

A Vision for an Inter-State Recreational Path: Williamstown, MA to Pownal, VT



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I. Introduction

Just as rivers and railroad corridors have historically linked small towns throughout the country, so too can recreational paths. Following railbeds, back roads, and highways, bike paths and multi-use trails are reconnecting communities throughout the United States. The opening of the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail in Berkshire County, Massachusetts in 2001 represented the potential for recreational paths in the Berkshires, and it has been incredibly popular and successful. The tri-state area on which we focused—comprised of Williamstown, Massachusetts, Pownal, Vermont, and nearby New York—comprises a key link in several trail networks. Our task in this project was to consider the potential for a recreational path from Williamstown, through the communities of Pownal and North Pownal, and to the New York border.

In addition to being at the epicenter of trail networks, this region is renowned for its natural beauty. The Hoosic River and Berkshire and Taconic Mountains form a perfect backdrop for a recreational path. Furthermore, this area offers a great deal of cultural and historic attractions, and a trail would only enhance the draw of tourists to the area.

In addition to a general examination of the benefits of recreational paths and policies related to their creation, we were also interested in gauging the level of support in this area. By surveying residents of Pownal and the students, faculty, and staff of Williams College—who comprise an active population—we learned that there is overwhelming support for such a project. The reservations that we heard helped us to better understand specific aspects of trail construction. In order for a path like this to ever be feasible, it must have the whole-hearted support of the communities and the political and financial backing of the municipalities. Our research leads us to believe these conditions could be met.

We considered three route options, all of which essentially follow the Hoosic River corridor north from Cole Avenue in Williamstown, by the Route 7 bridge, through Main Street in Pownal, to the Tannery Site in North Pownal, and to the New York border. The three options are Rail with Trail, which would use the corridor owned by

Guilford Transportation Industries, following the abandoned rail line next to an active line; Bike Lane, which would use the road shoulder of Routes 7 and 346; and Country Roads, which is a route encompassing secondary public roads, private roads, forested areas, and sewer easements. This report contains the results of our analysis of the feasibility of creating a recreational path along this route.

II. Project History

A. Context

The Mahican-Mohawk Trail is a route that approximately follows the Native American trail from the Connecticut River in central Massachusetts to the Hudson River in eastern New York and is in the Deerfield and Hoosic River drainages. Several organizations, among them the Hoosic River Watershed Association (HooRWA), are working towards the long-term goal of recreating this historic transportation corridor by means of a multi-use recreational trail (with different sections devoted to hiking trails, bike paths, etc.). This trail would enhance the historic ties between many communities, as well as connect numerous natural and cultural features of the landscape.

The Berkshire Bike Path Council (BBPC) is a volunteer organization that was founded in 1998 and has also been active in the creation of bike paths in Berkshire County, Massachusetts. Their greatest achievement to date came in 2001 when the first stage of the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail was opened. This 11-mile trail originates near the Berkshire Mall in Lanesborough and continues north through Cheshire to the center of Adams. The trail was created along a former rail bed, and with its gorgeous scenery along the Cheshire Reservoir and thoughtful attention to detail, it has met with tremendous success with people of all ages and abilities. The second section of the trail, from Adams to North Adams, is in the design stages.

The Mahican-Mohawk Trail and the efforts of the BBPC intersect in northern Berkshire County. In the spring of 2002, a group of Williams College students produced a feasibility study for a section of bike path between North Adams and Williamstown.¹ This route would connect to the northern terminus of the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail, be situated along the Mahican-Mohawk Trail, and, specifically, connect the thriving

¹ Fletcher, et al. *Mahican-Mohawk Bike Trail Feasibility Study*. Williams College. May 2002.

Massachusetts Museum of Modern Art (MassMoCA) in North Adams with the Station Mill (Phototech) site in Williamstown which is currently under redevelopment. The BBPC, with assistance from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, took this study into account and is currently examining specific routes and working with a design consultant. Furthermore, the BBPC's application for a Scenic Route grant was recently approved and a formal design study is underway.

B. Client Goals

Our project is one piece of a wider vision. Our principal client was Mr. Lauren Stevens, a Board Member of both the Hoosic River Watershed Association (HooRWA) and BBPC and an outdoor enthusiast. Our task was to create a feasibility study for a recreational path from Williamstown, across the Vermont border, through Pownal and North Pownal, Vermont to the New York border. This will "pave the way" for a future group (possibly of Williams students!) to extend the path into New York, along the Hoosic River until it joins the Hudson River.

One important consideration when creating a recreational path is that it connect specific places and that the route serve some purpose. Whether the path is used primarily for recreation, or whether it also serves some commuters, it is imperative that it unite natural and cultural features. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to incorporate a trail into redevelopment plans for certain sites. We identified two specific sites in Williamstown and two in Pownal. First, the path should make an effort to attract the Williams College community. This is a large and active constituency, and one of our route options would cross the College athletic fields along Stetson Road. Additionally, we would hope to see the path included in the redevelopment efforts for the Phototech mill site on Cole Avenue. In 2003, a group of Williams College students examined redevelopment opportunities and explored the idea of including this recreational path.² In Pownal, there are two sites that are in the midst of revitalization. The former Tannery site in North Pownal is a cleaned-up Superfund-site, and plans have been discussed regarding turning this area into a park. Additionally, the former Green

² Endres, et al. *Redevelopment Plan for the Station Mill (Phototech) Site*. Williams College. December 2003.

Mountain Race Track currently sits abandoned on Route 7, but recent news articles mention plans for the sale of this site to a private firm.

Mr. Stevens would especially like to see the path parallel the Hoosic River. A recreational path is an ideal way to expose many people to the river, which will hopefully lead to increased appreciation and stewardship of it. Furthermore, a path could provide additional access points, such as canoe launches.



View of rail paralleling Hoosic River, south of Pownal Tannery site, looking north.

C. Site History – A Tale of Two New England Villages

Williamstown is a rural village in the northwest corner of Berkshire County and the state of Massachusetts. Surrounded by mountains, this town in the so-called “Purple Valley” is renowned for its natural beauty, cultural attractions, and Williams College. Located in the Hoosic River Valley, Mount Greylock is can be found just to the south-east. In 1765, to comply with the will of Colonel Ephraim Williams, the hamlet of Fort West Hoosac changed its name to Williamstown and promised to found a free school. In 1791, this school was established, and in 1793 it was renamed Williams College. Williamstown thrived on dairy farming, sheep herding, and wool production, but it was the advent of the Industrial Revolution that drastically changed the town. With easy access to the railroad and to water power, Williamstown, like other northern

Berkshire towns, was home to many successful mills, including the Walley Mill, Station Mill, and Water Street Mill.³ While the mills are gone and the agricultural sector has lost prominence, the combination of the College and the prestigious cultural institutions—including the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Gallery and the Williamstown Theatre Festival—have led to increasing gentrification and tourism.

Pownal is located in the southeast corner of Bennington County and the state of Vermont. The Hoosic River flows through the town before continuing northwest into New York. Pownal is also renowned for its natural beauty, including the mountain known as The Dome. Chartered in 1760, Pownal includes three distinct locales—Pownal and North Pownal (which are linked by the Hoosic River and the railroad) and Pownal Center. Pownal is home to the Oak Grove Seminary, where both Presidents James A. Garfield and Chester A. Arthur were instructors. It was also the site of Vermont's only race track—the Green Mountain Race Track, which ceased to be in use in the 1970s and currently sits abandoned along Route 7. Like Williamstown, Pownal flourished both agriculturally and industrially, as evidenced by the former Tannery located on a manmade falls in the Hoosic.

A demographic comparison of the two towns yields some interesting results. Williamstown has a population of 8,424 (all figures from the 2000 Census).⁴ College students account for approximately 25% of the population, and the College is a major employer, with 51.3% of the population occupied in educational, health, and social services work. The population is 90.8% white, 3.1% Asian, 2.8% Latino, and 2.7% African-American. The town boasts an economically prosperous population, as the median household income is \$51, 875, with 5.5% of individuals living below the poverty line and an unemployment rate of 3.5%. Furthermore, 53.6% of the population holds a bachelors or more advanced degree. Census data on commuting to work, which may be of interest to bike path planning, shows that the mean travel time to work is 13.6 minutes, that 60% of people drive alone and that 26% of people walk to work.

³ Williamstown House of Local History. <http://www.milnelibrary.org/hlh.html>

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary.

Pownal has a population of 3,560. While almost identical to Williamstown in area, 46.65 vs. 46.89 square miles, the population density is a mere one third of Williamstown, 76.31 vs. 179.66 people per square mile. The population is 97.8% white, with the remaining minority population quite evenly distributed amongst other races. With a median household income of \$39,149, 9.6% of individuals are living below the poverty line. Commuting to work is primarily accomplished by car with just 38 Pownal residents, or 2.1% of the population, walking to work. With an average commuting time of 23 minutes by car, it seems unlikely a large portion of the population could use a bike trail to commute to work.

Demographic Comparison

	Williamstown	Pownal
Population	8,424	3,560
Area (sq. mi.)	46.89	46.65
Population density (persons per sq. mi.)	179.66	76.31

For the purposes of our study, it is important to examine the types of planning that have taken place in both towns, specifically regarding recreational options. Between summer 2000 and fall 2002, Williamstown underwent a rigorous self-examination process that resulted in a new draft town Master Plan. Led by the Master Plan Steering Committee, town residents were surveyed and vision statements were drafted on a variety of issues. When residents were surveyed in April, 2001 (with a response rate of 450 households) on the importance and supply of various recreational needs, the two elements that were found most lacking yet most desired were swimming facilities and bike and running paths.⁵ In the Open Comments that were received from this survey, it is clear that a common concern is the current situation, exemplified by Green River Road (Rt. 43), in which vehicular traffic, bicycles, and runners all share the

⁵ Williamstown Master Plan Survey, April 17, 2001.

road. Several respondents expressed a desire to see a bike path built to reduce the number of runners and cyclists using the narrow shoulders of roads, and two noted that, since many users are students, perhaps the “College should help pay for it.” The possibility that “established bike paths would be a boon to residents and tourists” was also noted.⁶ Additionally, under the guidance of the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation (WRLF), an Open Space and Recreation Plan was developed in the summer of 2003. Two Williams College students (Maura Commito ‘04 and Jocelyn Gardner ‘05) assisted Leslie Reed-Evans, Executive Director of WRLF, in this effort.

