

25 Bedell Rd  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603  
Email: [redfox@idsi.net](mailto:redfox@idsi.net)

March 18, 2001

County Executive  
County Office Building  
22 Market Street  
Poughkeepsie NY 12601

Re: Maybrook Rail Trail & Multi Use (including Equine)

Dear Mr. Steinhaus,

I was very excited when I found out that the Maybrook Corridor in Dutchess County was going to be used as a rail trail. I was equally excited when I heard through the equestrian community that horses would be permitted. I have used

multiple use trails at Minnewaska, Mohonk, buffer area at Stewart airport, Wallkill and Hudson Valley rail trails as well as some of the state owned multiple uses areas in Dutchess County. Imagine my disappointment when I called the Public Works department to get status on the proposed rail trail and instead found that the county was deciding on not permitting equestrian activities on it. I have not been given valid reasons why a trail activity that is permitted on many areas trail systems (including Dutchess County) is being restricted from this public trail. The current proposal for the Maybrook Rail Trail is as a bikeway, not a bicycle/pedestrian trail. Following is research on trails that should be considered when making decisions about the Maybrook Rail Trail and it's allowable uses.

### **1) Trail Types (Single and Parallel)**

Multiple use trails can be shared and enjoyed by all types of non-motorized trail activities such as walking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding. There are two basic types of multi-use trail systems.

a) One is a single surface or single thread trail system. Some examples of this type of trail:

China Camp State Park in California has multiple use trails that are four to five feet wide. These trails become narrower as the vegetation grows in. Hikers, bicyclists and equestrians use these trails.

The 12-mile Wallkill trail varies in width from six to ten feet and it also becomes narrower as the vegetation grows in. This trail system uses a wooden deck bridge over a roadway. Other Ulster County single multi use trails can be found at Lake Minnewaska (State Preserve) and Mohonk Preserve which contains some of the best carriage trails in the country.



**Figure 1 Wallkill Rail Trail Bridge with wooden deck**

In Dutchess County, there are five state owned multiple use areas. These trails vary in width from narrow footpaths to single width roadways. The trails are used by hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, cross-country skiers and one area even permits snowmobiles.

- b) The other type of multi-use trail is a double path (two-thread) system where a paved trail runs directly parallel to a natural trail surface. Some examples of this type of trail:



**Figure 2 Ray Roberts State Park**

A ten-mile multi-use double path trail system runs through the Ray Roberts Lake State Park in northern Texas. However, the pictured ten-foot by ten foot highway underpass culvert is shared by bicyclists, pedestrians and mounted equestrians. This culvert has had no significant incidents in its seven-year use.<sup>1</sup>

The Hudson Valley Rail Trail in Highland (which is part of the Maybrook corridor) has a wide paved section that directly runs next to the natural trail surface of cinder and ballast.



**Figure 3 Hudson Valley Rail Trail**

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<sup>1</sup> post from the President of the "Trails Association of Ray Roberts" on the TRAILSANDGREENWAYS List on YAHOO.

*How does this apply to the Maybrook Rail -trail?*

The Maybrook can easily accommodate this type of trail system and the proposed utilities because of its width<sup>2</sup>. In sections where the trail may be too narrow or bridges need to be built, trail users can share a single trail system. The paved trail surface should be placed 2' from the edge of the trail instead of in the center. Fiber optics can be buried under the paved sections (like the Hudson Valley Rail Trail in Highland) or share the 2' border with the water utility line. The natural section of the trail can be used for waste water lines and as a utility road as well as for trail users who prefer a softer base.

## **2) Conflicts on Trails**

In 1986 there were 255 rail-trails. According to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, in 2001 there are 1,051 rail-trails. With more than 11,000 miles of trails, some conflicts have now become the targets of studies on trails. Two main issues are:

- (a) Trail users have a preference for the type of trail surface depending on the trail activity. For example walkers and runners prefer a softer, more natural surface than pavement. Bicyclist and skate-boarders prefer a paved surface. Trail users also have preferences in the trail characteristics including the trail width. A couple of studies that demonstrate this are:
  - i. A 1998 North Carolina study found that their trail was used by walkers 23% more than any other trail activity and they had done so more on unpaved surfaces than paved. Bikers, joggers and roller-bladers preferred a paved surface.
  - ii. A Texas U.S. Department of Transportation study (1999) evaluated the user satisfaction and perception on three bicycle/pedestrian facilities. Two of the trails were paved with asphalt (4-6' wide and 6-12' wide) and the other was cinder (13' wide). Speed and a paved surface were important to bicyclists where joggers/walkers enjoyed a wider, softer crushed cinder path. Their recommendation is future paths is to make them wide and give a trail users a choice of trail surfaces.
- (b) Some people find conflicts with activities that are different from theirs. Moore very appropriately said in his 1994 study on trail conflicts, "*Even single-use trails must accommodate very different styles of a single activity. A pedestrians-only trail, for example, might be used by hikers, backpackers, trail runners, bird watchers, hunters, snowshoers, orienteers, rock hounds, etc., and conflict can and does occur among any and all of these trail users.*"
  - i. Moore and Scott found on a recreational paved trail in Cleveland, Ohio (where 50% of the respondents were walkers, 20% roller-bladers, 17% bicyclists and 13% were runners) that walkers and runners increased the overall enjoyment of others while bicyclists and skaters decreased others enjoyment. Their study also showed that if the trail users had participated in other trail activities over the past year, they were more positive towards these activities. The authors recommend that education is needed by all trail users to reduce the number of trail conflicts.
  - ii. A 1992 study by Moore, Graefe, Giitelson and Porter asked trail users what they liked least about their trail. 14.8% of the comments related to behavior of other users. The most common complaints were about bicyclists being inconsiderate, riding two abreast, passing with no warning and going too fast.

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<sup>2</sup> According to the DEIS for the Dutchess Central Utility Corridor (section III.A.2) the railbed is a level berm that varies in width from 25 to 50 feet and is covered with a crushed rock surface

- iii. The St. Louis Park is one of the nations largest urban parks. Their Master Plan now includes making a double trail system. They have found a need to protect the pedestrians from the faster moving bicyclists and roller-bladers. They also feel it will double the capacity of their trail system.

