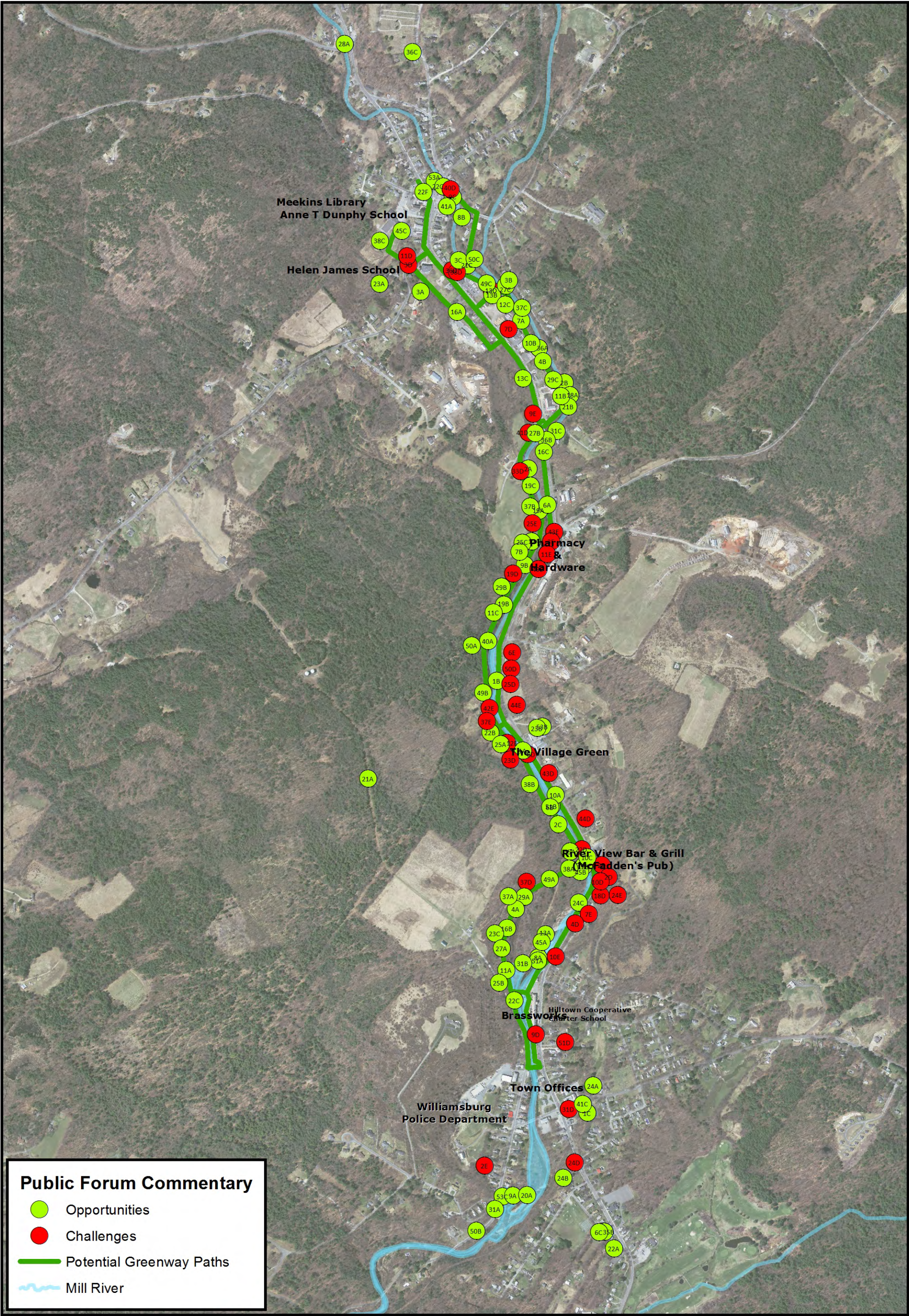
Name	Town	Dot ID	Comment
Eric Weber	W	21A	As a fallback if the river greenway doesn't pan out, there's always the water main right-of-way between H'ville/South St.
		21B	I'd like to see the vanished roadbed here restored as a path.
		21C	Bring back the Mill St bridge! for pedestrians only, not cars.
Eileen Stewart	W	22A	Would love to bike to breakfast @ Bread Euphoria from Burgy-also would feel less guilty about calories!
		22B	Wonderful to cross the river there as the Rt 9 shoulder becomes dangerous to ride or walk going from Burgy to Haydenville
		22C	Beautiful aspects of river from Meekins + the bank parking lot. Love the dam, waterfall + pool right here. Always wanted to take a dip in the pool some hot day
		22D	Danger danger cannot walk or bike + it can be ugly driving a car if bikers in the road
		22F	I love having a "downtown" as hectic as it can be sometimes. Many small towns would kill to have such a busy, useful, fun center generating economic prosperity in the town = critical mass
—	H	23A	Helen James School-we live in Haydenville. It would be wonderful for our kids to be able to safely bike to school
		23B	Village Green - who doesn't love to walk & get ice cream?!
		23C	To be able to safely look & stop at the river would be great. Bird watching, walking
		23D	Crossing over Rt 9 to get to the Village Green would be tricky.
Roger Cooney(?)		24A	It makes sense (in my view) to have the greenway follow the old rail bed as possible should follow old rail bed if possible
		24B	I bike the old rail bed to Leeds often. I hope that it greenway will be connected to Leeds in the future
		24C	If the greenway is to be truly green, perhaps it should be located on the south side of the Mill River
		24D	This property doesn't want anyone to cross. The trees have been cut down to make it very difficult for anyone to pass
		24E	The grade of the hill is very steep in this location and may not be idea for some folks to way up & down
—		25A	It would be great for kids (+ adults) to be able to walk & ride & bike to the V.G.
		25B	The Brassworks is an amazing & sweet space to gather & swim in the summer - to make it more accessible space might require more infrastructure to accommodate more visitors
		25C	The more proximity to river the better
		25D	The further away from Rt 9 the better
		25E	Local neighboring residents might be opposed to a trail that runs close to homes