We are not aware of the existence of a Master Plan for the town of Pownal, though such a document may have been drafted at one time. In our conversation with Karen Burrington, Town Clerk, we learned that Pownal is currently in the process of creating a wastewater treatment plant and digging new sewer lines, which involves negotiations with Guilford Transportation Industries.

D. Benefits of Recreational Paths

The area that we examined constitutes about 8.5 miles of trail. It is clear that this section could not exist in a vacuum, and its role as another link in a chain of other trails cannot be overemphasized. In fact, all of these trails in Berkshire County provide a vital link between the well-established trails in eastern and central Massachusetts (e.g. Cape Cod Rail Trail, Norwottuck Rail Trail, Northampton Rail Trail) and those in New York State (e.g. Harlem Valley Rail Trail) and farther west. It must be recognized that all trails are created in this way—guided by a larger vision, trails are created section-by-section by many individual communities.

This vision speaks to the wider importance of recreational paths. Throughout the country trails have been shown to have tremendous positive benefits. Trails increase the recreational opportunities available to people of all ages and abilities and provide a safe place for a variety of forms of exercise. Numerous studies indicate the economic benefits of trails and show that they have positive effects on businesses and home values. Additionally, as increasing numbers of people plan their vacations around trails, locations such as Cape Cod and the Pioneer Valley (in western Massachusetts)

⁶ Open Comments from Williamstown Master Planning Survey, 2001.

have profited from their trails in this way. While the Berkshires already draw large numbers of tourists to its cultural attractions and natural scenery, a recreational path would only enhance this lure. As was mentioned, there are historic ties between the communities of Williamstown and Pownal, but many of these have weakened in recent decades. A path would reinforce this two-way connection and would especially aid the association between the Williams College community and Pownal.

The concept of smart growth is a buzzword in the field of planning. This popular concept refers to planning that “protects open space, revitalizes neighborhoods, makes housing more affordable, and improves community quality of life.”⁷ Furthermore, it emphasizes transportation options that provide an alternative to automobiles. Thus, a recreational path would contribute to goals of promoting alternative transportation, conserving natural resources, and enhancing the quality of life for those who live, work, and recreate in the surrounding communities.

III. Community Research (see *Appendix A*)

One of the challenges implicit in the creation of a feasibility study is a survey of the populace to determine general views on the topic. With two distinct towns plus the Williams College community as potential patrons of the trail, we aimed to gather data about these communities. There is significant existing data available for the broader Williamstown community, thanks to the Master Plan survey process as well as the Open Space and Recreation Plan produced by the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation. Furthermore, with the North Adams to Williamstown route already proposed, the concept of bike paths has certainly been raised in Williamstown. Thus, we were particularly interested in surveying the people of Pownal and the Williams College community—a significant source of people seeking places to exercise and recreate.

We used two surveying techniques: 1) In Pownal, a face-to-face anonymous written survey that we handed out at random to people at the Stewart’s Shop and Pownal Post Office; 2) A web-based survey for the Williams community in which we solicited respondents via an e-mail. The faculty/staff and students each filled-out the

⁷ Hugh Morris. *Trails & Greenways: Advancing the Smart Growth Agenda*. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. September, 2002.

survey via a web-based form that automatically compiled the results into a database. This offered the most accurate input method since we received over 900 survey responses from faculty, staff and students.

In Pownal, we gave out 37 surveys and received 19 back directly, as well as another five by mail, totaling 24 respondents. While by far our smallest sample of the three surveys, we did receive the best response rate, 65%. The gender balance was even at 50% female, 50% male. The average age of our respondents was 38. For the Williams Faculty/Staff survey, we sent out 2,260 e-mails asking people to fill-out our web survey. We received 335 responses, for a response rate of 15%. Gender was well-balanced, 52% female, 48% male, and the average age was 45. The student survey received a response rate of 26%, or 568/2,210. Gender was 54% female, 46% male, and the average age was 19.6.

A. Exercise Habits (*Appendix A, Figures 1 and 2*)

To gauge the level of current activity by each group, we asked the following question: "During the warmer months, how frequently do you walk, ride a bike or go running?" While a vast majority of each survey group exercise on a regular basis, we wanted to know why they don't exercise more often. We then asked: "What prevents you from bicycling, walking or running more often? (check all that apply)." In each survey group, over a third of respondents answered "no time." Another sizable response was "nowhere safe" which received 26% from the faculty/staff and 33% from Pownal.

B. Prior Trail Experience (*Appendix A, Figure 3*)

When asked "How many times have you used other recreational trails?" and given examples of trails in Massachusetts and Vermont, 70% (228/335) of respondents answered three or more times. When a similarly worded question was asked in the Pownal survey, 50% of respondents (12/24) said that they had used a recreational path more than once before. In both the faculty/staff and Pownal surveys, we saw only a small percentage of users that had been on a path only once or twice: Pownal 8% once before, faculty/staff 8% once before, 8% twice before. In Pownal, 37% (9/24), responded that they had never been on a recreational path, while 14% (46/335) of

faculty/staff surveyed group said they had never been on a recreational trail. Given this data, there seems to be a strong correlation that once people use a recreational path, they are likely to return to use it or another path again.

C. Level of Support (*Appendix A, Figures 4 and 5*)

In our Pownal survey, when asked “What would you likely use the recreational path for?” (check all that apply) 83% of respondents indicated that they would use the trail for recreation. In addition, 75% said they would use the trail for exercise. The Williams faculty/staff survey indicated that 79% (265/335) would use the trail for recreation. Even a higher percentage, 82% said they would use the trail for exercise (281/335).

Williams students were asked: “Would you be in favor of the college constructing a 5-mile flat paved recreation path easily accessible from campus?” Out of 536 respondents, 435 (81%) said Yes. Those that said No, did so for a number of reasons including a large number of runners who did not wish to run on pavement. Another concern was that resources might be diverted from other more pressing issues to construct the path.

With that new information, we slightly revised our question that was posed to the Faculty/Staff, “If new funding resources could be found, would you be in favor of the college constructing a 5-mile flat recreation trail easily accessible from campus? The trail would be linear and offer both pavement and crushed stone surfaces.” This proved to be almost universally favorable with 97% (307/315) answering in the affirmative.

D. Comments

We received a combined total of 323 comments submitted with the surveys. There were 131 faculty/staff comments, 182 student comments, and 10 Pownal comments. A complete list of the comments is available on request. Included below are just a few of the comments that represent the broader compilation:

- *We would definitely like to use such a trail for roller skiing as well - this comment is made on behalf of the entire Mt. Greylock High School Ski Team (about 70 individuals!) —Williams Faculty/Staff Member*

- *I think this would be a valuable asset to not just for the college, but the whole Williamstown community...It would also provide a place of interaction between the community members and college students. — Williams Student*
- *I know several ten year old kids who don't know how to ride a bicycle: that says it all. Williamstown is located at the intersection of three state highways and there's no safe place to ride. We all want to ride, but who wants to put bikes on the car and drive 25 minutes to the mall? A recreational path will improve our quality of life 100%!
—Williams Faculty Member*
- *I would love more things to do with the kids in exercise form. Thank you.
—Pownal Resident*
- *I'm all about the word "flat" on this page...for a Midwestern girl, the laziness factor is significantly increased by inclines. — Williams Student*
- *It would be nice to have a place other than RT 43 for the students to run. This would lessen the chances of me killing one of them, (usually dressed in black while running after dusk) on my way home from work. —Williams Staff Member*
- *Amherst has a paved walk a few miles in length and it gets a lot of use and is very enjoyable. — Williams Student*
- *These type of trails are valuable to users and non users from a safety perspective. They also greatly increase quality of life for users.
—Williams Staff Member*
- *Go go. Ash[uwillticook] trail is best public project in years. —Pownal Resident*
- *My home town built a recreational trail using an old rail trail and it gets incredible usage. It has actually helped increase the values of the properties in its area due to its great appeal. This would be a tremendous and needed addition to the region. —Williams Faculty Member*

- *This would be a very good idea, as a member of the Cross Country team, while there are a lot of running routes from and around campus, many of them are actually quite dangerous. Also, once we shift back to standard time...it is very difficult and unsafe to run outdoors. Having a paved path adjacent to campus, free from the dangers of the roads, would provide a safe alternative. (Although our bright yellow reflective vests are really quite attractive...)* —Williams Student
- *Although Williamstown is rural, it suffers from the lack of safe running, walking, biking trails for college students, residents, and children. Most joggers are forced to run along Cold Spring Road which seems very dangerous to me. It is a problem that could be solved by a good trail.* — Williams Faculty/Staff Member
- *My hometown built a 6-mile paved recreation path on an old railroad bed and it is VERY popular. I walk/run on it basically every day when I'm home, and I think people would use it a lot here if there was one.* — Williams Student
- *I think it would be a great idea!!!* —Pownal Resident

IV. Description of Route and Alternatives (see Maps in *Appendix B*)

The tributaries of the Hoosic River begin near the Berkshire Mall in Lanesborough, MA and meander north-west, all the way to the Hudson in Schaghticoke, NY. In Williamstown and Pownal the river flows through a narrow valley, filled in part with sediments that have washed down from the surrounding hills since the glaciers retreated ten thousand years ago. Under the sediments, the valley is filled with clay-rich material, deposited in Lake Bascom which once covered the area. The clay-heavy soils and sloping terrain make farming difficult in much of the area. The small populations of the towns are still mostly clustered in communities near the river.