### ***Conflicts on Trail - Equine Related***

Horses have shared trails with pedestrians longer than pedestrians have shared their trails with bicycles and roller-blades. Studies and other documentation have shown that sharing the trails with equines does not cause major conflicts. Some examples of these studies are:

- (a) A public survey on attitudes towards single surface trails in Colorado (where some of the trail activities were walking 40%, bicycling 29%, running 11%, roller-blading 4% and horseback riding 3%) found the majority of complaints to be due to maintenance closings and the annoyance with others users. These annoyances were: general discourtesy 16%, bicyclists 15%, dogs off leash 11%, roller-bladers 6%, animal droppings 4% and objection to horses 1%, and crowding. Respondents were also asked about designating trails for specific uses rather than being multi-use. Thirty two percent were in favor, thirty five percent somewhat agreed and one third was opposed to the idea.
- (b) Acadia National Park in Maine has fifty-six miles of broken stone carriage trails. These roads were initially built for horse and carriage and are still used as such but the majority of trail users now are hikers and bicyclists. The 1995 daily summer usage was 1000 to 2000 people (Jacobi, Manning 1997). The main complaint visitors had were bicyclists passing from behind without warning and bicyclist traveling at excessive speed. Finding horse manure on the trails were the only (minor) complaints about horses.
- (c) An USDA research paper (Watson, Niccoucci, Williams 1993) studied the conflict between hikers and equestrians in three wilderness areas; in California, (John Muir Wilderness and Inyo National Forrest) and in Indiana (The Charles C. Dam Wilderness). This study showed that most hikers did not mind meeting horses on the trail but the probability of encountering a horse was low. It also showed that a small amount of people disliked encountering horses on the trail and an equally small amount of people disliked encountering dogs on the trail.
- (d) The International Mountain Bicycling Association feels that equestrians and bicyclists can share the same trails. They feel "problems" are usually a perception problem and can be solved with education. Bicycles can spook horses if the bicycle comes up from behind quickly and silently. Bicyclists should be taught to always give notice when they are passing from behind.
- (e) The TRAILSANDGREENWAYS egroup on YAHOO consists of approximately 477 members. The list is sponsored by the Trails and Greenways Clearing House, a joint project of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and The Conservation Fund's American Greenways Program. The list members include trail mangers, and other professionals as well as trail and greenway activists. The group was asked if they shared their trail with horses and were there any problems<sup>3</sup>. The responses were very positive although a couple of responders did mention getting minor complaints about finding horse manure on trails.
- (f) According to Williams and Conway-Durver (1998) horses do not cause erosion. They may loosen hillside soils on poorly designed or mismanaged trails but they do not cause continued erosion. Hooves do loosen soil but bicycles wear down trails more than horses and feet will compact loosened soil.

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3 see Appendix B for more information

- (g) An unpublished survey in 1997 by F. Truter of Illinois<sup>4</sup> found similar results as other researchers regarding multi-use conflicts on trails. The few trails that never permitted horses had concerns like; conflict between bikers and horses; horses cause erosion, droppings, and horses killing little children. These types of responses are unfounded and misperceptions.

*How does this apply to the Maybrook Rail -trail?*

Manure found on trails was concern for a small amount of people in different studies. Horse manure does not spread pathogens that can be transmitted to people unlike dogs, cats and birds<sup>5</sup>. Trail etiquette needs to be taught to **all** trail users. Many equestrians with their love of horses do not see anything wrong with leaving horse dropping on the trails. Equestrians should be told to push manure off the side of the trail. Another solution that some multiple trails use is to place buckets along the trail for the manure. The buckets are dumped and cleaned on a regular basis.

Since many of the trails in the Hudson Valley region already permit equestrian activities it is surprising that people would express concerns about sharing the Maybrook Rail Trail with equestrians. People that have these concerns either have not used the multiple trails in the valley or they have not encountered horses on them. Studies have also shown that people tend to be fearful of activities that they are not familiar with. Trail user education along with having a wide trail system should address any concerns and fears.

### **3) Safety Issues Trail Related**

According to the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council (1996) (which you were a member of), bicycle paths of the past were thought to be dangerous because of poor designs and lack of meeting the requirements of bicyclists. The council recommends addressing problems in the planning process. Some of these problems are conflicts between the groups of trail users (such as pedestrians, bicyclists and horse riders) due to differences in speed, sight distance requirements, surface types and width. The Council also recommends having separate facilities for pedestrians and bicycles.

The *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* also states the biggest concern for trail users is to feel safe and secure. Some of the safety concerns are adequate width and buffer from the adjacent traffic. Other studies include concerns such as user speed, sight distances, trail width, and trail congestion and passing without warning.

### ***Equestrian Related***

The *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* mentions that bicycling is legally permitted on every public road in Dutchess County except for I-84 and the Taconic State Parkway. However due to the current condition of some roads they are less desirable for walking or bicycling. This is also true for equestrian activities. The Maybrook rail trail goes through the most densely populated towns in Dutchess County and these areas will probably become more congested in the future (especially if the utility corridor housed in the Maybrook corridor changes any zoning restrictions). Dirt roads that were once common in Dutchess County have now become a rarity. Areas to ride safely in these towns are rapidly disappearing. Equestrians in Dutchess County have already lost one rail trail because we did not make a strong enough effort. There isn't a public area to ride horses close to the Maybrook Rail Trail.

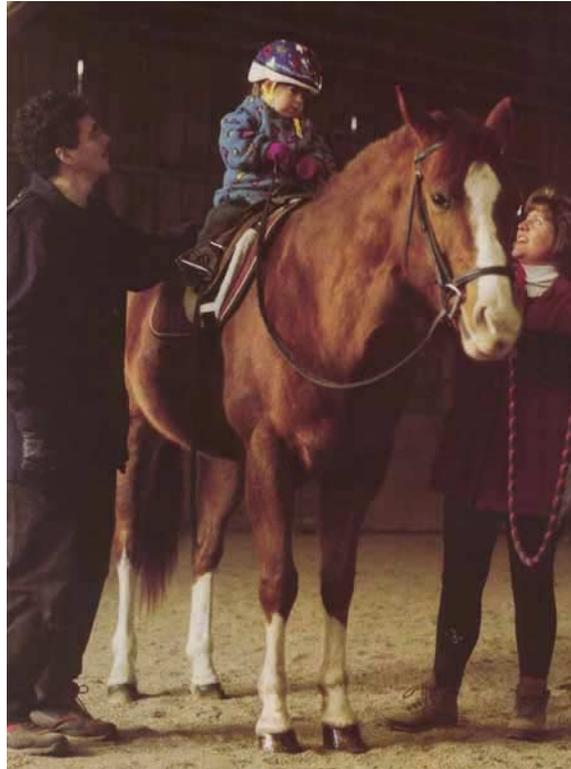
1,252 people with disabilities took the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (prepared for the National Center on Accessibility). This study showed that disabled people participated in more days of horseback riding than

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4 See Appendix C for a summary. The actual responses will be produced upon request

5 Quinn, Adda. (2000) Does Horse Manure Pose a Significant Risk to Health. Envirohorse Belmont, CA. <http://www.californiastatehorsemen.com/EH-Health.htm>

able-bodied people did. This can be attributed to the use of horses in physical/mental therapy. There are no federal or state restrictions or regulations regarding horses and physically or mentally challenged people of any age.



