



Mill River Greenway Committee

Town of Williamsburg

141 Main Street

Haydenville, Massachusetts 01039-0447

COMMUNITY FORUM 4/9/16

public comments

NOTE: THESE COMMENTS ARE KEYED TO A SET OF LARGE-FORMAT GRAPHICS ONTO WHICH PARTICIPANTS AFFIXED NUMBERED DOTS TO INDICATE LOCATIONS FOR SPECIFIC COMMENTS. THE ORIGINAL POSTER GRAPHICS AND/OR PHOTOGRAPHS OF THEM ARE AVAILABLE TO BE VIEWED AS WELL.

GENERAL COMMENTS

1. Lot of work – thank you.
5. Can't wait for this to come to fruition! Not only useful, healthy, and a much safer link between the village centers, but a great way to build our community's identity, economy, and pride.
5. Along route, I'd like wider areas where benches can be placed to make it accessible for older people, families with kids, and others who need to rest periodically. Also these would be good spots for signage on historic info and natural history. Also works of art – public art installations.
6. I think the path should end at a green space and community center at Helen James building. Special consideration needs to be taken in how public will access the town center/businesses. Access to route (parking/walking to get on it) at many places to allow people to get on in Haydenville and in Williamsburg center.
8. Parking, parking, parking... it's going to be a big issue.
15. Cost for maintenance to town?
17. Yay! Keep up the good work!
20. Any of these alternatives will be a wonderful improvement! Whatever works!
21. Thanks for the hard work of the committee.
23. Would have liked to have had summary of pros and cons from feasibility report published as handouts.
24. So grateful for all your collaborative work on this. I may be using a walker but I will be on a Burgy Haydenville path someday!
25. I am excited about being able to walk & bike to Burgy! (esp the snack shack and ice cream)
26. Thanks for all the hard work!!
30. I am 100% supportive of this project. GOOD FOR OUR ENTIRE TOWN!!!
33. I'm an abutter who lives on South Main. I just want to appreciate the work that's gone into this project. I support having this project move forward and love the options presented. I'm open to having the people who are fully involved in the complexity of the issues make the needed decisions. Thanks so much for all your work.

40. I can't wait for this trail to be built! I commend the committee for its work thus far.
43. I like a wilderness/woodland feel... so hopefully not many trees will be cleared to make a wide open path, at least not in all sections. And please remember comments made at D.Donuts hearing about a 'rest-stop' park-like area in the vicinity of the newly emerging Dunkin Donuts!
46. Do as few bridges across as possible.
47. This project will make a huge positive impact on our town. Bravo!
48. This is not just a great project, it is a needed project.
50. I fully support this project and trust that the Greenway committee is making the right decisions moving forward. I appreciate the town's support of this. It will be even better than the failed rail trail effort which is amazing!
51. Very supportive of whole project!
53. A most important project. I'm all for it, and I'm very impressed with work done so far.
54. As an abutter, we own on South Main, we support the project and look forward to the utility that comes with the project.
57. Will there be parking spaces available for residents who live at a distance from the trails? The Greenway project is wonderful but it needs to be accessible. I look forward to the completion of this project. Good work!!
65. Trail development will improve infrastructure of various town roads, sidewalks, drainage systems, retaining walls, etc....
69. Looking forward to having a new path to walk and to having it on the river.
69. What are the maintenance costs of the Greenway estimated to be? Will there be some plowing?
70. This project is a great opportunity for our community! The possibility of connecting up with Northampton rail trail is too important not to pursue. The current state of Route 9 is too dangerous for many pedestrians and cyclists, this project provides an elegant solution.

RAIL TRAIL DISMOUNT

- 1B. Option 2 for design – boardwalk.
- 2D. Boardwalk – great option
- 3A. I think a boardwalk would be an eyesore. I much prefer a more natural access pathway.
- 4A. I like the boardwalk design!
- 5B. I prefer the boardwalk option. Aesthetically, its acceptable. The main factor for me is lower environmental impact, worth the increased cost.
6. I prefer option 2 (boardwalk design) for the Rail Trail extension.
- 8B. Trail Extension – option 2.
- 9A. It would be good to have a comparison of anticipated long-term maintenance costs for both alternatives. I like the boardwalk concept, but worry about replacement costs in 30-40 years.
- 13B. *(sticker vote for boardwalk)*
- 14A. Send the existing bike path to the easement you already have for Fairfield Avenue.
- 16A. I vote for the "option 2" - esp for less environmental impact, hoping the grants will pay for it.