The proposed recreational path would begin at the Phototech mill at the end of Cole Avenue in Williamstown, and end near the Hoosic River at the New York Border in Pownal, Vermont. The general course of the path would be following the river. There are several ways that could be done.

A. Rail with Trail

The former Boston and Maine Railroad (now owned by Guilford Transportation Industries) passes through the area, following the flat grade near the Hoosic. Once home to two tracks, trains now travel on only one. In most places the rails of the second track have been completely removed. One possible route would follow the path left empty by the second rail.



View of active and inactive railroad tracks in Pownal, VT, looking north.

The rail passes under Cole Ave. on the northeast side of the river (the opposite side from Photech), and remains on that side of the river all the way into New York. The active rail line runs between the empty rail and the river. Between Cole Ave. and Route 7 the rail passes through lowland that is free of houses, but is home to old coal silos and the town-owned Bridges Pond. At one mile, the rail passes under Route 7 and diverges from the river, passing between Route 7 and the Williamstown Department of Public Works, the transfer station, and the sewage treatment plant. The rail returns to close proximity to the river just north of Steinerfilm Inc. It then follows close between the river and Route 7 to the Green Mountain Race Track. After the race track, the rail passes through a residential part of Pownal. The road extending from the Northwest Hill Road Bridge is at 4.5 miles. The rail continues through Pownal, then passes through

mostly open farm land to the Tannery at North Pownal (at mile 7). From the bridge at the tannery site the rail continues along the river. Just north of Indian Massacre Road the two rails diverge. The unused line crosses Route 346 and continues on the north side of the river into New York (the active line crosses the river near the border).

B. Bike Lane

North Hoosic Road, Route 7, and Route 346 follow a course similar to the rail. These roads are somewhat hillier than the rail, but they do not have many large, steep hills. Route 7 has large shoulders in some places, but the roads generally have narrow shoulders and fast moving traffic. The roads, while less scenic and further from the river than the other possible routes, would provide easy access to homes and businesses.

C. Country Roads

The third option would make use of many different pieces of land along the way. This would pass through land held by many different owners and along secondary roads. It would begin on the Hoosic Water Quality District (HWQD) sewer easement at Cole Ave., pass through the Phototech Mill site, and cross Cole Ave. to Stetson Road. Stetson Road and the sewer easement continue onto the Cole Fields on the Williams College campus. Just beyond the soccer field, a paved access road diverges from the sewer easement and Stetson Road, and continues on past the softball field. This road leads to a building with public restrooms. The path could diverge from the existing road at the softball field, then pass through a wooded area and cross the Hoosic onto town-owned land. On the northeast side of the river, the path would continue through the wooded area until it met with the access road to a former gravel pit. The gravel pit road parallels the railroad, passes under Route 7 (at 1.1 miles), and meets Simonds Road near the HWQD wastewater treatment plant. Williamstown owned land continues to Steinerfilm Inc. and includes a road currently used to access the Department of Public Works and Countryside Landscaping. Beyond the Williamstown land, just before meeting Broad Brook, the path would cross the Hoosic River. On the southwest side of the river, the path would pass through private land to Old Farm Road. The path would continue along the road to Northwest Hill Road, and on to the Northwest Hill Road

bridge in Pownal (5 miles). Remaining on the southwest side of the river, the path would follow the road past Palmer Farm. This road ends, and the path would pass through the wooded area (on private land) until meeting some private roads around the Tannery and nearby gravel pit. After the Tannery, the southwest side of the river is wooded, and the northeast side is dominated by the railroad and Route 346.

There are many possibilities for variation on this plan. In Williamstown, the sewer easement provides a possible route from the Photech mill to the HWQD plant. The sewer easement passes directly through the Photech site, then crosses Cole Ave. and follows Stetson Road through the Williams College playing fields. To the west of the playing fields, it rejoins the Hoosic at the site of a recent Army Corps of Engineers bank stabilization project. It then passes through several private parcels, crosses Route 7 and crosses a horse farm before traversing the Hoosic to the sewage treatment plant.

In Pownal, there is also the possibility of incorporating sewer easements. Pownal is currently putting together a network of sewer lines to serve the town from a treatment plant on the Tannery site. These lines have not yet been constructed, so there is potential to include a recreational path in the project's planning stages.

Another possible route of the trail would not make use of Old Farm Road and Northwest Hill Road. Rather, the path could remain near the river after passing Steinerfilm (it would probably need to cross to the northwest side of the river due to the proximity of the rail line). It could then cross back over the river to the Green Mountain Race Track and parallel the Hoosic into Pownal.

V. Policy and Cost Considerations

When considering building a recreational path, two important questions to consider are who owns the right-of-way and how will the trail attain the use of the corridor? While the support of private organizations, non-profits, and community groups is an essential component in the creation of recreational paths (as with the BBPC and the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail), the completed trails are generally owned by government agencies. While no specific figures are available for land acquisition costs, other numbers can be used to help estimate the costs associated with each option.

There are several funding sources that dedicate finances specifically to recreational paths.

A. Rail with Trail

One route that we analyzed would follow a two-track rail corridor owned by Guilford Transportation Industries. Currently, one track is used by Guilford for freight traffic while the other track is abandoned. The rail and ties have been removed in most places along the abandoned line. The right-of-way extends along the entire length of the proposed route, and there are numerous precedents for combining active rail lines and recreational paths.

Railroad corridors represent historic transportation passages that linked communities throughout the United States. When regional rail service ceased in many areas, these corridors were left abandoned, but came to be recognized as vitally important connecting routes. In 1983, Congress created the Rails to Trails program “to preserve abandoned rail corridors as trails until the day the nation might need them again for rail traffic.”⁸ Twenty years later, the program has spread rapidly and there are currently over 1,193 rail trails in the U.S. covering over 12,648 miles.⁹ Additionally, in the past decade, the federal government has invested \$4.5 billion in the program.¹⁰ A lesser known variation of rail-to-trail is rail-with-trail; multi-use trails that parallel active rail lines. A November 2000 report by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy analyzed 61 rails-with-trails across the nation, noting that these trails exist in 20 states, account for 6% of the total number of rail trails, and are used by 8.2 million people annually.¹¹

As Josh Lehman, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for MassHighway, emphasized, in the absence of specific laws regulating rail trails, every aspect of rail trail planning must be determined on a case-by-case basis.¹² One of the greatest challenges of this project is that it concerns an inter-state route, and the two states involved have different histories and cultures regarding rail trails.

⁸ “‘Rails to Trails’ Faces Some Bumpy Tracks.” *The Wall Street Journal*. November 3, 2003.

⁹ Craig Della Penna, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. personal communication, November 11, 2003.

¹⁰ “‘Rails to Trails’ Faces Some Bumpy Tracks.” *The Wall Street Journal*. November 3, 2003.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p.5

¹² Josh Lehman, MassHighway. personal communication, November 17, 2003.

In May 2001, the Massachusetts Senate published a report entitled *Getting on Track: Common Sense Ideas to Expedite Rail Trail Development in Massachusetts*. This study notes that national reports “highlight concerns with how Massachusetts’ transportation decision-makers choose to use federal dollars. These reports reveal that Massachusetts ranks at the ‘bottom of the barrel’ nationally at moving these projects forward.”¹³ This report also praises the efforts of neighboring Vermont, noting its accolades from the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse and its efforts to streamline the project development process and include citizen advocates in decision making.¹⁴ Furthermore, the Vermont Agency of Transportation Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which was adopted in December 1998, includes rail trails as an important component. The plan notes the benefits of rail trails, including “a pre-existing right-of-way, a sub-base that is usually strong and well-maintained, and an historical context within the community.”¹⁵ The report further observes, “a rail trail serves not only bicyclists and pedestrians, but other users such as snowmobilers, all-terrain vehicles, and equestrians.”¹⁶

When any rail trail, but especially a rail-with-trail, is proposed it is often met with concerns about safety and liability. This apprehension may come from both the railroad company and from the community, and it is critical to assuage the fears of both groups in order to successfully build a trail. Rails-with-trails are not incompatible with the railroad companies. One of the best sources for current thinking on rails-with-trails is the August 2002 report *Rails-with-Trails: Lessons Learned—Literature Review, Current Practices, Conclusions* published by several agencies within the U.S. Department of Transportation. As this report demonstrates, at least 61 rails-with-trails have been built in the U.S., and for 38% of those analyzed, the attitude of the railroad company in question was described as “supportive,” “positive,” “good,” or “great.”¹⁷ Furthermore, rails-with-trails can even benefit the railroad company. In 1998, the Wheeling

¹³ *Getting on Track: Common Sense Ideas to Expedite Rail Trail Development in Massachusetts*. Massachusetts Senate, May 2001. p. 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p.23-24

¹⁵ Vermont Agency of Transportation, *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*, December 1998. p.41

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p.41

¹⁷ *Rails-with-Trails: Lessons Learned*, August 1, 2002. p.9

Corporation, which operates a regional railroad based on Ohio, published the report “Rails with Trails” in which they articulated their position:

We at the Wheeling Corporation see many benefits of rails-with-trails within some of the communities we serve, both in economic development and enhancing the beauty of the area. With properly patrolled trails, these areas could see a dramatic decrease in trespassing, vandalism, and sabotage. And hopefully, through it all, the public will become more informed about our industry and the economic benefits of the rail carrier serving their area.¹⁸

The railroad in question in our project is Guilford Transportation Industries. According to several sources in the field—Craig Della Penna (Rails-to-Trails Conservancy), Amy Bell (VTrans), Jennifer Howard (MA Department of Conservation and Recreation), and Jim Sullivan (Bennington County Regional Commission)—Guilford is “tough” to deal with and opposed to rail trails along their lines. Though this section of the route only runs eight slow-moving freight trains (four eastbound and four westbound) daily, and there would physically be space for a trail, the consent and support of Guilford is a hurdle that would need to be overcome.