**Figure 4 A Hidden Hollow Farm Therapy Lesson (from HUDSON VALLEY magazine)**

In the Hudson Valley region, horses are being used in untraditional ways. Hidden Hollow Farm in Milan uses horses for therapy for physically/mentally challenged individuals. This farm has participated and had their clients participate in the Special Olympics World Games. According to owners, Stephanie and Shannon Weber their 250 challenged clients range in age from 18 months to 78 years old. The North East Center for Special Care in Kingston, which deals with mainly head trauma patients, plans on using horses as therapy in its program. Area nursing and children's homes in the area are seeing the benefits of visits from miniature horses.

	Bicycle Collisions with Pedestrians	Horse
Deaths (1991 to present)	7 (ages 15 - 84)	23 but none to bystanders
NEISS data (1999) to Present: Includes accidents and deaths as reported from sample hospital emergency rooms that statistically represent hospital emergency rooms nationwide.	24	14,303, of these only 57 were not listed as falls, owner. These were mostly injuries to feet (stepped on) or kicks. 2 sounded like they might be pedestrian related.

**Figure 5 Summary of data from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission**

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission in Washington, D.C. ran reports on February 22, 2001 for any occurrences of "horse" and any occurrence of "pedestrian and bicycle collisions" in their databases<sup>6</sup>. None of the deaths related to horses involved bystanders/spectator. Of the 14,303 incidents in the NEISS database, only 57 incidents were not listed as falls or owner/rider/occupation related. The breakdown of these 57 incidents, is as follows; 31 kicks, 16 horse stepped on foot/toe, 5 knocked over, 3 bites, and 2 hit in head by horse's head. It is possible that most of these are also owner/rider/occupation related and they just weren't reported as such. There were 2 entries that might be spectator related. It was quite surprising to see that there were 7 deaths caused by a bicycle hitting a pedestrian and that the pedestrians were 15 years or older. According to the Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in 1999 there were a total of 5,805 deaths to pedestrians and bicyclists<sup>7</sup>.

Liability is a non-issue since all of the mentioned trails have found ways to address it.

The TRAILSANDGREENWAYS egroup members on YAHOO were asked if they used any barriers between the equestrians trail and their pedestrian/bikeway. None of the respondent's trails used any type of barrier and did not see a need for any<sup>8</sup>.

In the Hudson Valley, there have not been any incidents or accidents because of horses sharing the trails. The Walkkill Rail trail has only had a few minor complaints about horse manure on the trail. The Hudson Valley Rail trail in Highland has not had any complaints but is planning on putting a layer of soil on top of the ballast to make it easier for all pedestrian activities (such as walking, running and horseback riding). The multiple use areas in Dutchess County also do not know of any problems.<sup>9</sup>

*How does this apply to the Maybrook Rail -trail?*

By having a two trail system (paved adjacent to natural trail surface) all types of trail users can safely be accommodated. The faster modes of travel (bicycle and rollerbladers) can use the paved section of the trail, and pedestrians can use the softer trail base. Having such a wide trail system will also prevent congestion problems. The straight alignment of the trail gives trail users great visibility. The trail at its narrowest point is wider than some public roads in Dutchess County.<sup>10</sup> Horses do not impose a safety danger to other trail users. Barriers are not used at other sites<sup>11</sup>. Many multi-use paths (including local multi-use trails) are very narrow and horses share the trails without incidents and accidents to other trail users. The Maybrook Rail Trail will be wider than some roads currently in use in Dutchess County. If a legal roadway is a safe enough width to accommodate passing trucks and horses can legally use this road, the Maybrook rail trail should have no problem accommodating all types of non-motorized trail activities.

#### **4) Economic Benefits**

According to a 1996 Barent's Study for the American Horse Council, the Gross National Product from direct goods and services is \$25.3 billion and \$112.1 billion on the U.S. gross domestic product. This is larger than the railroad

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6 The actual reports are available on request

7 See Appendix A for an interesting letter about safety

8 See Appendix B for more information.

9 Private Email for information pertaining to the Walkill Rail Trail is on request. The Hudson Valley Rail Trail and the Dutchess County Multiple Use areas were phone conversations; names and numbers will be given on request.

10 Under the Rail-trail Bridge on Van Wagner Road in the Town of Poughkeepsie, the road measures 19'6". According to the EIS for the Utility Corridor, the railbed varies in width from 20-50'.

11 In the course of this study the only rail trail found to use a barrier that separates equestrians from other trail users is the Ojai Trail in California. Their trail runs parallel to a roadway in some locations. Automobiles have hit this rail on occasions.

and movie industry and about ten times the size of the U.S. bicycling industry. The 1997 Census of Agriculture found Dutchess County leads N.Y.S. in having the most horses in a county. This number was 2,303. A recent physical survey (2001) within a 2-miles perimeter of the Maybrook corridor revealed 304 horses<sup>12</sup>. This number is quite surprising since the Maybrook corridor is in the most highly populated towns in the county.

Unlike other recreational activities where money is spent once, equestrian owners continue to contribute to the economy for their interests. For example, bicyclists may purchase a bike and other accessories but future spending on bicycle related items are limited. Equestrian owners have the initial purchase of the animal and supplies but money is spent on the animal for its lifetime<sup>13</sup> or until it is sold. Owning a horse consists of spending money on a place to keep it (land or boarding facilities), fencing, grain, hay, bedding, utilities, veterinarian visits, blacksmith visits, tack stores, trucks and trailers, etc.