- 20D.** Prefer for goat trail board walk if less impact on environment
- 21C.** The goat path solution seems adequate (*sticker vote for boardwalk*)
- 23A.** Prefer boardwalk version - smaller environmental impact
- 24A.** Love the boardwalk idea pls make concrete pebbly ie: non slip
- 26A.** The boardwalk is better option for longterm durability
- 26C.** (*sticker vote for boardwalk*)
- 27A.** Vote for boardwalk!
- 28C.** I prefer the boardwalk option. It will be more natural and require less clearing for construction.
- 30A.** On both designs, I'm thrilled to see that the re-grade will result in a steep hill outside the bud (?). It's important because it will dissuade trespassing.
- 31A.** I prefer the boardwalk design.
- 32B.** Mass Rail Trail Extension – Option 2 appears preferable as it has less environmental impact.
- 34A.** Boardwalk appears to have less impact to existing slope and will be less of a barrier to wildlife
- 34B.** Lots of other material choices that will be more permeable & not sacrifice surface performance.
- 34C.** Less opportunity to engage with river, guardrails at road and safety rails at pathway.
- 34D.** Detailing of railing would need careful attention to balance safety and visual/felt connection to river.
- 41B.** I have a preference for less environmental impact, therefore the boardwalk design. But it may depend on funding. I'm okay with either actually.
- 43D.** I like the trees and the mystique of feeling like I am in a 'wilderness' path with those densely packed trees on either side of the dirt footpath. I hope a stretch might remain as such or be recreated. This leg of the trail was, and still is when there is snow, a great area for cross-country skiing. I hope that it might be unpaved for that reason, or at least not plowed.
- 44A.** I like the boardwalk design best
- 45B.** Boardwalk design to across S. Main St. seems preferable if funds can be raised. Would likely last longer and have less environmental impact.
- 46C.** Do the proper grading for pavement and a more stable downward grade to S. Main.
- 48B.** Vote for boardwalk! A little more up front cost but long term maintenance costs are less and lasts longer than asphalt.
- 51A.** Prefer Option 1. Concrete boardwalk is not necessary. Only resource area is riverfront.
- 58A.** I like the less environmental impact and less tree removal that completes the boardwalk ease as the new existing rail trail does.
- 59.** Like the option 2 boardwalk design.
- 62A.** Prefer boardwalk concept due to less environmental impact
- 65A.** Boardwalk design is appealing and adds to trail interest. A plus for less destruction of existing conditions.
- 66A.** Less invasive version preferred. I like the old riverbank as intact as possible.
- 77A.** Much prefer sidewalk on East Side.

SOUTH MAIN CONNECTOR*

1C. *(sticker vote for east side sidewalk)*

2A. I am concerned about the traffic island connecting Bridge Rd. to So. Main. It needs to be completely redone. Stop signs, no parking on corners, cross walks, sidewalks.

2C. Easement to South Main needs to have safe access onto South Main, cannot see oncoming River Road traffic.

3B. I prefer the east side option -- seems more 'natural' on this side

4B. Like these! *(sticker vote east side South Main)*

5A. I would like to keep the sidewalk on the east side. The alternative on the west side seems potentially unsafe because of the multiple street crossings. The traffic calming will help but traffic approaches too fast from south.

6A. I prefer the east side route and think traffic slowing is necessary esp. in the residential area.

8. I bike South Main Street a lot... plans need to be made to SLOW traffic for this trail.

8C. Sidewalk alternative – east side.

10A. This seems like a safer option - no crossing street *(sticker vote for sidewalk east side)*

11A. Parking Concern: I'm looking for ways to drive to path & pull out my future recumbent tricycle near the Brassworks or across from Masonic Hall.

12B. I support connecting to the Mass Central bike path.

14B. You will be taking private property at the bridge and the upper end of 40 South Main Street.

14C. Heavy truck traffic and high speed of current traffic. Bridge is not wide enough for two commercial vehicles.

14E. No room for a 5 ft. wide path between the wall at 40 South Main (historical wall) and the roadway (utility poles).

14F. My deed is older than the road's current location. Town property is not 20 feet from center line.

14G. The wall is constantly moving – unstable. Who would be liable?

14H. There is a blind intersection at the end of Fort Hill Road.