According to the *Lessons Learned* report, 47% of rail-with-trail corridors are owned by a government agency (usually States, counties, or municipalities).¹⁹ An additional 11% of managing agencies attained partial ownership of the rail corridor by purchasing an easement. “Transfer of ownership is seen as the cleanest way to reduce liability risks,” and “financial compensation also helps gain railroad company support for projects.”²⁰ In Vermont, many rail trails are “leased to and managed by the Department of Forest Parks and Recreation.”²¹ As the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy November 2000 report *Rails with Trails: Design, Management and Operating Characteristics of 61 Trails Along Active Railroads* notes, trail maintenance duties fall primarily to municipal and county governments. The report found 62% of trails are maintained by city or town, 18% by county, 7% by state, 2% by federal government,

¹⁸ Ibid. p.29

¹⁹ Ibid. p.31

²⁰ Ibid. p.31

²¹ Vermont Agency of Transportation, *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*, December 1998. p.43

and 7% by a “Friends of the Trail” group.²² Furthermore, 90% of trail managers reported that the railroad does not help maintain the corridor.²³ Thus, while an enthusiastic group of volunteers is basic to the creation of a recreational path, so to is the whole-hearted support of the local government—who may end up owning and managing the trail.

In calculating the approximate cost of the rail-with-trail option, we were, thus, not able to include land acquisition. This is a large unknown that would require negotiations with Guilford. According to several sources, including David Shufelt, Executive Director of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association in upstate New York, the cost to construct a recreational path along a rail bed is approximately \$125,000 per mile.²⁴ Furthermore, this option would require fencing or a divider between the trail and the active rail line. The construction figure we used was from the Maintenance and Facilities costs from a trail in Asheville, North Carolina—\$20 per linear foot of fencing.²⁵ There may be numerous options for a divider, including using landscaping.

B. Bike Lane

A bike lane is “a portion of a roadway that has been designated by striping, signing, and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicycles.”²⁶ One major advantage of the bike lane route is that there will not be any costs associated with attaining access to the majority of the land, as public roads would be used. It is important to remember, however, that the current road would likely need to be widened in some sections, which may encroach on private property and necessitate complicated negotiations. The only cost that was factored into the cost comparison for this route is the construction cost. According to a figure from the Florida Department of Transportation, the cost to construct a 5-foot wide pavement extension on both sides of a road is \$189,000 per mile.²⁷

²² *Rails with Trails: Design, Management and Operating Characteristics of 61 Trails Along Active Railroads*. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, November 2000. p. 25 (n.b. some trail managers identified more than one group)

²³ *Ibid.* p.25

²⁴ David Shufelt, Harlem Valley Rail Trail. personal communication, November 22, 2003.

²⁵ *Maintenance Protocols. TN Greenways Workshop*. October 7, 2002. Document forwarded by Beth Timson, Durham, NC.

²⁶ Spokane Regional Transportation Authority. <http://www.srtc.org/glossary.htm>

²⁷ *How much do bicycle and pedestrian facilities cost?* Document forwarded by Beth Timson, Durham, NC.

C. Country Roads

This option involves a combination of public roads, private roads (such as Williams College-owned Stetson Road), and private land. Again, the cost of land acquisition is unknown and variable. This option would necessitate the purchase of easements, some of which run through forests and floodplains. This route has the most potential for causing new environmental impact and would require both special permits and variances from the Williamstown and Pownal Conservation Commissions.

The figure used for construction costs was the same as for rail-with-trail—\$125,000 per mile. Additionally, if this route were to be used for the entire 8.5 mile path, it would require the construction of several bridges which would significantly add to the cost.

D. Cost comparison

For the reasons outlined above, the costs of land acquisition are variable and are often the result of negotiations. Thus, in the comparison below, this cost is omitted. Additionally, this cost comparison is for the construction of the entire route according to each option. As will be described in the Alternatives Analysis, we explored the possibility of a combination route, using different surfaces in different sections.

Cost Comparison

	Rail with Trail	Bike Lane	Country Roads	Do Nothing
Land Acquisition	unknown	unknown	unknown	\$0
Construction	\$125,000 per mi x 8.5 mi	\$190,000 per mi x 8.7 mi	\$125,000 per mi x 9.1 mi	\$0
Bridges	\$0	\$0	unknown	\$0
Fencing	\$20 per linear foot x 5,280 ft x 8.5 mi	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Cost	\$1,960,100	\$1,653,000	\$1,137,500	\$0

It is also important to remember that even after the path is created, there are costs associated with maintenance. Many trails have been fortunate to find that as communities come to embrace the trails, they also feel a sense of stewardship and are willing to volunteer to ensure its upkeep and beautification. In addition to committed volunteers, the managing organization of a trail will typically sign an Inter-municipal agreement with the municipal and county governments involved, which covers both maintenance and liability.²⁸

E. Funding

In 1991, Congress passed the pioneering legislation, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA; pronounced “ice tea”). The passage of ISTEA was a result of the changing focus of the U.S. Department of Transportation to expand transportation options, including those with environmental, social, and recreational benefits. One of the significant programs included in this legislation was the Surface Transportation Program (STP), which stipulated that 10% of the funds a state receives through ISTEA must be spent on Transportation Enhancements (TE).²⁹ TE projects must fall into one of twelve categories, including historic preservation, preservation of abandoned railway corridors, scenic highway programs, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities, safety, and education activities.³⁰ Since the inception of the program, \$2.4 billion has been invested in over 12,000 projects, with more than half of the funds spent on bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including rail-trails.³¹ In 1998, ISTEA was followed by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), which reauthorized these funding opportunities. TEA-21 expired in September 2003 and has been extended until February, 2004, but there is uncertainty about the reauthorization of the act.

Two key points to note about TEA-21 funding is that it carries with it the same requirements as other federal highway money and that distribution is at each state’s

²⁸ David Shufelt, personal communication, December 2, 2003.

²⁹ *Transportation Enhancements Overview*. Federal Highway Administration.
<http://fhwa.dot.gov/environment/tea2.htm>

³⁰ National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse. <http://www.enhancements.org>

³¹ *Transportation Enhancements Overview*. Federal Highway Administration.

discretion. Any project that is funded through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transportation Agency (FTA) must conform to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); it must be evaluated to ensure its compliance with a variety of social, economic, and environmental conditions.³² There are a few stipulations that relate specifically to bike trails. Most notably, "According to 23 U.S.C. 217(h), motorized vehicles (including ATVs) may not be permitted on the trails and pedestrian walkways which use Federal highway funds." In the case of snowmobiles, State or local government may make its own regulations.³³ According to Amy Bell, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for VTrans, laws regulating ATV use are very explicit and very restrictive. In fact, the only circumstance under which one may legally operate an ATV is if on one's own property or if specific written permission to be on another's private property is carried on one's person. Furthermore, ATVs are prohibited on government and public land.³⁴ Craig Della Penna of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy qualified this statement by noting that in New Hampshire, legislation has enabled ATV use on federally-funded trails; there are no absolutes regarding this policy.³⁵ An additional specification for the use of TEA-21 funds is that it cannot be used to fund bicycle/pedestrian trails that are solely for recreational use. The purpose of the trail must be "principally for transportation purposes," such as commuting to work and travel through recreation areas.³⁶

It is state Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) that typically distribute TEA-21 funds. In Massachusetts, the TEA-21 program is coordinated by the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) and project selection is principally made by the Regional Planning Agency. In Berkshire County, the relevant agency and MPO is the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), which is headquartered in Pittsfield. According to Zoe Neaderland, Senior Planner at BRPC,

³² Federal Highway Administration

³³ *Transportation Enhancements Q & A's*. Federal Highway Administration.

³⁴ Amy Bell, VTrans. personal communication, November 13, 2003.

³⁵ Craig Della Penna, personal communication, December 11, 2003.

³⁶ *Transportation Enhancements Q & A's* Federal Highway Administration.

BRPC does not fund projects, although all regional federally funded transportation projects must be submitted and prioritized in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and must come from the Regional Transportation Plan (which supports a north-south bike facility), both coordinated by BRPC for the Berkshire MPO.³⁷

Furthermore, a project must be proposed by a municipality, public agency, or commission, and not a private or non-profit organization. In Vermont, TEA-21 is managed and project selection is made by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans). Applications for funding may be made by local governments, MPOs, or non-profit organizations. In Bennington County, the relevant planning organization is the Bennington County Regional Commission. According to Amy Bell, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for VTrans, the fact that applications for TEA-21 funding must be endorsed by municipalities, makes it imperative for a community to fully support the idea of a recreation trail. The fact that TEA-21 funding is distributed separately at the state-level complicates matters for an inter-state trail. As Craig Della Penna noted, he could not recall a bi-state trail funded with TEA-21 money.³⁸

In addition to Transportation Enhancements, other federal funding sources which are part of ISTEA/TEA-21 include the Recreational Trails Program—which is distributed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation and allows for motor-vehicle use—and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)—for which recreational paths qualify “due to the program’s primary goal of improving air quality.”³⁹ Additional funding sources include federal earmarks obtained through the local Congressmen.⁴⁰ The Ashuwillticook Trail was principally funded by earmarked funds obtained by Rep. John Olver (D-MA). In December 2003, Rep. Olver continues to work to attain funds for transportation in Berkshire County. Due to the success of this model with the Ashuwillticook Trail, it is recommended that funding be pursued through Rep.

³⁷ Zoe Neaderland, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. personal communication November 17, 2003.

³⁸ Craig Della Penna, personal communication, November 11, 2003.

³⁹ *Getting on Track: Common Sense Ideas to Expedite Rail Trail Development in Massachusetts*. Massachusetts Senate, May 2001.

⁴⁰ Zoe Neaderland, personal communication November 17, 2003.

Oliver and Rep. Bernie Sanders (I-VT). Additionally, there may be state money for projects such as this. State money is available through the Transportation Bond Bill, which has been used to fund the Norwottuck and Minuteman Bike Trails in Massachusetts⁴¹ and through the states' Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs.