Mowen, Graefe and William's (1998) study found that of all the trail user groups, equestrians held the highest levels of activity involvement and place attachment. They also suggest that special efforts should be made to involve equestrians with the planning and decisions regarding trails. The U.S. Forest Service in it's Florida Department of Environmental Protection study found that trail users that engaged in equine activities had slightly higher average expenditure levels than other types of trail users

*How does this apply to the Maybrook Rail -trail?*

One stable very close to the Maybrook rail trail hosts 7 National Shows each year. These shows attract over 40 horses from all over the country to each event. They estimate that just the money that each of these shows puts backs about \$100,000 into the immediate area (hotels, meals, gas, etc.) per show. The Dutchess County Cooperative extension had estimated in 1993 that the cost of keeping a horse (run-in shed, shoeing every 8 wks, yearly shots, etc.) to be \$4500 per year. If you multiply this by the number of horses found in the 2-mile perimeter of the Maybrook rail trail you get \$1,368,000 back to the local economy. This figure does not include the rest of the equestrian community in Dutchess County or the housing for the area veterinarians, blacksmiths, etc.

Studies have shown that equestrians have the strongest place attachment. Studies also show equestrians volunteer more than people of other trail activities do. Equestrians also spend more money on their activity than other trail activities. There is no public area to horseback ride in the location of the Maybrook rail trail. It would be financially beneficial to encourage equestrians to stay located in this area of Dutchess County.

## **5) Conclusion/Summary**

Equestrians are one of the forgotten groups in Dutchess County. Lifestyles have forced most people to make the most of their time. This means that for people to get to their destinations quickly dirt roads have been replaced with pavement. People behind the wheel of their automobile are oblivious or annoyed by slower means of transportation on their roads (pedestrians, bicyclists and especially horses). To be safe, equestrians are forced to enjoy their activity where they are no longer seen out in public. Equestrians now ride where they don't have to use public roads such as their backyards, or arenas. Their other alternative is to move to areas that are more horse friendly.

While the equestrian sport might be considered dangerous to the rider, riders do not purposely put themselves or others in dangerous situations. If a horse owner knows their horse gets spooked easily, they will not take a chance to put their horse, themselves and others in danger.

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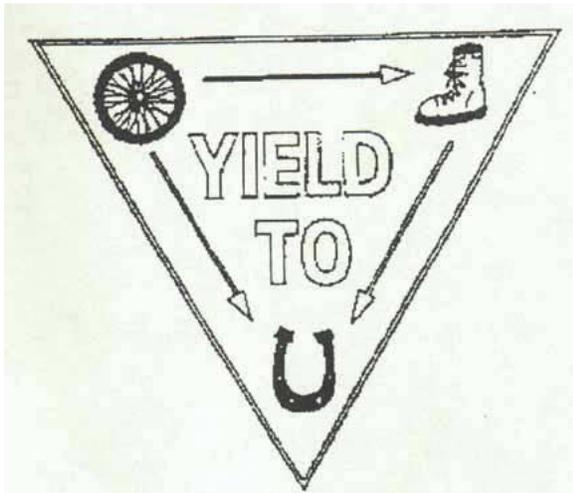
12 During the month of March in 2001, equestrian owners within a 2-mile perimeter of the Maybrook rail trail were asked how many horses they currently had on their property. This number is probably low because this was a visible physical survey and horses could have been hidden from view, also places that previously had horses did not have any at the time of the survey.

13 Life expectancy of horses is 30+ years.

The Federal TEA-21 money that has been allocated to Dutchess County is to construct a bikeway (project #1000). The rail trail is being constructed under the pedestrian and bicycle enhancement activity because it has a transportation purpose. Studies are now showing that many projects that received this exact type of funding have a very low rate of transportation use. The 1999 U.S. Department of Transportation study on three Texas bicycle trails found 86% of their respondents was not using the trails for work transportation purposes<sup>14</sup>. Many automobile trips are also not for work purposes. Horses are permitted on all the public roads that permit bicyclists. Why should horses being prohibited from this public facility?

Studies have shown that the current proposal for the Maybrook Rail Trail is a bikeway, not a bicycle/pedestrian trail. Surveys, studies and reports from all over the U.S. demonstrate that more pedestrian activities (walking, hiking, cross country skiing, equestrians) use trails than cyclists and roller-bladers. Paving the rail trail will satisfy the bicyclists and roller-bladers but not the historical majority of trail users. Numerous studies provide evidence to the conflicts between the faster modes of transportation and the slower modes. We believe the rail trail should be used by all non-motorized trail activities. We concur with the researchers and you, that a two-trail system would accommodate all type of non -motorized trail activities. The initial costs would be none to minimal since the trail is already in place and is wide enough to accommodate this type of trail system. There are no extra costs to having equestrians share the trail. The Maybrook Rail Trail should remain consistent with the entire Maybrook line (Hudson Valley Rail Trail in Highland).

Other conflicts that researchers have found are usually perception problems and these can easily be handled with education of trail users. An interesting paper that was presented in Ontario, Canada by Paul Schimek, points out that many American who think they know everything about riding a bicycle, were never taught basic traffic skills. Schimek points out the need for education. Additionally, signs should be posted displaying the proper protocol. Since horses safely share the trails safely in other parts of Dutchess County, they should be permitted to share the rail trail as well.



**Figure 6 Sign with Yield Protocol (from Rails-to-Trails Conservancy)**

Watson and others (1993) found in their study that trail users are not aware of the "right of way" etiquette. Hikers may experience conflict when they have to move over because of a horse because they feel that by stepping aside they had implied that the horse has a higher status. This might also explain the feelings between bicycle riders and pedestrians. People need to be taught trail etiquette and signs should be posted along the trails to help show the protocol.

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14 Verified via phone conversation on 2/21/01 to the Public Works Dept. in Houston for it's two trails (name on request). No verification was done on the Austin trail.

Studies have also shown that compared to the amount of other trail users, the amount of equestrians using the trail would be low. These same studies show that the equestrians are the ones to volunteer to help on the trail and that they feel a personal attachment to it.

As previously mentioned, the equestrian community in just the 2-mile perimeters of the Maybrook Rail Trail puts back \$1,368,000 of real revenue to the county. The County should want to encourage equestrians to stay in the County.

Acadia successfully shares it's carriage roads with up to 2000 trail users per day. If the Maybrook rail trail is set up as a two-path system, all types of non-motorized trail activities and county utilities can safely and happily share the trail.

As you know, there is an additional proposal for a Maybrook Utility Corridor. Because of the EIS activities, we are concerned that the rail trail will be designed on how it would best serve as a utility corridor rather than incorporating it with the best rail trail system<sup>15</sup>

The information in this letter has facts from published studies. It is not based on opinions and perceptions. Federal (including TEA-21 funding) and New York State laws do not mandate or require barriers or restrict horses from sharing public facilities. Studies have shown that successful multi-uses (and even bicycle/pedestrian trail) are double path trail systems. Moving the paved portion of the trail does not cost anymore than leaving it in the middle. However, the advantage is that all possible trail users can enjoy the trail and the capacity of the trail is expanded. Hikers, walkers, equestrians and cross-country skiers can enjoy the softer, natural side of the trail while the faster bicycle and roller-bladers can enjoy the paved sections.