Name	Town	Dot ID	Comment
—		27A	Want to see the land on other side of the river for walking and biking, etc.
		27B	Hope there can be a bike & walking bridge close to where the river goes under Rt 9-esp. if Mass Highway can help us there.
		27C	One of my favorite places is where the West Branch meets the East Branch- I wish it could be cleaned up & accessible as a little park(off Mill St perhaps) even tho it will always be flood prone
—		28A	Tried to get it the green dot as far as the Hodgekin's property, where the trail along the West Branch is so beautiful-if only this trail could be part of the greenway-it's a fabulous resource that should be public.
—		29A	It would be desireable to get back from the highway.
		29B	Away from highway. More scenic.
		29C	Good if easements can be obtained
Jameson family	H	30	I love the idea of a greenway! I want my son to be able to bike from our home in Haydenville to the library, country store in Williamsburg. Thank you for your work.
—	H?	31A	Like the opportunity to connect with old railbed trail to Look Park & bike path in Leeds -maybe too ambitious but eventual goal?
		31B	Enjoy the river spot just north of Brassworks-great place for rock collecting, etc. (needs invasive removal)
		31C	Another nice spot on the river - area to walk, sit, etc.
		31D	Concerned about cars here - specifically no traffic light at junction of High St & Rt 9 - crazy spot w/cars & pedestrians
Jon Gould	W	32	I don't have any favorite places I'd like to get to along the route. I just want to show my support for the concept @ this stage. I believe the river could be appreciated by many more people if a greenway were constructed.
Robert Torrey		33D	This is my lawn. I live on a deadend road for privacy. I really don't want people on my lawn
—		35	Overall, I think this is a fabulous idea. One of my frustrations about our location is not being able to walk anywhere. Thanks for your work in trying to move this forward.
		35A	I would really love to see a path near McFadden's. From there to about the Brassworks is the part of route 9 that feels the least safe to me for running/biking
		35B	Extending far enough to facilitate safe connection to the bike trail would be great.
Sarah McMullen	W?	36A	The stretch of river form the hardware store to behind the Burgy Market is lovely, but primarily used as parking/dumping or is inaccessible. Would love to access/see this area more.
		36B	Would love to be able to walk along the river where there is the "sidewalk gap" between villages
		36C	There should be a safe route to school all along Rt 9, with sidewalks as minimum. Starting N of Chesterfield Rd and extending to Haydenville.
		36D	The stretch of sidewalk from Country Corral to the school is very choppy and unpleasant even to walk on. Very little delineation between road, parking & sidewalk. 10' sidewalk, road, 6' sidewalk, etc.