The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy November 2000 report *Rails with Trails: Design, Management and Operating Characteristics of 61 Trails Along Active Railroads* also considered the sources of funding used for trails. In a 2000 survey, trail managers were asked to indicate the sources of their funds (and could select more than one option). Their findings reveal that while 43% of the trails were at least partially reliant on federal funding, there is diversity of funding options that are utilized by recreational paths⁴²:

Funding Sources for Rails with Trails

State funds	43%
Private funds	36%
Federal funds	41%
City funds	43%
County funds	20%

VI. Alternatives Analysis (see Maps in *Appendix B* and Alternatives Analysis Charts in *Appendix C*)

In order to compare the three alternatives, we rated them on a variety of characteristics. The pros and cons of each option were considered.

A. Method of Analysis

The approximately 8.5-mile trail corridor was divided into four sections. The division between each section is a bridge where the surface choice of the path might easily be switched without the need for extensive construction. Each surface, on each section, was given a score of 0, 1, or 2 for every one of ten factors (as described

⁴¹ Josh Lehman, personal communication, November 17, 2003.

⁴² *Rails with Trails: Design, Management and Operating Characteristics of 61 Trails Along Active Railroads*. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, November 2000. p.27.

below). These are a measure of the quality of the factor on that section, with 2 being the best. For example, the railroad gets a score of 0 for 'Divider' because the need to construct a divider is undesirable. It gets a score of 2 for 'Surface,' on the other hand, because the abandoned rail area would need relatively little work before it could be paved. The different factors were then weighted. The weighting was done by a multiplier of 1, 2, or 3, based on the importance of the factor to the feasibility of a path. The multiplier serves to amplify the desirability (or undesirability) of each score.

B. Factors

Cost/Logistics:

- Divider: A divider would need to be constructed nearly the entire length of the rail route, to protect users from passing trains. No divider is less costly and preferable.
- Bridges: Newly constructed bridges would need to accommodate emergency vehicles and would be expensive. Fewer bridge constructions are favorable.
- Surface: The current surface of any route would need to be made flat, stable, and wide enough for a path. The routes that require the least work are considered better.
- Land Ownership: Private land owners could refuse the use of their land for a path. The routes that require the fewest negotiations with private landowners are preferred in this regard.

Character of Trail:

- Traffic Danger: Much of the desire to build a recreational path is to get people away from the worry of cars. The less interaction with traffic the better.
- Slope: Steep slopes might limit the users of a path, and thus flat terrain is preferred.
- River Access: One of our client's goals is for the path to help people interact with and enjoy the Hoosic River. Routes that facilitate this interaction scored higher.
- Accessibility: People need to be able to get onto the path with ease. It is also desirable that the path have access to businesses and attractions.

- Scenic: The path will more likely be used if it and its surroundings are aesthetically pleasing, and some alternatives meet this need better than others.

Environmental Impact:

- New Disturbance: In following a river valley, the path is bound to infringe upon wetland buffer zones and flood plains. If the impact of the path can be limited to areas that have already experienced similar impact, the path itself will be doing less harm. Thus, alternatives along previously disturbed land scored higher.

C. Rail with Trail

The rail with trail route is attractive in many ways. The construction of the trail surface would be relatively easy. In most places along the route the empty rail bed provides a flat compact surface that could be paved with little preparation. The route would, however, require the construction of a divider between the active rail line and the path, in order to protect path users and prevent trespass onto the rail line.

The rail line is already an effective transportation route and closely follows the river. It would provide good access to many homes and businesses along the route. Access to the river, however, would be limited, as the active rail line runs between the empty line and the river. River access would be gained only at road crossings along the way, and would require trail users to cross the active line. This presents possible safety hazards, and could make the path less attractive to the rail company.

There are several specific locations that could pose additional problems. While the rail line does provide the benefit of existing bridges over many of the obstacles along the way (brooks entering the Hoosic and the entrance road to Steinerfilm in Williamstown) the bridges may not be wide enough to accommodate a train, a path, and a barrier between them. The bridges may need to be widened for the path by cantilevering support to the existing structure. The rail line also passes through a narrow gully near the Tannery in North Pownal. When the rail corridor was originally built, the gully was created by blasting rock. The corridor is probably not wide enough to safely accommodate a path, and thus the passage would need to be blasted wider, or the path would need to be placed somewhere else.

D. Bike Lane

In terms of land acquisition, constructing a bike lane along Routes 7 and 346 may be the easiest of the three options. Providing a safe route for recreation is one of the most important aspects of a path. The roads in consideration are heavily traveled by trucks and commuters; they are also narrow in many places. A bike lane would principally be used by people traveling on bicycles, but it would exclude many other uses and thus not meet some of the goals we have outlined.

Routes 7 and 346 are currently too narrow to accommodate a bike lane on both sides. Over most of the route, there is space into which the roads could be widened, but there are sections where, due to terrain, this would be both costly and difficult. The road passes through residential areas and widening it could infringe on private property. One section of Route 346, just east of the Tannery, presents a problem similar to that faced by the rail option. The route would need to pass through the same narrow gully described above.



View of narrow shoulder on Route 346 in Pownal, VT, looking south.

E. Country Roads

This option could provide a path that meets the goals we have presented; its construction may be more difficult. The Country Roads route would follow the Hoosic River closely, and avoid crossing the rail line. Piecing a path together from many

different surfaces could provide a greater flexibility in connecting to locations along the way, such as Williams College and the Green Mountain Race Track.

The Country Roads alternative, while utilizing significant portions of public land, would involve numerous private land owners. We hope that a path would be a welcome use of land for anybody with holdings in the 100-year flood plain. The path may also follow the Pownal sewer lines when they are installed, thus utilizing a new public corridor.

This route would inevitably involve the construction of bridges. The Hoosic would probably be crossed several times in order to utilize public land, former roads, and flat areas of the flood plain. There are also numerous brooks and streams along the way that would need to be crossed. There are twelve brooks that are large enough to be shown on a USGS map—seven on the southwest side of the Hoosic and five on the northeast side. Some of these, like Broad Brook, would require a bridge nearly as large as that across the Hoosic. Additionally, there may be many smaller streams that would need culverts or small bridges. Bridge costs could be reduced by making small bridges (which could not accommodate emergency vehicles) as long as each section of the trail had an access point. Alternatively, the Hoosic could be crossed a few times in order to avoid numerous brook crossings.

This route also includes some roads. The roads are much quieter than Routes 7 and 346, but traffic would still need to be considered. Some of the roads are also unpaved. Incorporating a paved path into the corridor provided by an unpaved road will require some creativity, and it may not be necessary to pave the path in these sections.

VII. Recommendations

A. Recommended Route

As our analysis shows, the route that we recommend is the Country Roads option for the section from Cole Avenue to the Route 7 bridge over the Hoosic River, and the Rail with Trail option for the remainder. We suggest that a 10-foot wide paved path be constructed, with a stone/dust shoulder for use by runners, walkers, and equestrians who may prefer this surface. We also think that the option of an entirely

non-paved trail for the portion in Pownal should be explored, as this Vermont has generally been more open to this option. Of course, the reason that we analyzed several different surface types for the path is that we recognize that there may be obstacles to the achievement of certain options in some areas. In fact, our rankings and our approximate cost estimates are not vastly different for the three route options, with the Rail with Trail and Country Roads options being very comparable.

B. Steps to Success

In our research and discussions with experts in the field, we learned several important lessons about the creation of recreational paths. First, that the utmost patience throughout the entire process. Second, the formation of trails is a political process, and it is essential that all decision-making be kept open. Trails take different forms in different regions, and the path must be tailored to the desires of the community. Third, is the principle, "If you build it, they will come." While we were unfortunately only able to familiarize ourselves with a small portion of the Pownal populace, we feel confident that if a trail was built along our route, it would be embraced by both the Williamstown and Pownal communities. Thus, it is imperative that these communities are active and involved in this process.

Additionally, we suggest that the BBPC increase its efforts in north Berkshire County and expand them to include the residents of Pownal. The Ashuwillticook Trail is a model for this path in many ways, and this body is an instrumental component. We also suggest that Williams College play an active role in the creation of this path. Monetary support, both during and after construction, and the involvement of the College in general would significantly facilitate the creation of a path and its acceptance by the College community. In terms of the route, we feel that in order to be successful, the path must provide a safe and non-complicated place for people to spend time. The path must also have a clear purpose and destination and logically connect to sites within the communities of Williamstown and Pownal. We think that a recreational path is desirable in this area, and with these guidelines, we feel that it is feasible in the near future. We fervently hope to see this piece of a greater vision continue the successful tradition of recreational paths in New England.