We must take advantage of the experience, wisdom and insight from other rail trail experiences. With proper trail design and education the Maybrook rail trail can accommodate all non-motorized trail activities with the least amount of conflicts.

Sincerely,

Lori Horner

### **Resources**

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15 See Appendix D for letter sent to Mr. Chase regarding our concerns on the Draft EIS for the Dutchess Central Utility Corridor. Also see Appendix E for letter sent to Mr. Robbins regarding our position on uses for the Maybrook MultiModal Corridor Study.

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Mowen, A., Graefe, A, Williams, D. (1998). An Assessment of Activity and Trail Type as Indicators of Trail User Diversity. Journal of Park and Recreation. Sagamore Publishing, Champaign, IL. Volume 16 Number 1 1998

National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) can be from the US Consumer Product Safety Commission, National Injury Information Clearinghouse, Washington, and D.C. Their website is: <http://www.cpsc.gov/>

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## Appendix A:

### A look at everyday risks by the President of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail.

Many rail-trail opponents claim that these trails are unsafe for the users and the adjacent landowners. As "proof," they gather anecdotes about crime on trails. Second, they assert that these crimes prove all trails are unsafe. Third, they draw the conclusion that your trail will also be crime ridden and should not be built. I believe this line of argument employs a double standard of safety and risk. Those who attack the safety

of trails would never think of applying the same type of risk analysis to other forms of transportation, recreation or life in general. It's a neat logical trick: by demanding perfect safety (i.e., no risks) in an imperfect and risky world, they create an artificial and impossibly high standard of safety that trail makers can never meet.

Trail opponents don't require promises of perfect safety in other areas of life, or they wouldn't get out of bed in the morning. They ignore all the risks involved in walking, riding in a car or crossing the supermarket parking lot while waving a few anecdotes about crimes on trails.

I've gathered some statistics over the years on risks and safety that might help make the point.

Dogs, sometimes called man's best friend, provide companionship to millions. Yet in 1995, 3.5 million dog bites were reported to American insurance carriers, with the companies spending \$1 billion on the claims (South Bend Tribune, Oct. 6, 1996). Should we, therefore, outlaw dogs?

Escalators carry millions of people safely each year. Yet in Boston, 300 people require emergency room treatment every year from injuries received while riding on escalators (NBC Dateline, Nov. 29, 1995). Should we, therefore, eliminate escalators?

A trip to the grocery store is a usually routine. Yet in one recent year, shopping cart accidents resulted in 25,000 trips to the emergency room (68 per day), including two deaths. Two thousand children were hospitalized (NBC Today Show, March 20, 1996; data from a study by Dr. Gary Smith, Children's Hospital, Columbus, Ohio). Should we, therefore, ban shopping carts?

Regular exercise can significantly reduce the chances of dying prematurely from heart disease and other ailments. Yet in 1992 many forms of recreation resulted the following number of emergency room trips: table tennis-1,455; horseshoes—4,423; billiards-5,835; bowling—24,361; golf-37,556; in-line skates-83,000; volleyball—90,125; swing sets-102,232; football—229,689; baseball—285,593; bicycles-649,536 (Newsweek, June 21, 1994, data from U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission). No question: let's definitely ban that dangerous table tennis game.

Farmers use the latest equipment to produce our food. Yet in Indiana, 28 people die in an average year in farm accidents. Farmers die at more than four times the average rate of all other workers from work-related accidents, according to the National Safety Council. (AP story in the Goshen News. I did not record the date.) Explain that, Farm Bureau.

Government sources estimate that air bags in motor vehicles have saved 2,700 lives. Yet at the same time they have killed 87 people—48 adults and 39 children (NBC Nightly News, Nov. 17, 1997).

Trains are one of the most efficient ways to move freight. Yet a vehicle-train crash occurs about once every 90 minutes in the U.S. Two motorists are killed daily in these crashes. (Goshen News, July 13, 1994; data from Indiana Operation Lifesaver.)

We send our sons and daughters to college for higher education. Yet colleges are awash in criminal behavior. About 2,400 U.S. colleges reported their statistics on campus crime to the Chronicle of Higher Education in response to the 1990 federal law, the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act of 1990. The report states that in the reporting academic year (1991-1992) there were 7,500 incidents of violent crime on their campuses. That includes 30 murders, 1,000 rapes and more than 1,800 robberies.

However, they also reported that these violent crimes, thank goodness, were the exception when compared to property crimes, e.g., there were 32,127 burglaries and 8,981 motor vehicle thefts in the same period. (I know I feel better with that qualification.) (From the Chronicle of Higher Education, Jan. 20, 1993. p. A32.)

And, of course, the most glaring source of risky behavior—the highways. In 1993, 53,717 motor vehicles were involved in 35,747 fatal crashes, resulting in 40,115 deaths (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety). Does this statistic mean we should, therefore, ban motor vehicles or highways or both?

Every form of human activity involves risks. The question is whether the risks are acceptable in light of the rewards. Our society, with some bazaar logic, rationalizes away or accepts 40,000 deaths each year from motor vehicles because it believes the rewards are acceptable. Most people believe the rewards of college are worth the risk of occasional criminal behavior, and most people believe the risk of going up the escalator is worth the risk of getting your foot caught in the mechanism. Once established, trails have proven to be as safe as the surrounding community through which they pass. The rewards of recreation and nonmotorized transportation they provide far outweigh the risks.

While it is important not to trivialize or deny that bad things can happen on trails, it is equally important to examine the logic behind the anecdotes. Are trail opponents willing to apply their let's-close-the-trails logic to other activities, e.g., close all highways because 40,000 people are killed each year; close all colleges because

there were 1,000 rapes? If not, then they are using a double standard to analyze risks—a selective use of statistics to discredit what is a relatively safe activity.

Two final points. First, we need to educate trail users about elementary safety precautions. We should caution people about jogging alone on an isolated trail, just as we would caution against jogging alone on an isolated country road or the mall parking lot for that matter.

Second, if there are safety problems on trails, we need to fix them. That's what we do with highways. If there's a dangerous highway curve, we straighten it. If a certain highway intersection has frequent accidents, we redesign it or put up stoplights. But, we don't close the road when we discover a problem, and we don't stop building more of them. Instead, we improve them.