14I. The town is currently dumping Fort Hill's run-off/stormwater onto 40 South Main which is moving the walls; eroding the side of the road.

14J. Double S-curve before existing bridge is extremely dangerous/blind when approaching proposed crosswalk.

14K. Currently having problems with people parking in our yard to use bike path. No parking available.

14L. Commercial traffic coming out of 40 South Main blind already – congested roadway.

14M. This is a very dangerous solution.

14N. Very blind curve at the end of South Main crossing bridge onto Route 9.

14O. History of an increase in crime to homes on bike paths – strangers in the neighborhood.

16B. I like staying on the same side of the river and avoiding 2 pedestrian crossings on South Main St.

20A. Any chance for sidewalk on west side of South Main thru village?

21D. The options along South Main are all good. Some engaging the river more than others – but all good.

- 23B.** Prefer east sidewalk - less impact on private property, more scenic.
- 26B.** I prefer the west side option IF the Fort Hill intersection is greatly improved AND if traffic calming options can slow the traffic near bike crossings.
- 28B.** Better to stay on East Side of South Main Street, despite the engineering challenges.
- 30C.** Please don't black asphalt sidewalks - Beautify the town with nice curbs and concrete.
- 30D.** Just keep it on the right/east! No extra crossings please!
- 40C.** I hope the option the east side of South Main proves feasible.
- 40D.** *(sticker vote sidewalk east side)*
- 41C.** The east side option is nice because it runs closest to the river and avoids pitfalls on the west side (telephone poles and stone wall)
- 44D.** This option makes sense to me - keep sidewalk on the same side of the road as the trail dismount.
- 45C.** On South Main, trail on east side of road looks to make more sense. Fewer street crossings, including Fort Hill Rd.
- 46D.** Stay on the same side as the path comes out on.
- 47D.** Sidewalk east side is logical, stays closer to river.
- 49A.** Turning into driveways with cyclists coming down street at night or with bad visibility (probably not an issue but I'd be concerned).
- 51A.** Prefer minimizing road crossings in Haydenville. What about 1-way street section?
- 51C.** *(sticker vote for sidewalk east side)*
- 54B.** I don't have an opinion on surface for coming down from S. Main - however I wouldn't like to use the bridge go to one lane - I think traffic and safety would be negatively impacted.
- 54C.** I believe the sidewalk should stay on the odd side of South Main all the way. It will be safer for both pedestrians & drivers.
- 58B.** I like the new path to stay to river side as it significantly increases the river views and doesn't require several crossovers
- 59.** Big concern with the safety issue at the end on South Main. Lots of traffic and narrow.
- 65D.** Makes more sense to put trail on east side of South Main.
- 77C.** Consider closing this bridge (to autos) for Greenway use (*library bridge*).

BRASSWORKS AREA

- 1A.** I'd like both Route 9 AND the meadows trail. Fast travel for fast bikes and leisurely walk/bike.
- 3C.** I would not like to see the dam go.
- 4D.** Consideration should be given to removing the dam and having the path/greenway behind the Brassworks. Climate change suggests more floods may be in our future.
- 5C.** I prefer green route because it avoids steep embankment along Walpole Rd. and because I prefer not to have Bridge B - would rather retain the look of river without new bridge there. I'd like to avoid the purple route because hope to get farther from Route 9.
- 6B.** I prefer the #2 route (#3 and 4 as second choices) for Brassworks area to avoid road side.
- 6C.** I would love to see a park, access to trails, and/or greenspace/recreational use in this land area. Planning for senior housing might be nearby, etc.