Name	Town	Dot ID	Comment
—		37A	Keeping the path away from Rt 9 will provide a safer more relaxed experience but (see 37D)
		37B	Keeping the path on this side of river means no bridge-but what about relative costs?
		37C	Away from sidewalks here reduces hazards & conflict w/traffic except at crossings on Rt 9
		37D	Being away from Rt 9 may reduce usage
		37E	What about flood damage near river & maintenance costs?
Eileen Keegan	W	38	I think this connection will be a very valuable asset to our community.
		38A	Nice area & away from Rt 9
		38B	An asset to have access to V. Green & River View restaurant
		38C	Access from school would allow educational opportunities i.e. history, ecology, fitness.
		38D	I overheard a resident say that the owner of the dealership is going to sue the town??
Mary Ellen Smith		39	Although I own property in the area, I no longer live here. I do, however, support the idea of a safe path connecting the towns.
		39	If the Greenway goes through private property, will the land owner be responsible and/or liable for possible issues?
		39	Would the town be interested in purchasing my property if the greenway were to be developed there?
Catherine Carija	W	40	I love the idea of connecting the villages. Love to have access to the river. Would want access to be foot or bike.
		40	In Burgy Center -at the bridge kitty corner to library - I'm concerned those trees would be removed along the river. This would be very wrong. They block the parking lot view & the lights. As the resident @ 1 East Main St this is a huge concern to me.
		40	Concern dogs not being cleaned up after on path
—		41A	Looking forward to be able to walk or bike to work from Haydenville center safely
		41C	Same as above.
		41D	My concern at crossings is a safety issue. Will there be overpass or tunnels?
Evelyn Arnold		42D	Too dangerous on this side of river.
Linda Rowley	H	43	How about a completed sidewalk to extend from the existing walks! Bicycles on the road where they belong. <u>And</u> bicycles should have license plates & be registered with insurance. No taking of private property
Linda West	H	44D/E	Sidewalks were intentionally not installed by the Selectboard at the time of signoff of route 9. Could have had a sidewalk at that time. Moving of route 9 to accomodate greenway along route 9 (river) will move road closer to the houses.