Why would it be any different for trails?

John D. Yoder, President

Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc.

## Appendix B:

### Question and Results Found on the GREENWAYSANDTRAILS Email List

The following question and result summary was posted on the GREENWAYSANDTRAILS Internet list. Email correspondence upon available upon request.

Question: Sharing the Trail with Horses

a. If you allow them, do you have barriers that separate them from pedestrians and bikes?

b. We'd like to hear successes and failures

1. I received 12 responses from all over the continental US.

a) Four respondents work for the Federal government (park specialists), two were trail managers, two were members of Equestrian associations, three were executives on a rail trail coalition and one maintains an extensive website on rail trails.

2. Trails varied in length and type. Some were single multi-use trails (varying in width down to 6') where others were natural paths adjacent to a paved path. One respondent's trail is not yet open but they plan to allow horses.

3. None of the respondent's trails used barriers to separate activities and they did not see a need or having one.

4. There were no failure stories! The experiences of sharing the trails with horses that it is "very successful" and "working well".

a) Several respondents said the complaints they receive most regarding their trails are that Bicyclists/roller-bladers are going too fast or are reckless.

b) However, minor mention was made about horse manure being in the trails.

c) Trail courtesy was mentioned by one respondent as a main issue when mixing trail use. Suggested delivery systems are signs and pamphlets. Some of these include:

i. Right-of-ways posted (bikers to yield to pedestrians, pedestrians yield to horses)

ii. Everyone should notify if they are passing

iv. Equestrians should remove manure from paved surfaces and parking lot (pushing off the side of the trail is acceptable)

## Appendix C:

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**Summary of Fran Truter's Responses to her letter to trail managers to find out if they could offer information on the controversy that arose over the multi-use concept for the trails in their area.**

Survey was sent out in the Fall of 1997 and had a 33% response rate

Summary done by L. Horner

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Trail Name	State	Summary
Pine Line in Medford	WISC	8' screened lime, thread in center, horses use side Equestrians throw fund raisers for trail \$ No problems
Story County Conservation	IOWA	Double track plenty of room, lime for bikes, horses area mowed, Experience little in conflict
Gandy Dancer & Wreshall in Solon Springs	WISC	Frozen manure can cause hazard for snowmobile, no conflicts
Nancy Burton Memorial Park Zionsville	IN	When park opened had horses, more popular then made separate trail for equestrians. Original ballast
Puddle Jumper Trail Orange City	IOWA	Separate adjacent trail for horses, culverts put on horse side instead of bridges. If horse trail too wet, allowed to use pedestrian trail
Yellow River State Forest Harpers Ferry	IN	Not multi use, steep terrain, conflict bikers and horses, horses erosion and droppings, horses don't stay on trails UPDATE: opened to bikers
Vadalabene Nature Trail Edwardsville	IL	Big horses and children not a good mix, horses have spooked and killed children.
Pine Line Trail Price County in Phillips	WISC	No problems
Buffalo River Trail Eau Claire	WI	No problems, original ballast, wants diversity
Pioneer Trail Morrison	IOWA	Minimal cost to prepare horse trail, cost less than trying to remove the contractor's trail. Horse trail runs parallel to limestone bike/pedestrian trail.

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		The two trails share bridges
Hennepin Canal Sheffield	IL	Not a rail trail but canal. Equestrians limited to 20 miles and they are exploring multi use UPDATE: horses still allowed
Prairie Trail McHenry County, Ringwood	IL	Few users, little user conflict. Great visibility. Mountain bikers want to use trail and equestrians object: original ballast only needs to Be dragged a couple of times a year
Woodville Trail St. Croix County Glenwood City	WI	Ballast and being worked on. Horses permitted on 4 of the 7 miles Where ever possible the trails will run parallel but in some cases they may share the same trail. Paved trail will be with limestone
Great Western Trail and Illinois Prairie Path within DuPage County	IL	Very little equestrian use. Horse hooves do damage trail when Ground is soft making trail bumpy. Suggests parallel trail System UPDATE horses still allowed
Grant's Trail St. Louis ( <a href="mailto:TRAILNET@trailnet.org">TRAILNET@trailnet.org</a> )	MISS OURI	Multi use 12' section of asphalt in center of trail and 4' walking Path next to trail UPDATE: this looks like a bike only trail
Florence County	WI	No multi-use conflicts, little equestrian use

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## Appendix D:

February 2, 2001

Mr. Scott Chase, Executive Director  
Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority  
27 High Street  
Poughkeepsie, New York 12601

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Study for the Dutchess Central Utility Corridor

Dear Mr. Chase,

I am a member of the New York State Horse Council and I feel that I also represent the equestrians of Dutchess County. I have been working with the Dutchess Rail Trail group, which includes private citizens from various interest groups (such as bicyclists, runners, joggers, and walkers as well as equestrians). This letter is inform you that we feel that there is a possible potential land use conflict that was not addressed in the Draft EIS for the Dutchess Central Utility Corridor. Since the rail-trail has not been completed, we are concerned the impact of the utility corridor on the rail-trail cannot be determined. In principle we are not opposed to the utility corridor, but we feel that the utility corridor cannot be planned until the rail-trail plans have been finalized.

The EIS mentions the proposed rail trail in several sections:

*Section 2.A. "The pipeline corridor includes the potential for siting future fiber optic cables, a natural gas line, and sewer lines. Following construction of the water supply pipeline, the railroad corridor is planned to serve as a 10 foot wide paved trail (Rail-trail) for hiking, biking, and other linear trail activities." (pg 2.1)*

Comment: We are concerned that this section of the document details the design of the rail-trail prior to any formal planning or public comment on any formal rail-trail proposal. This section defines the construction of the trail as paved. We feel that this decision on construction of the trail is premature and the location of the paved section will impact or restrict several forms of non-motorized activities that are currently accommodated by other rail trails in the Mid-Hudson area.

*Section 2.D.2 "The railbed right-of way extends for the most part 33 feet on either side of the railbed centerline. The utility corridor and the paved trail will be installed entirely within this right-of-way." (pg 2.16)*

*Section 2.E.6 "vary in width 7' to 10' and is planned to be paved with asphalt. Unpaved shoulders measuring 2' in width would run parallel to the trail on either side." (pg 2.20)*

Comment: We are concerned that these sections of the document detail the construction of the rail-trail based on the requirements of the utility corridor. Since there is no formal proposal for the design of the rail-trail, the rail-trail will be limited to those designs required to protect the counties investment in the utility corridor. We feel that these construction decisions may impact or restrict several forms of non-motorized activities that are currently accommodated by other rail trails in the Mid-Hudson area.