- 6D.** I would love to see the route along the river, as opposed to Route 9.
- 8A.** Alternatives for Brassworks: I like Alternative 2/Bridge B (*blue*).
- 9B.** Really like the alternatives across the river with two bridges. Much more interesting path, better connection to nature, more aesthetic.
- 10B.** Good option of bridge here (Bridge C) to go onto Route 9.
- 10D.** I like option blue or orange with new bridge.
- 11B.** The 'orange' trail behind the Brassworks appeals for lack of steep grade
- 12A.** I would love to be able to walk on the Brassworks meadow side of the river.
- 15A.** (*sticker vote for Brassworks meadow side trail*)
- 16C.** I like the scenic quality of the yellow line staying away from Route 9, esp as it enters a possible park on Eversource land.
- 16D.** Cross over the river again at the Haydenville library (to save all the tree clearing needed if it followed Walpole Road) then stay near Route 9 to pass the Snack Bar, etc.
- 17D.** I would prefer the orange route AND the purple route.
- 18B.** The entry to the parking lot is difficult as-is, introducing ped/bikes at that point would make it worse, unless reconfigured.
- 18C.** Reconfiguring the road/Brassworks interface could improve its 'feng-shui.' Grade and the unused steps.
- 18D.** If the Brassworks became a destination, the main trail could take the south (*Walpole*) side of the river, but a spur could go to the Brassworks.
- 20C.** Really hope we can have a trail through meadow.
- 21B.** The route that crosses near vets and opens into old field where Williamsburg celebrations were held gives a needed relief from Route 9 traffic and a view up and down the river (could this be done with existing Skinnerville Bridge?). Onward through the Brassworks meadow area – would produce an excellent view of the riverbend and add a feeling of spaciousness which would be welcome after the confinement of the earlier parts of the trail and proximity to vehicular noise, odors, and distraction – crossing back over the old dam would be very dramatic although the approach would require a cantilevered boardwalk to solve steep slope problems. Once across the dam the choices are fairly easy without too many major engineering problems.
- 21A/B.** Getting into the Brassworks flood plain would be so soothing to the human spirit – spacious and interesting – away from the traffic etc. That route may cause "consistent use problems" i.e. flooding at times but in my humble opinion the Brassworks meadow and old fairgrounds are worth the expense and occasional inconvenience.
- 23C.** Option 3 route (*yellow*) too steep in sections?
- 23D.** Route 2/Bridge B preferred.
- 24B.** I'm very fond of bridges, they provide natural stopping/contemplation spots but I think I'd prefer the Route 9 wall option as looks like it would keep us closer to the river.
- 26D.** I favor Route 3 (*green*) that brings the path through the Brassworks meadow. Both for aesthetic and long term road safety reasons, a bike path should take the prettier route, well away from Route 9.
- 27B.** Is it possible to have trail on both sides?
- 27C.** Decommission of the dam.
- 28A.** Utilizing this land for a greenway/park would be a tremendous asset to the town.
- 28D.** Decommission the dam.
- 29A.** Hopefully, bike path, bridges, etc. will complement the future use of the Brassworks as a building – similar to Eastworks in Easthampton. Easy access for walkers, parking, a

park (?) – something lovely to look at, accessible to all modes of travel – extend a park on the west side of the river.

29B/C/D. We need both trails – following the road for general travel, snow removal in winter. We need inner road to develop park-like environment. We will need access to park cars; wheelchairs; bikes; walkers. Goal should be to interconnect recreational with business, schools, homes, etc.

32A. With regard to the Brassworks alternatives, I think the orange route makes a very attractive choice.

34C. *(sticker vote for Route 9 purple trail)*

37C. It would be best to remove the dam completely, which means I would prefer the yellow path.

40B. I hope there will be a viable option behind Brassworks. I hope there will be a path on the south side of the river. I'm very excited about integrating a park into the plan.

41A. I love the idea of getting off the highway as much as possible and extending the path behind the Brassworks (thru their current parking).

41D. I love the idea of a town park... and of taking down the Brassworks dam in a deliberate way instead of waiting for it to tumble down from the next hurricane.

43C. *(yellow)* I would like a stretch to be in a sort of a woodland setting, though I understand the potential need for snack kiosks and rest areas (in Brassworks parking and foyer/entrance areas) as well as the fact that this scenario is the lesser cost.

44B. I like Bridge B, I don't like the path along Route 9.

44C. *(sticker vote at Bridge B)*

45A. I think it will be important for many trail users to avoid steep slopes – like Walpole Road area.

46A. I think going up Walpole Road and staying behind the river on that side is a good idea.

46B. Good idea to not disturb the river – just stay on this side and away from Route 9.

47A. This town would benefit enormously from open space/park on WMECO land. Historic, aesthetic, recreational, ecological benefits. Please pursue this!

47B. How about a park and loop trail around lower Valley View farm, with only one bridge (bridge C) to access? Main route stay on Route 9.

47C. Love how this project will revitalize the Brassworks!

48C. Consider removing dam. Prefer routes around Brassworks that go behind building.

54A. To get around the Brassworks, I like option 2 or 3 *(green or orange)*– I think that 4 *(blue)* is good too but maybe harder. I like staying off Route 9 if possible and using the meadow. However if the route 9 option is the only feasible option, making it extra wide would make me more likely and comfortable using it.