Name	Town	Dot ID	Comment
Lisa Sheehy		45A	Beautiful wide part of the riverbed. I would like to see the route of a greenway have a view of this area & places to sit. Would like it to get down near the riverbank level (not up in Brassworks parking level) if possible without impacting ecology.
		45B	Another beautiful area at bend in river
		45C	Whichever route the greenway follows, I'd like to see it end at, or have a spur, all the way to the Dunphy school. For me, one of its main purposes is to provide safe access to school for kids & families.
Lisa Sheehy		46	Concerns (not connected with specific locations so I didn't place red dots): protect ecology of river & banks of river; figure out parking areas at each village center & somewhere in middle; consider whether & how to light the path without – impact to nearby residents (eg limited lighting or down-facing lights); seating along path to build in accessibility for people w/limited mobility. I strongly support a greenway. I think it will increase safe access between villages, encourage healthy physical activity for children & adults, and increase awareness of & knowledge of the Mill River & our history related to the river. Will likely also be good for W'burg & Haydenville businesses by drawing in visitors at a manageable level, increasing visibility & accessibility of businesses.
Lee & Bill Lashway	W	48	Our only concern is for the safety of the bikers as many & all types of vehicles go in & out of our property all day.
Jody Nishman	W	49A	I like the idea of the greenway on the southwest side of the river.
		49B	Keeping on this side of the river seems great.
		49C	Seems like a nice way to go
		49D	If it's possible to stay separate fr. Rt 9, please do
Joan Coryat	W	50A	Preferably, the path should not border Rt 9 given the high amt of traffic, fumes and associated noise.
		50B	It would be fabulous to connect to Leeds bikeway someday.
		50C	Mill St connector over river would be very scenic.
		50D	See 50A. I would bike right next to Rt 9 but I wouldn't walk due to reasons stated above.
		50E	I'm sure you've spoken to Nick Dines about public gardens that would also connect the 2 town centers and generally beautify our town and draw more business.
—		51A	Bike path near waterfall would be neat
		51B	Greenway on western bank of river would be very attractive
		51D	<u>No</u> bike path on old railroad bed
Sue & Dick Briggs		53A	Town center-school, library
		53B	Ice cream stand
		53C	End of rail trail @ Leeds/Haydenville line
		53D	All of Rt 9

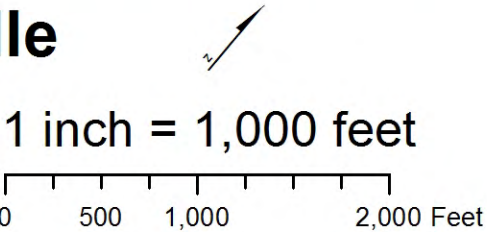
Appendix B: Map-Community Forum Dots Exercise Results