Acknowledgements

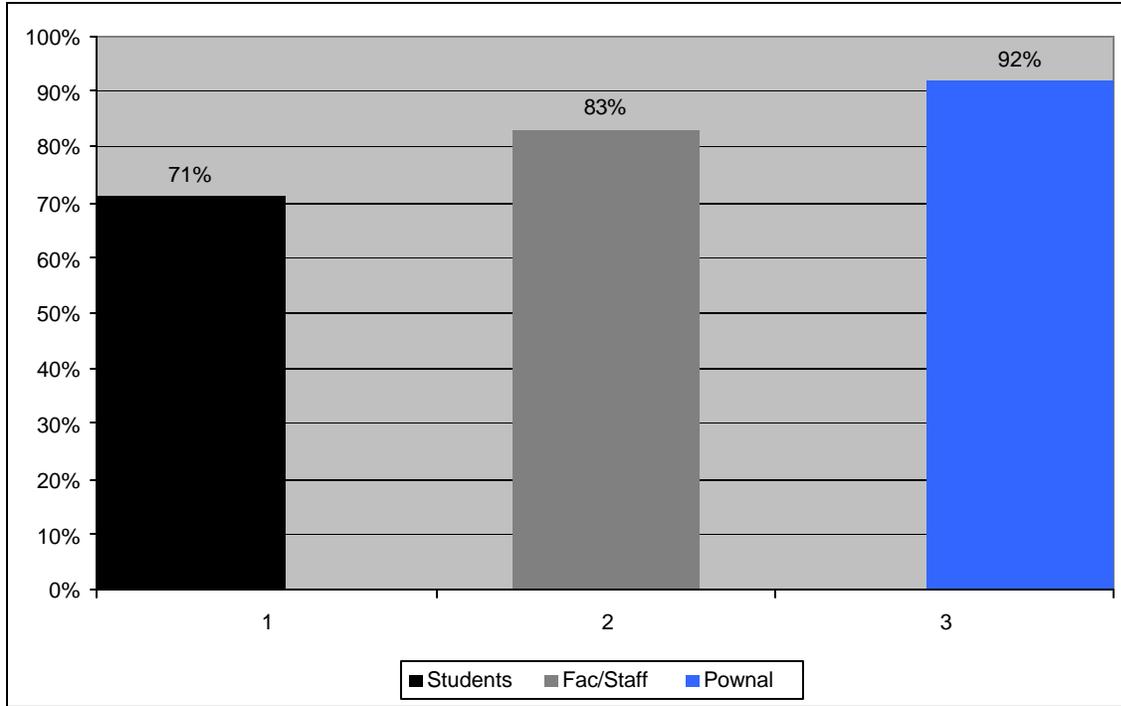
We are indebted to all of the people who shared their knowledge and time with us. Many thanks to Lauren Stevens (HooRWA/BBPC); Marge Cohan, Tom Galvagni, and Zoe Neaderland (BBPC); Craig Della Penna (Rails-to-Trails Conservancy); David Shufelt '83 and Rhianon DeLeeuw '04 (Harlem Valley Rail Trail); Bettina McCrady (Springfield [VT] Trails and Greenways); Amy Bell (VTrans); Jim Sullivan (BCRC); Josh Lehman (MassHighway). Special thanks to Profs. Hank Art and Sarah Gardner.

Appendix A

Results of Community Research

Figure 1

During the warmer months, how frequently do you walk, ride a bike or go running?



Percentage of respondents who exercise on at least a weekly basis.

Figure 2

What prevents you from bicycling, walking or running more often? (check all that apply)

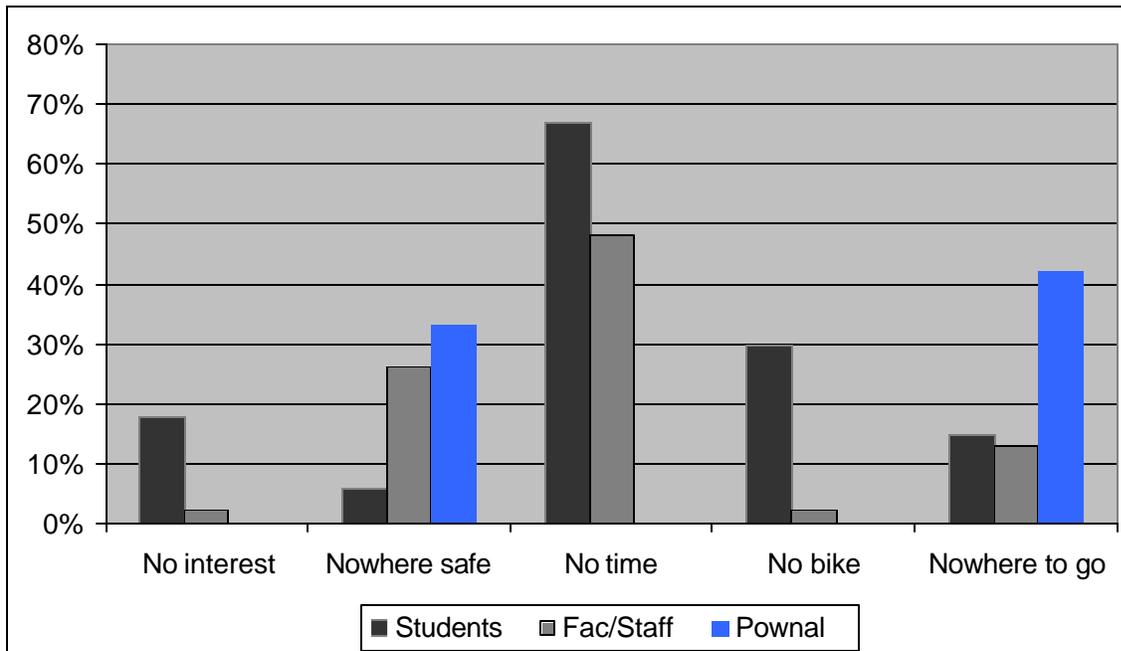


Figure 3

How many times have you used other recreational trails?
(faculty/staff)

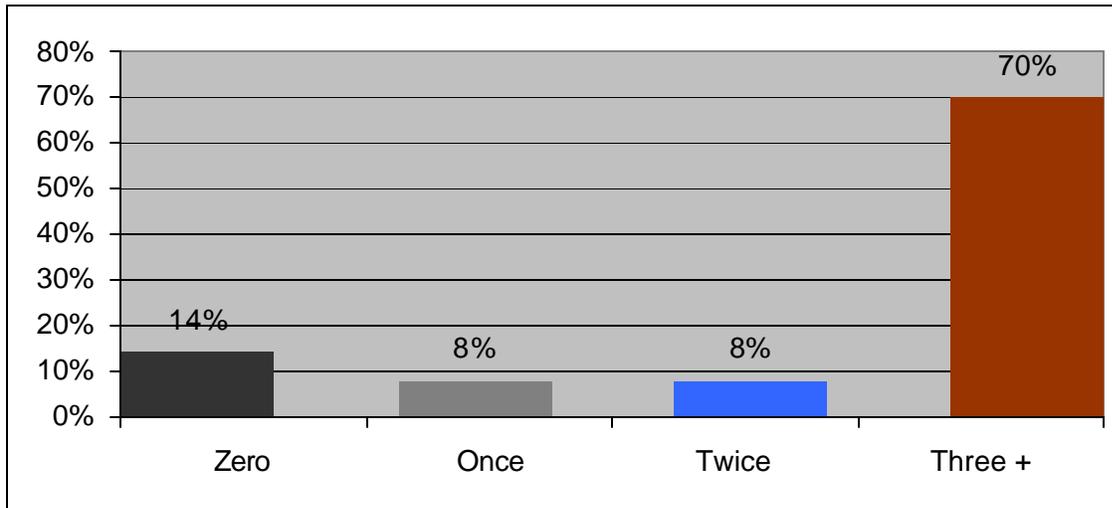


Figure 4

Would you be in favor of the college constructing a 5-mile flat paved recreation path easily accessible from campus? (students)

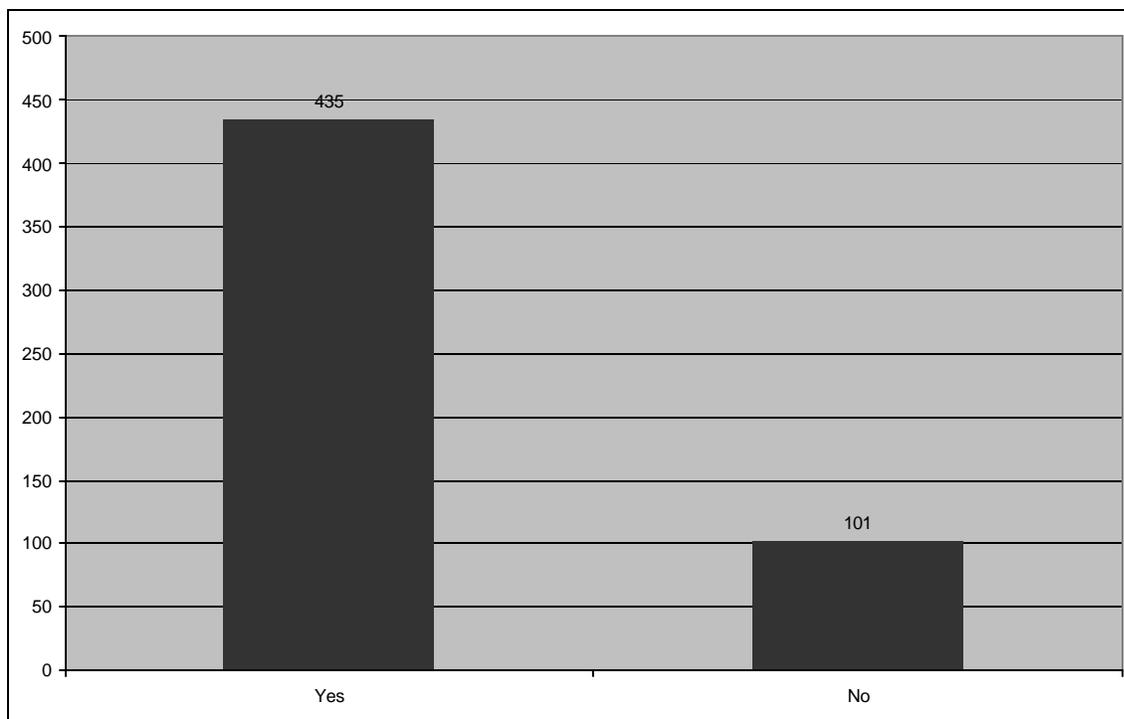
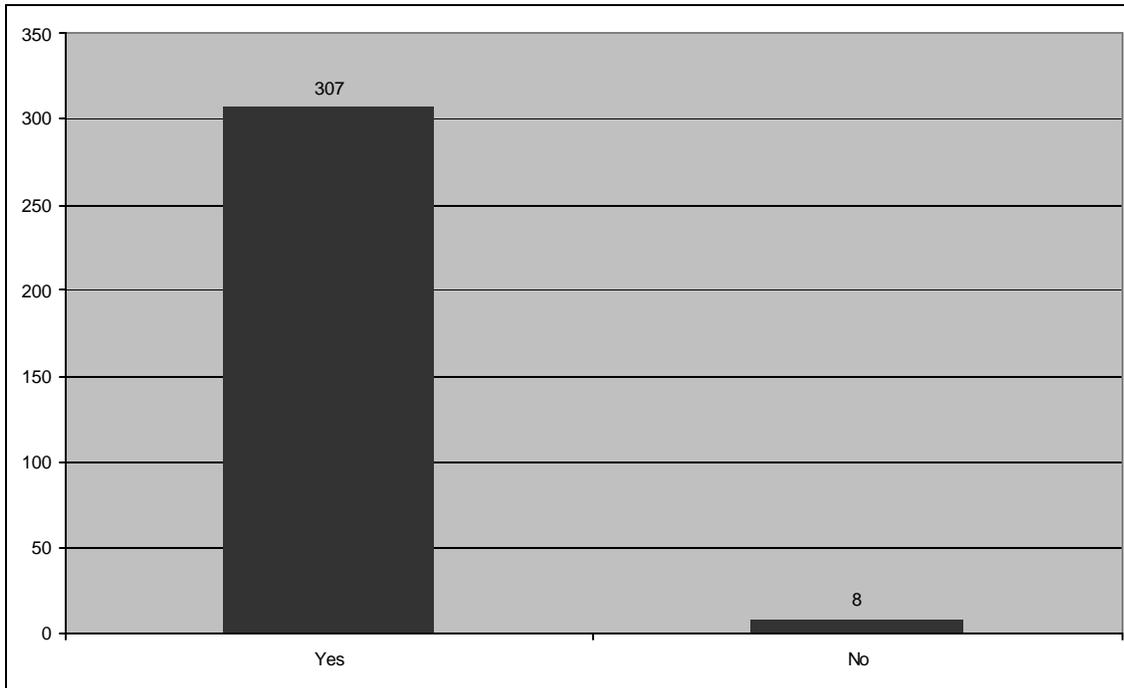