58C. I would like to see both the purple road option AND the trail on opposite side & park options that presents.

58D. Decommissioning the dam would encourage better river environment and less tree removal below dam.

59. Move traffic light to the intersection.

60A. Love the idea of getting into meadow area and off Route 9 as soon as possible.

61A. Please think about access to the river under the dam so we could go swimming.

62B. *(sticker vote for bridge over dam)*

62C. Only concern, limited parking.

- 63A.** Alternative 1 (*yellow*) seems like the best option because it's the path of least resistance.
- 63B.** Seems like we should avoid anything that goes across an old dam that might fail at any time.
- 65B.** Use of Meadows through Brassworks area more appealing than riding on roadside.
- 65C.** Would be an excellent place for a park!
- 66B.** Use the current Skinnerville Bridge (new, craned into place ~2 yrs ago?) at this location & extend the road down from the 3 Skinnerville houses.
- 66.** Don't like purple route on Rt 9@ Brassworks. Hope the riverbank trails are viable options with owners. But – next I heard Nick Dines' concept for Rt 9 "sidewalk" and that sounds pretty cool (But still be nice to be off the road at that curve).
- 69B.** If we end up keeping the Greenway along Route 9 at the Brassworks curve, could there be one bridge over to a potential park?
- 77B.** Concerned about uncertain future with Valley View Farm owners if Greenway follows this route.

ROUTE 9

- 2B.** Put traffic light where it should be at intersection of High Street/Route 9/Bridge St. This would also cut down on speeding through the center of town Haydenville.
- 4C.** Like seeing sidewalk continue!
- 6B.** Support of crossing from the riverside route (*over Route 9*) to local businesses would be very important to me (*at Williamsburg Pharmacy*).
- 10C.** Needs a light here for pedestrian/bike crossing (*South St/Route 9 intersection*)
- 11C.** Route 9 "purple trail" -- After seeing all choices I think this would be aesthetically good, protected from highway and right "on" the water.
- 13A** (*sticker vote at High Street/Route 9 intersection*)
- 18A.** With the trail ending at the James School, it would be great to have the school grounds be welcoming, with gardens and recreation.
- 20B.** One could cross (river) at Bridge Street instead of library, would D.Donuts make an attractive rest stop by river??
- 21.** The path along the river curve up by the Snack Bar is a huge undertaking whereas a few bridges would side step the need.
- 26A.** Concerned about pedestrian/bike crossing. Could there be a responsive signal? Will need a crossing from High Street AND in front of town offices.
- 30B.** While these sketches are beautiful, I love the idea of being further from traffic while on the trail.
- 37D.** East side sidewalk is a great idea, but don't forget crosswalks to walk across to businesses (*at Williamsburg Pharmacy*).
- 40A.** Very smart to 'piggyback' with Route 9 reconstruction.
- 43A.** How will people cross the road to get to businesses?
- 48.** I'm concerned about relying on building two bridges. May end up using Alt. 5 through the "pinch."

- 48A.** Think about moving Skinnerville bridge further south so that path can use that bridge, too.
- 48D.** Need adequate cross walk areas to get to other side of road. Suggest raised areas. *(downtown Williamsburg)*
- 49B.** Traffic light at this intersection *(near town offices)* should go!
- 54D.** I am not sure of the feasibility, but I would love to see a roadway option (i.e. from Williamsburg to the vet if the purple route is selected) that gets bikes separate from cars – i.e. on the pedestrian side of the barrier. I see this as particularly important for allowing kids to transverse between the two towns.
- 62B.** Preference for trail to be more distant from Route 9 (sound & visual appeal). However, I could see that some folks might like to use the trail to travel from Burgy to the Riverview Restaurant and the Village Green.
- 69A.** I like the idea of walking or riding by the water. Could we get closer to the river just below the Pharmacy Bridge?
- 69C.** I'm concerned about people wanting to cross the road at the Village Green.
- 77D.** Consider saving the large sycamore – detour the paved greenway around it on a boardwalk – would also enhance connection to river and make for a wayside.

(note: #64 is letter emailed to committee by South Main St. abutter, comments regarding signage, asphalt, traffic control, etc. on South Main Street).

*(self-identified South Main abutters: Comment Sheets #2, 14, 33, 54, 64)