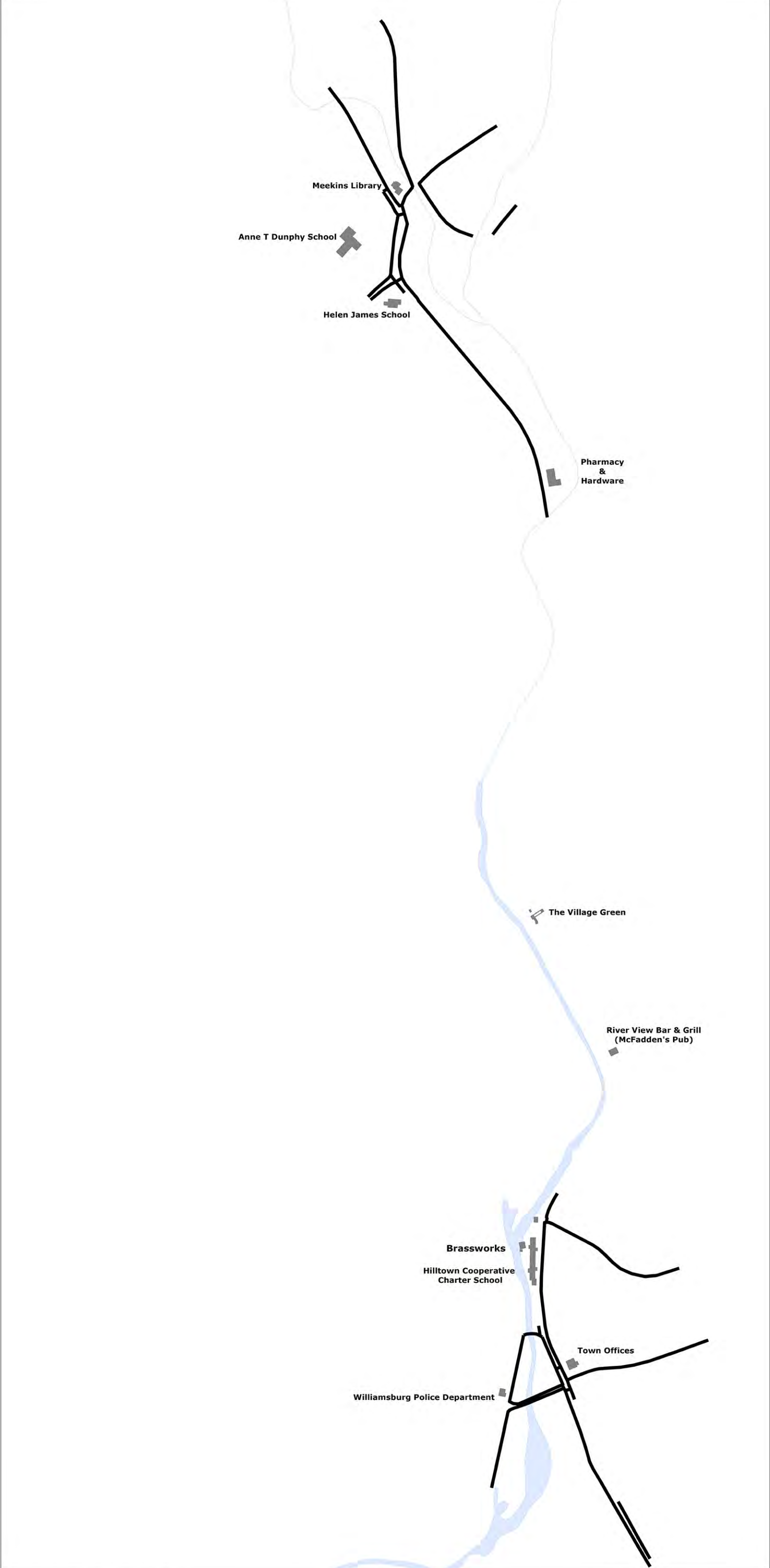
Williamsburg Center & The Village of Haydenville

May 19th, 2013 ~ Public Forum Commentary

Orthophotos and River data were made available by the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division. Parcel data is from the Town of Williamsburg Assessors office and digitized by Smith College students working with Reid Bertone-Johnson.