*Section 2.F.1 "Any sewer pipelines would be laid under the opposite shoulder of the trail at a minimum 10 foot distance from the water pipeline. Gas or fiber-optic cables could be laid on the water side of the trail next to and above the compacted backfill" (pg.2.20)*

*Section 2.F.4 "The proposed trail is planned as a seven to ten foot wide asphalt surface crowned in the middle with a slope of ¼"/foot to the edge, two foot minimum unpaved shoulders with a side slope of ¾"/foot is planned for each side of the trail. Subbase will be installed below the trail if the railroad subbase is unsuitable for the trail. (pg.2.21)*

*Section 3.E.iv "Following construction of the water supply pipeline, the railroad corridor is planned to serve as a 10 foot wide paved trail for hiking, biking and other linear trail activities" (pg.3.54)*

Comment: We are concerned that the construction details for the rail-trail are defined in terms of the construction of the utility corridor. Without a formal proposal for the construction of the rail-trail, the effect of the utility corridor on the rail-trail is unacceptable because it may impact or restrict several forms of non-motorized activities that are currently accommodated by other rail trails in the Mid-Hudson area. The rail-trail right-of-way was considered wide enough to accommodate County Route 11. Therefore, we feel that alternative locations for the paved portion of the rail-trail and the location of the utilities (with a possibility of occupying both sides of the trail) be constructed in such a way so as not to restrict or impact any form of non-motorized activity including biking, inline skating, jogging, hiking or equestrians.

Additionally, the following extracted comments from Dutchess County Executive Steinhaus' 2000 State of the County address with regard to the construction of the 4600' water line and the reconstruction of St. Andrews road:

*"Substantial construction savings were realized by replacing the water line at the time of our public works road reconstruction project. We all realize the wisdom of this type of highway construction, and when necessary consider advancing capital money for a project that will pre-position the authority for planned future expansion."*

In Steinhaus' 2001 State of the County address he adds:

*"The legislature and executive, local elected officials, members of local policy boards, as well the people of the community must be included in major public policy discussions which include them... we have learned there are multiple choices and different paths to take to achieve our goals."*

Since the utility corridor and rail-trail are an 11-mile construction effort, the savings in construction costs if all utilities (water, sewer, gas, fiber-optic, etc) are installed simultaneously will also be substantial by following Steinhaus' wisdom in the St Andrew project. This coordinated construction will reduce both the environmental and economic impact on the surrounding communities. The rail-trail will also be available to the public sooner, impact local residents only once and provide the anticipated economic benefits similar to those of the Harlem Valley Rail-Trail as detailed in the EIS.

We are not sure that the construction details in Figure 2.3 for the utility corridor are based on construction techniques for normal county roads. However, as we have stated above, it appears that the details of the rail-trail construction are being determined by the utility corridor. We believe that this is a significant impact on the success of the rail-trail.

We are also concerned that the EIS does not mention the maintenance requirements for the utility corridor and whether they may conflict with those required for the rail-trail, e.g. closing the trail for utility maintenance and access to trails. Twenty-three percent of those reporting problems with local trails as cited in a study by the "Colorado State-Wide Public Survey on Attitudes Towards Trails", complained of closed or inaccessible trails. Ongoing construction or maintenance will give the appearance that the rail-trail is not important to the community as a tourist or leisure time attraction, but it is a utility corridor doubling as a bike path. This situation will severely impact the public's acceptance of the trail and the favorable comparison with the Harlem Valley Rail-Trail will not occur. The public use of rail-trail's has been cited as contributing to both the physical, mental and economic health of communities and families utilizing these facilities.

In conclusion, we feel that:

1. the effect of the utility corridor on the rail-trail be evaluated by considering the best possible design of the rail-trail first and then how the utility corridor would then be designed.
2. the location of any paved surface is such that all forms of non-motorized activity (biking, hiking, inline skating, cross-country skiing and equestrian activities) are accommodated. This could be achieved by locating the paved area of the rail-trail off-center and with an adjacent unpaved portion of similar width. These trails could share the use of bridges from the paved trail.
3. all of the utility construction is undertaken at the same time as the rail-trail construction.
4. the maintenance plans for the utilities do not prohibit use of the rail-trail for extended periods of time. This can be accomplished by Item 2 above so that the use of the paved surface does not interfere with the use of the unpaved surface.

Sincerely,

Lori Horner

## Appendix E:

March 19, 2001

NYSDOT-Rm. 239A

4 Burnett Blvd

Poughkeepsie, New York 12603

Re: Maybrook MultiModal Corridor Study

Dear Mr. Robbins,

Here is our input for the Maybrook MultiModal Corridor Study Goals and Objectives.

First, please make the following corrections to the meeting minutes dated January 29, 2001:

- A. *Under Attendees:* change Lori Horner, New York State Horse Association  
to Lori Horner, New York State Horse Council
- B. *Under Introductions:* change Lori Horner, president of the New York State Horse Coalition  
to: Lori Horner, representing the New York State Horse Council for the equestrians  
of Dutchess County
- C. On Page 10, re. prohibiting horses on the rail trail, Mr. Peter's answer (because of Federal regulations) is incorrect. Please add the following update: There are no federal or state restrictions prohibiting horses from using rail trails.

Because the Maybrook line runs through in the most densely populated towns in Dutchess County, we feel the Maybrook corridor would be best used as a rail trail. Rail trails provide multi-recreational facilities for all ages, protect the environment, offer safe routes for alternative modes of transportation, and provide economic benefits back to their community. Rail trails are not a passing trend. They have become a way of life in many communities. A Maryland study (1994) revealed one of their rail trails grew from 10,000 visitors in 1984 to over 450,000 visitors in 1993. This equates to a growth rate of 53% per year.

### **1) Provide a Transportation System That Effectively Moves People and Goods.**

A local bicycle survey found that the most common roads used by bicyclists were very close to the Maybrook corridor. 36% of the respondents commuted by bicycle at least one day a week. The average distance commuted was 10 miles round trip and the average number of days per week was 3. Almost half of the respondents indicated that they use their bicycles for errands at least one day a week.