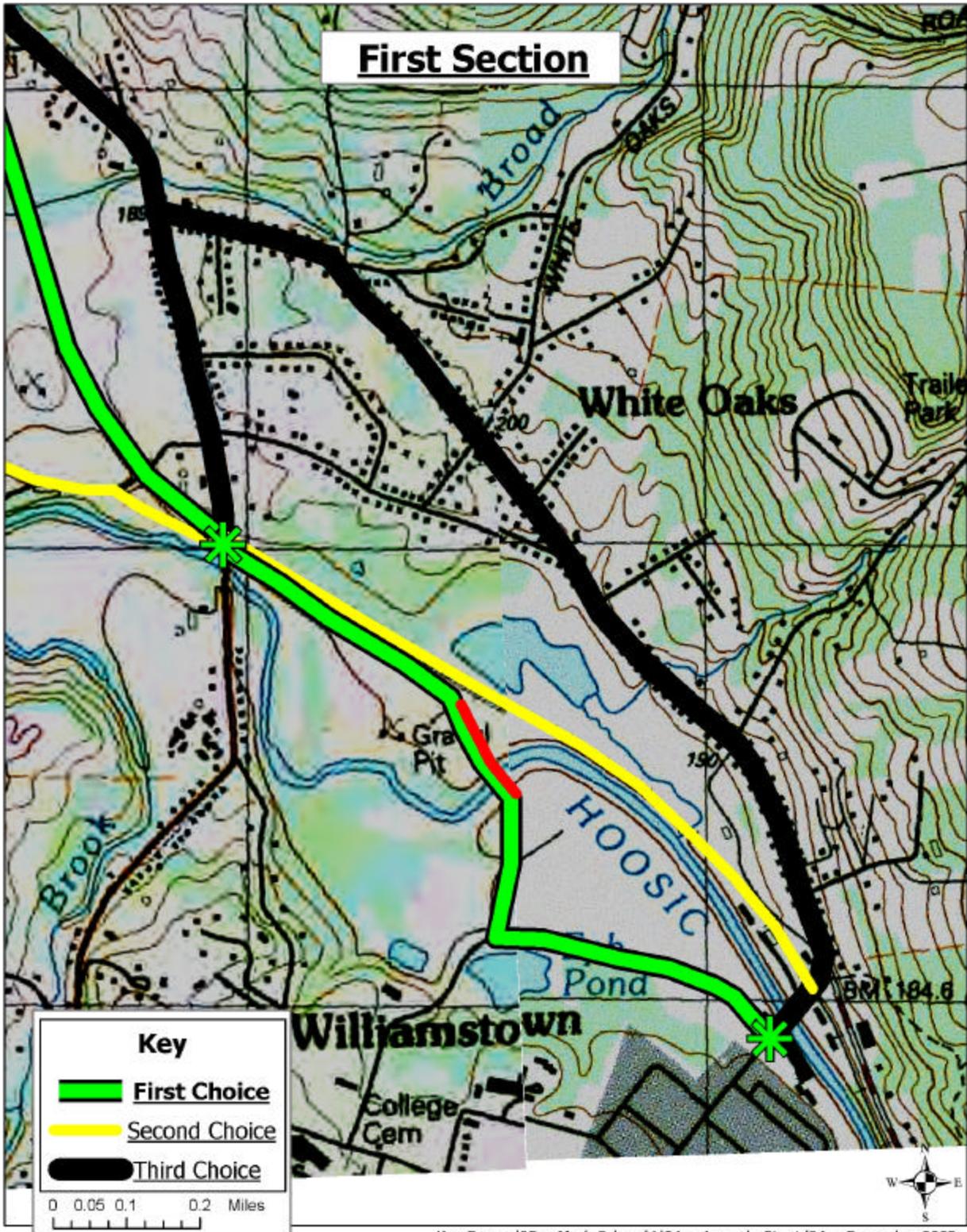
Figure 5

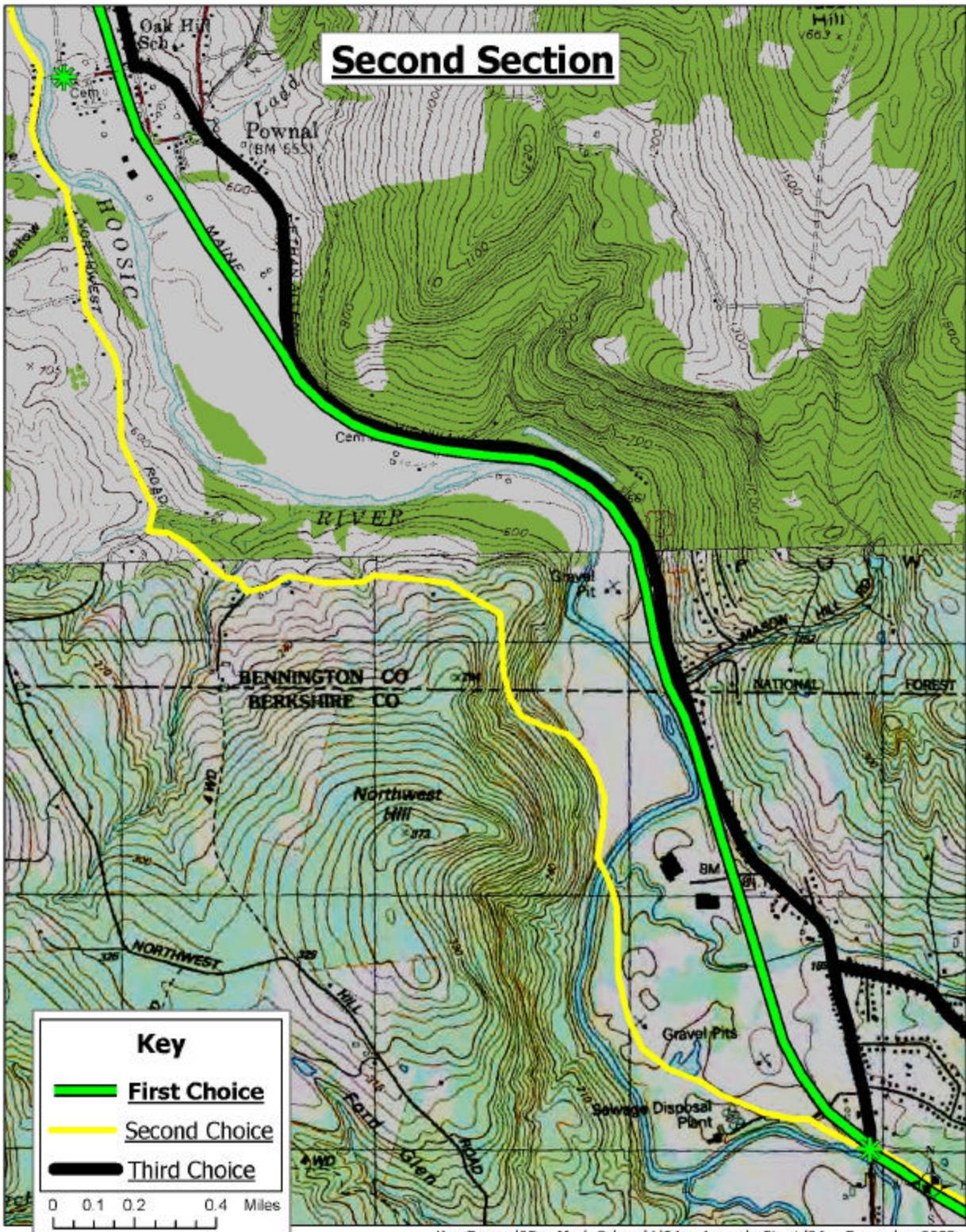
If new funding resources could be found, would you be in favor of the college constructing a 5-mile flat recreation trail easily accessible from campus? The trail would be linear and offer both pavement and crushed stone surfaces. (faculty/staff)