Appendix C: Map-Existing Sidewalks



Appendix D: Map-Williamsburg, Haydenville Orthographic

*Williamsburg
Center*

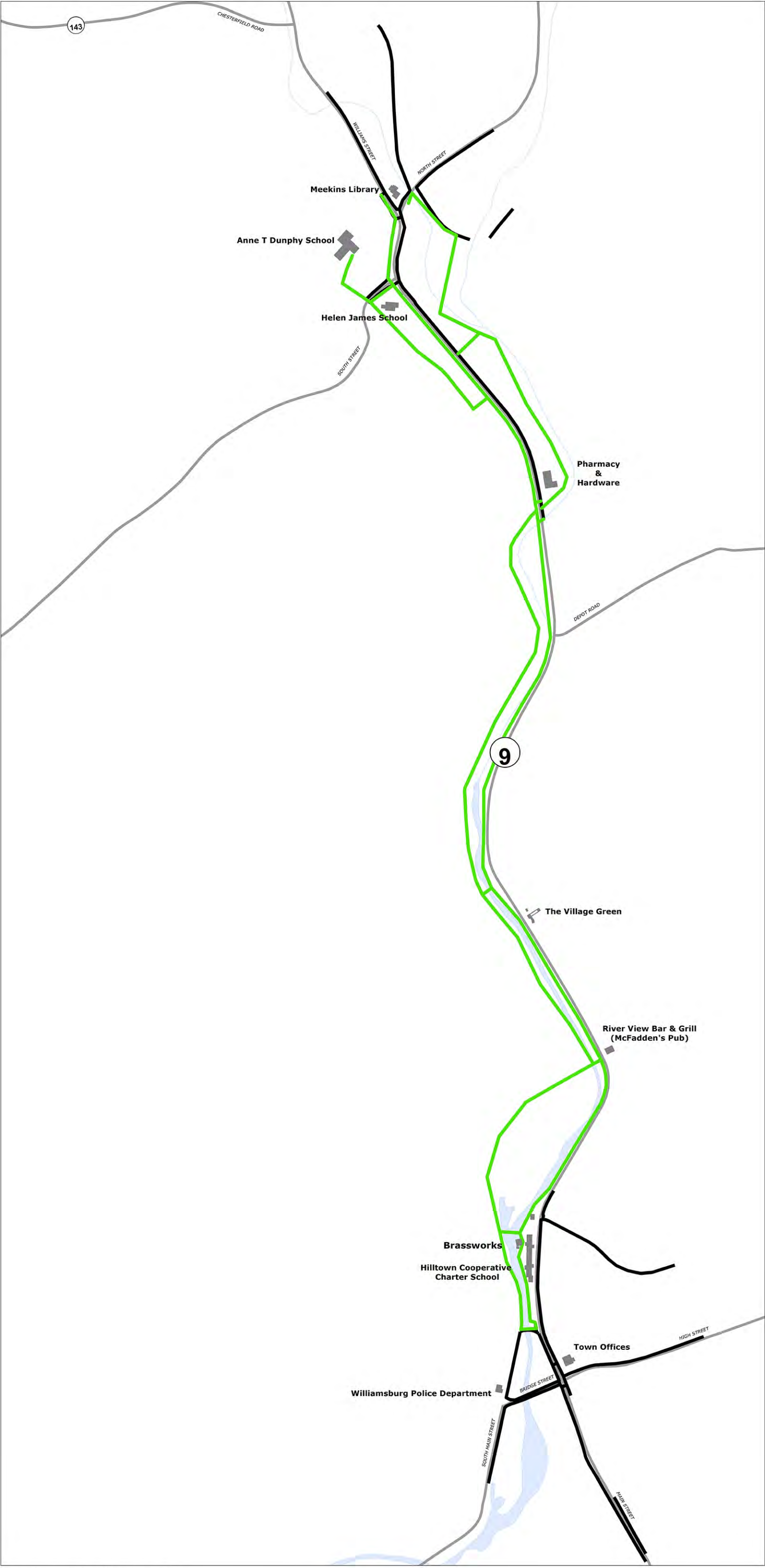
Haydenville

Williamsburg Center to Haydenville

Orthophotos and River data were made available by the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS),
Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division. Parcel data is from the Town of Williamsburg
Assessors office and digitized by Smith College students working with Reid Berline-Johnson.



Appendix E: Map-Possible Greenway Routes



Appendix F: Support Letter-Florence Savings Bank

June 6, 2013

To the Mill River Greenway Committee:

As an individual involved with the business community here in Williamsburg I am in support of the Greenway Committees' plans for a walk way along the Mill River. I agree with your thoughts on enhancing the commercial vibrancy of our town. The increase in foot traffic in my opinion can only be seen as a plus for the business community.

I look forward to hearing more details about the project as it develops.

Sincerely,



Douglas Baker, V.P.
Florence Savings Bank
Williamsburg Office

Appendix G: Support Letter-Williamsburg General Store

Williamsburg General Store, Inc.

12 Main Street, Williamsburg, MA 01096-0757
413-268-3036

June 6, 2013

Williamsburg Selectboard
Town Office Building
Haydenville, MA 01039


Dear friends,

A safe, pleasant, and convenient pedestrian corridor between our villages would provide an alternative means of travel for local people who want to visit our store, the Market, bank, library, a restaurant or just stroll about our lovely village. I believe that such a corridor connecting our villages, one that is largely away from the noise and fumes of busy Route 9, would allow many of our citizens to enjoy a little exercise with a rewarding destination.

The General Store has long been a destination for our Williamsburg and Haydenville neighbors. Local folks enjoy stopping for ice cream, a pastry, or a cold drink, or picking up a gift. The store is often enjoyed as a kind of family entertainment center, with youngsters finding their way to our candy or toy shelves while the adults tend to more important shopping. Many people relax with a cup of coffee and chat with friends on our front porch.

With the General Store just one of many reasons to visit our village, I feel that a greenway connecting Haydenville and Williamsburg would measurably increase the number of people coming here. For this reason and because I believe that such a human-centered resource will make our town an even more desirable place to live and do business, I enthusiastically support the proposed Mill River Greenway.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Majercik', written over a horizontal line.

David Majercik, Co-owner

Appendix H: Support Letter-Williamsburg PTO



June 4, 2013

Mill River Greenway Committee
Town of Williamsburg
141 Main Street
PO Box 447
Haydenville, MA 01039

To Mill River Greenway Committee,


The Williamsburg PTO would like to express its support for the proposed Greenway between Williamsburg and Haydenville. As parents and teachers, we are concerned about the safety of walkers and bikers who currently must use Route 9 to travel between the two villages. A walking/biking path would allow more of our non-motorized town residents in Haydenville to safely travel to and from school, the library, and other locations in Williamsburg. Such a path would also enable parents and other residents in Williamsburg to connect more easily with residents and amenities in Haydenville.

In addition, as a school community, we see the potential benefits of making the Mill River more central to our day-to-day activities, both educational and recreational. The history of the Mill River and its connection to our watershed and natural world are topics that teachers already include in their curricula. Easy walks along the river would provide a very tangible (and, some would say, essential) connection for students involved in these units and would allow teachers to broaden their approach to these subjects.

We also believe that the inclusion of a path in our community would inevitably have the effect of reducing the need for motorized transportation in Williamsburg. There can be no overstating the importance of this goal.

For these reasons, we urge the Selectboard to vote in favor of moving ahead with plans for the construction of the proposed Greenway.

Cordially,



Gary Kuntz
Williamsburg PTO

Cc: Board of Selectmen

Williamsburg Schools PTO, Inc.
1 Petticoat Hill Road, Williamsburg, MA 01096

Appendix I: Support Letter-Williamsburg School Committee



Williamsburg School Committee

Mill River Greenway Committee
Town of Williamsburg
141 Main Street
PO Box 447
Haydenville, MA 01039

June 4, 2013

To Mill River Greenway Committee,

On behalf of the Williamsburg School Committee I am writing to comment on the feasibility of a Haydenville-Williamsburg Greenway along the Mill River Corridor. At our April School Committee meeting, John Hoogstraten and Neal Bastek discussed the mission of the Greenway Committee, and outlined possible benefits and concerns of a possible Greenway. Also in attendance were several teachers, Principal Stacey Jenkins, and Superintendent Craig Jurgensen. Following their presentation, those in attendance had an opportunity to ask questions, and discuss the connection of our school to a proposed Greenway.

All in attendance were very enthusiastic at the possibility of a Greenway. The discussion focused on the impact on the school if there were safer and easier access from the river to the school, as well as an alternative walking and biking route to school. Faculty in attendance discussed the multiple possibilities of using access points to the river to integrate local history, biology, and ecology into the curriculum. Several committee members voiced their belief that a Greenway would strengthen student's connection to our community given the historical importance of the river, and its vital importance to the regional ecosystem. There was unanimous agreement that, for students who walk or bike to school, an alternative to Route 9 would greatly enhance their safety.

We appreciate the committee taking time to present to us, and wish them well as they finish up their work.