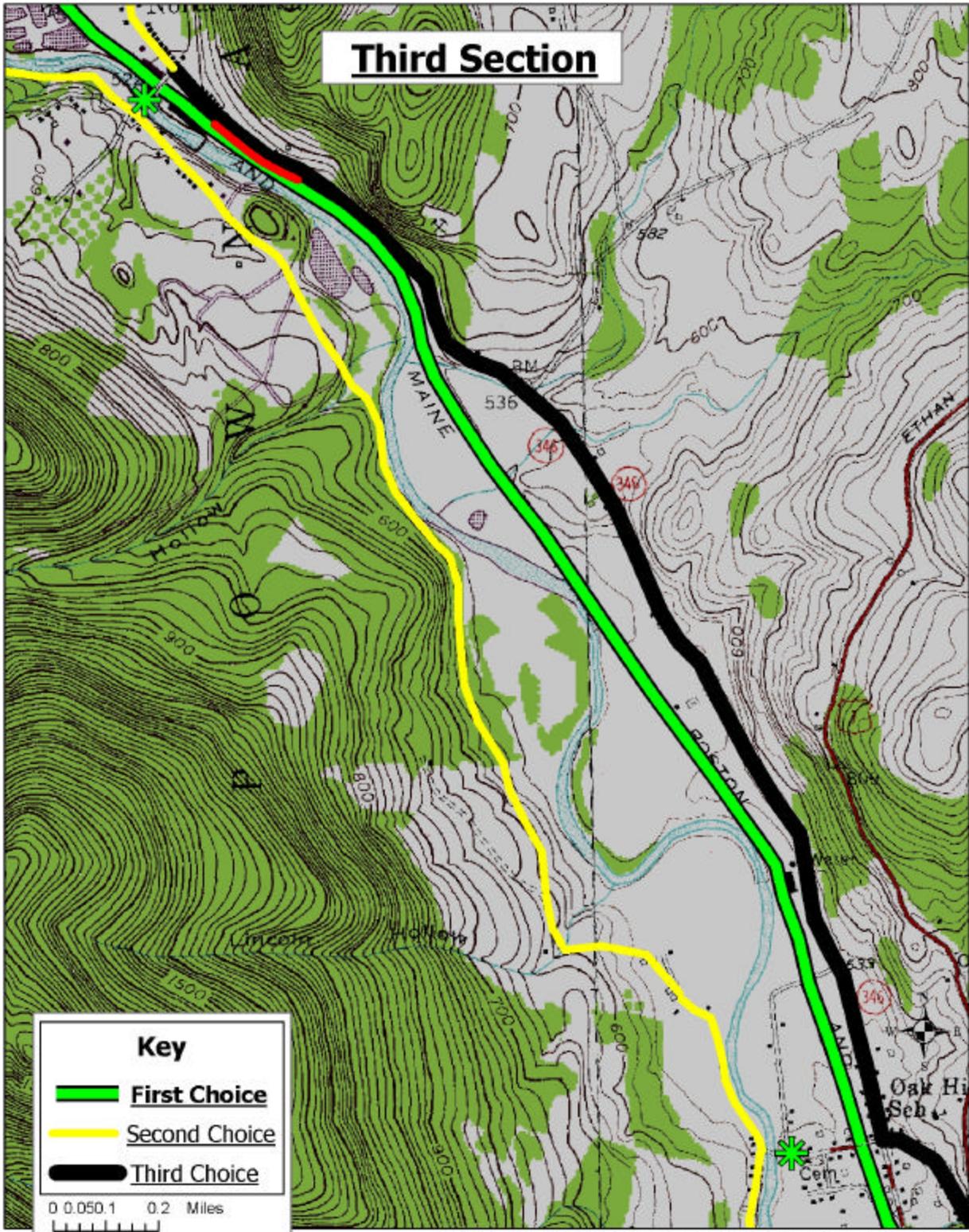


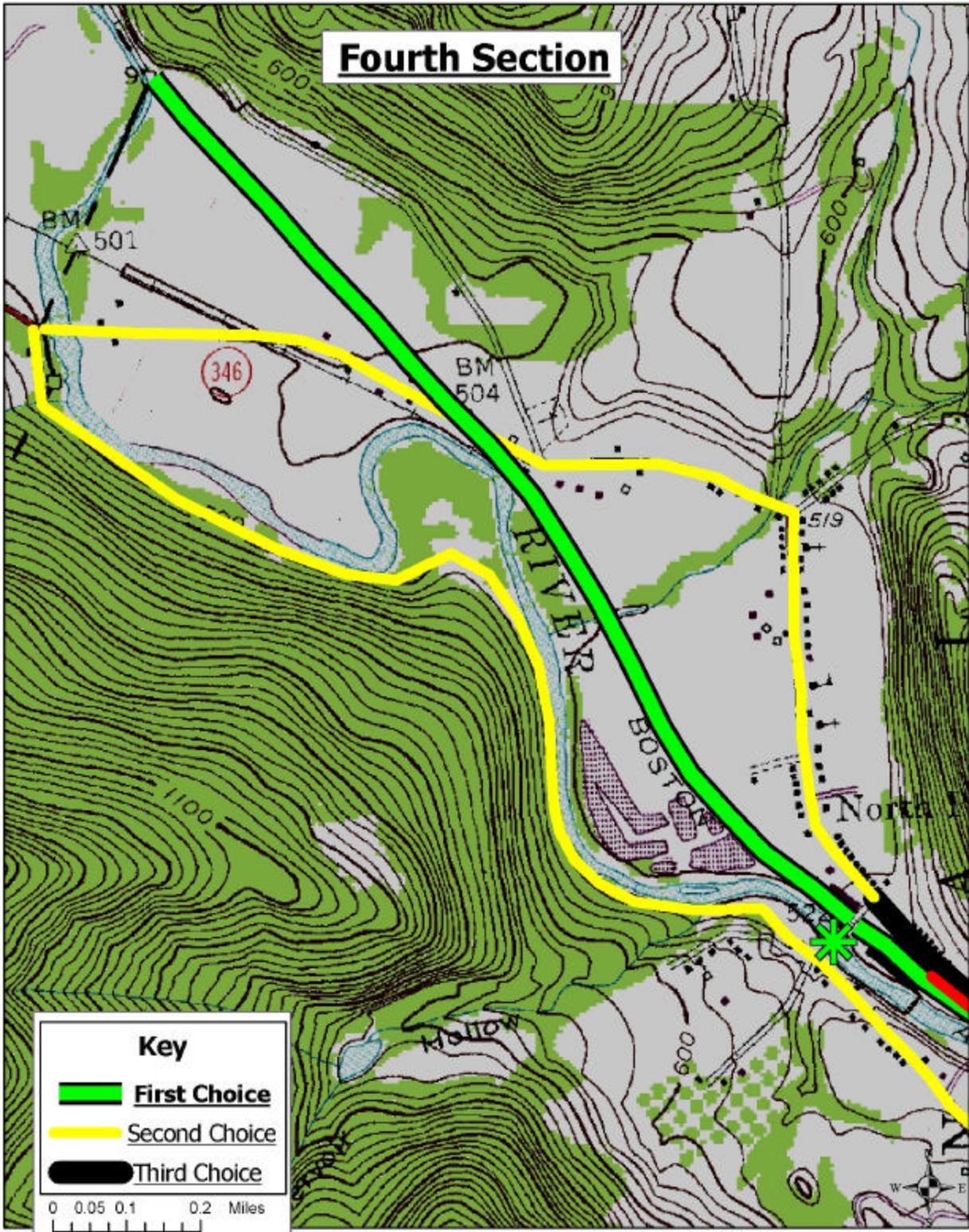
Appendix B

Maps









Appendix C

Alternatives Analysis Charts

(Cole Ave. to Route 7)	Weight Multiplier	Rail Bed (1 mile)	Bike Lane (1.6 miles)	Country Roads (1.1 miles)	Do Nothing
Divider	1	0	2	2	2
Bridges	1	2	2	0	2
Surface	1	2	1	1	2
Land Ownership	1	0	2	2	1
Slope	2	4	4	4	2
Scenic	2	4	2	4	2
Accessibility	3	3	6	6	3
Traffic Danger	3	6	0	6	0
River Access	3	3	0	6	0
New Disturbance	3	6	6	0	6
Total		30	25	31	20

(Route 7 Bridge to Northwest Hill Rd. Bridge)	Weight Multiplier	Rail Bed (3.5 miles)	Bike Lane (3 miles)	Country Roads (3.9 miles)	Do Nothing
Divider	1	0	2	2	2
Bridges	1	1	2	0	2
Surface	1	2	1	1	2
Land Ownership	1	0	2	1	1
Slope	2	4	0	0	2
Scenic	2	4	2	4	2
Accessibility	3	6	6	3	3
Traffic Danger	3	6	0	6	0
River Access	3	3	0	6	0
New Disturbance	3	6	6	0	6
Total		32	21	23	20

(Northwest Hill Rd. Bridge to Tannery)	Weight Multiplier	Rail Bed (2.5)	Bike Lane (2.5)	Country Roads (2.5)	Do Nothing
Divider	1	0	2	2	2
Bridges	1	2	2	2	2
Surface	1	1	0	0	2
Land Ownership	1	0	2	0	1
Slope	2	4	4	2	2
Scenic	2	4	2	4	2
Accessibility	3	3	6	3	3
Traffic Danger	3	6	0	6	0
River Access	3	3	0	6	0
New Disturbance	3	6	6	0	6
Total		29	24	25	20

(Tannery to NY Border)	Weight Multiplier	Rail Bed (1.5)	Bike Lane (1.6)	Country Roads (1.6)	Do Nothing
Divider	1	1	2	2	2
Bridges	1	2	2	2	2
Surface	1	2	1	0	2
Land Ownership	1	0	2	0	1
Slope	2	4	4	2	2
Scenic	2	4	2	4	2
Accessibility	3	6	6	3	3
Traffic Danger	3	6	0	6	0
River Access	3	3	0	6	0
New Disturbance	3	6	6	0	6
Total		34	25	25	20