Sincerely,

Duncan Laird
Williamsburg School Committee

Cc: Board of Selectmen

David Chase Sarah Christianson Jeff Gelbard Duncan Laird Kayla Solomon

Appendix J: Letter to Local Business Owners



Mill River Greenway Committee

Town of Williamsburg

141 Main Street

Haydenville, Massachusetts 01039-0447

March 2013

To the Williamsburg Business Community:

The Williamsburg Board of Selectmen, responding to public sentiment, created the Mill River Greenway Committee in 2012. The Committee exists to assess the feasibility of creating a multi-purpose greenway, a non-motorized link between Haydenville and Williamsburg, generally following the course of the Mill River. This link would provide public access to adjacent natural settings, cultural landmarks and local businesses. Such a corridor would also provide a means for safer, off-road pedestrian travel along Rt. 9 for our communities.

*Because your business is located in the vicinity of the proposed Greenway, **your input in the planning process is very important to the Committee**, and its immediate assignment: the development of a feasibility study for the creation of a pathway which will be presented to the Select Board in June of this year.*

Possible benefits to our local businesses from such a link between the two villages include increased foot traffic and customers, greater visibility and marketing opportunities, and enhanced viability for vacant or under-utilized buildings. Viewed broadly, a greenway could boost the commercial vibrancy of our town and promote our local business climate. The Committee is also sensitive to potential concerns such as security and maintenance.

On Sunday, May 19 at 2PM in the Town Offices in Haydenville, the Committee will be sponsoring a community forum to solicit feedback from the town's businesses and residents. In addition, or if you prefer, a meeting can be arranged anytime in the coming weeks between a representative of your business and members of the Committee.

We encourage and look forward to your participation. Feel free to contact me by phone or email any time.

Thank you.

*John Hoogstraten
Business Outreach Coordinator
Mill River Greenway Committee*

*jhoog@comcast.net
268-7523*

Appendix K: Letter to Abutters



Mill River Greenway Committee

Town of Williamsburg

141 Main Street

Haydenville, Massachusetts 01039-0447

March 2013

Dear Neighbor,

We are writing as members of the Mill River Greenway Committee, to share information about our work on behalf of the Town of Williamsburg and to invite your input.

Creating greater connections between Williamsburg Center and Haydenville Center, ensuring safety of pedestrian travel and increasing access to local businesses have been longstanding priorities of the town. Therefore, the Williamsburg Board of Selectman, in the fall of 2012, established a committee to assess the feasibility of creating a multi-purpose greenway to serve as a non-motorized link between Haydenville and Williamsburg, generally following the course of the Mill River. This link could provide public access to adjacent natural settings, cultural landmarks and local businesses. Such a corridor could also provide a means for safer, off-road pedestrian travel along Rt. 9 for our community's children and seniors.

Our committee's mandate is not to implement but rather to gauge the feasibility of this concept from structural, financial and political perspectives, and to assess levels of support and interest among town residents.

*Because you reside or own property in the vicinity of the river, **your input in the feasibility assessment process is very important to the Committee**, and its immediate assignment: the development of a feasibility study for the creation of a pathway, which will be presented to the Select Board in June of this year.*

Benefits to our community may include:

- Providing a greater sense of connection between the municipality's two town centers
- Creating safe options for children to walk to school
- Increasing access to town offices, public libraries and other community institutions
- Improving access to scenic, historic and cultural places within the town
- Ensuring greater safety for pedestrian and bicycle travel along the route 9 corridor
- Providing new, safe options for outdoor activity for town residents
- Increasing foot traffic to local businesses in town

The Committee is also sensitive to potential concerns such as security and maintenance.

We would like to invite your input in one of two ways – by attending a community forum on May 19th at 2pm at the Town Offices in Haydenville, or through an informal conversation with a member of our committee.

We encourage and look forward to your participation. Please feel free to reach out to any of the committee members to give input or to schedule a time to speak or meet.

Thank you.

The Mill River Greenway Committee

(please see reverse for contact information of Committee members)