### **2) Provide Safe Transportation Facilities**

Since roadways have become unsafe for non-motorized activities, there has been a decrease in walking. The decrease in walking has recently been recognized as one contributing factor in the obesity epidemic in the United States. Studies have shown that regular exercise can reduce health care costs. With increasing health care costs

and a large aging population, it's no wonder that there is a national focus on health. For every mile a person walks or runs, they will save society 24 cents per mile in medical and other costs<sup>16</sup>

Because roadways have become unsafe, children rely on adults to drive them places. Studies show that physical inactivity starts in childhood. Two-thirds of all Americans report they began their favorite activity as a child, and 53% say they began their activity with a parent or other close relative.

Rail trails provide safe and secure areas for people to exercise. By providing safe multi-recreational opportunities we may be preventing future health epidemics while also increasing family time and creating civic pride.

### **3) *Improve Transportation System Efficiency***

Trail users have expressed they want more trails built, trails linked together and more long distance trails. By expanding the length of the trail system it provides more economic benefits as well as more satisfaction to the community. Gobster 's 1990 study found that by having longer trails and a mix of surfaces for trail users to choose from, trail users were more willing to support user fees for trail upkeep and expansion. These users also stayed on the trails longer and spent more money. The longer the trail system, the greater distance people are willing to go to get to the trail (7 miles vs. 2), and the more each trip costs (\$4.03 to \$1.15). His study also showed that 70 percent of the respondents had also purchased hard goods.

### **4) *Provide Transportation Facilities and Services With Minimal Environmental Impacts***

By combining utilities in a single corridor money is saved for maintenance and land costs. Additionally, utility companies could be asked to pay fees to use the Maybrook corridor. Some examples of fees that have been collected in other states include:<sup>17</sup>

- a) The Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park in Virginia collected a one time \$450,000 fiber optic license fee and collects recurring rental fees on it's 45-mile multi use trail.
- b) U.S. Sprint pays the Parks Dept in Seattle, Washington to use the 2.25-mile trail. These fees increase 10 percent each year and they have a five-year contract.
- c) U.S. Telecom paid for the 10-foot wide pavement on the 48-mile Glacial Drumlkin Trail for a perpetual easement.

The paved sections of the Hudson Valley Rail Trail in Highland is built over a fiber optic line. The pavement acts as protection for the fiber optic lines.

There is numerous documentation on the negative aspects of automobile use. Rail trails provide a safer, and environmentally friendly alternative to motorized vehicles.

Studies have also shown that areas that were previously used as dumping grounds are now prided and policed by the local communities. This civic pride can also lead to volunteers helping with maintenance.

In close proximity of the Maybrook corridor are several area schools and colleges. The rail trail can provide a natural classroom for learning about native plants, rock formations and local history.

### **5) *Support Economic and Community Development and Services***

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16 Cited from Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails , and Greenways as taken from Men's Fitness Magazine, 1992

17 Cited from Thinking Green as taken from Rails to Trails Conservancy 1993.

The average American enjoys 130 leisure days per year. Studies have shown that young adults and households with annual incomes of \$50,000 participate more frequently in outdoor activities. Half of the families in Dutchess County make over \$49,000 and in Ulster County the median income is \$33,518.

One study showed trail users on three different types of rail trails spent an average of \$8.00 per person per day. This had a total annual economic benefit of over \$1.2 million for each trail. Visitors from outside the county brought in an average of over \$441,000 with the most money spent on area restaurants and gas.

A Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management survey of businesses along the Cape Cod trail found that 75% of the business owners believe that the trail's proximity to their business will make it easier for them to sell in the future. Since the opening of these businesses, 60% have expanded and they cite the trail as being a prominent factor in their expansion decision.

In a Maryland survey, 90% of the respondents felt that being within one mile of a trail was an amenity that they could use in the sale of their home. When asked the question "*if when buying a new home would the proximity of a trail/park influence you?*", 61% replied yes. Over 95 percent viewed the trail as an asset to their community and nearly 2/3 of the respondents felt the trail enhanced property values.

Tourism is a major contributor to the economy of both Dutchess and Ulster Counties. In Dutchess County local historical and recreational facilities bring close to two million visitors a year. This industry also provides employment for about 9,000 employees.

Dutchess County has already realized the interest and benefits of bicycling. The county distributes a series of publications on BIKE TOURS. Dutchess County also hosts bicycle and running events and races.

The Poughkeepsie Rail Road Bridge is on the National Register. Walk Across the Hudson event had thousands of visitors. As cited in the Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails and Greenway Corridors, travelers are also increasingly attracted to educational-oriented experiences provided by cultural and historic sites.

Mr. Steinhaus's 2001 State of the County speech mentions that we need creative ways to attract and retain the young working population in Dutchess County. Dutchess and Ulster counties are rich with educational facilities, historical sites and natural beauty. Quality of life in an area is important to corporations finding locations for their business.

## **6) Assure Financial Viability of Transportation System**

According to the "Rails to Trails Conservancy" (1998) 85% of all trail projects met no opposition from the community. In fact studies have shown that people feel the money spent on trails is a good use of funds and that people enjoy trail systems above traditional parks.

With the past decade of creating rail trails some problems have been encountered. Differences in speed on the trail create conflicts as well as differences in the preferences for the trail surface. Several studies solve this problem by creating a two-trail system: one 10' paved surface for the faster modes of transportation (i.e. bicycle and roller bladers) that runs parallel to a natural path. The Maybrook corridor in Dutchess County is wide enough to accommodate this type of trail system.<sup>18</sup> In sections where the trail may be too narrow or bridges need to be built, trail users can share a single trail system. We propose that the Maybrook corridor use this two trail system.

The paved trail should be placed 2' from the edge of the trail (instead of the center of the trail). Fiber optics can be buried under the paved section or share the 2' border with the water utility line. The other side of the trail can be used for waste water lines and the surface used as a utility road for maintenance. Another complaint from trail users about local trails was that they were often closed. Having a wide, two-trail system ensures that at least one trail can remain

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<sup>18</sup> According to the DEIS for the Dutchess Central Utility Corridor (section III.A.2) the railbed is a level berm that varies in width from 25 to 50 feet and is covered with a crushed rock surface.

open. This would make the Dutchess trail system consistent with the Hudson Valley Rail Trail in Highland. This type of trail system is attractive to all non-motorized trail activities.

Several studies conclude that most trail users live close to their trail and they use them frequently. A recent survey of the Mohawk Hudson Trail in Schenectady found that 40% of the adjacent households used the trail frequently if not daily. In fact only 14% of the adjacent households never use the trail. Gobster's Illinois study shows that seventy-five percent of the trail users lived within ten miles of the trail. Given the dense populations in the surrounding areas of the Maybrook corridor, similar use can be expected.

Many studies have shown the link between rail trail use and economic growth in the community. The Maybrook rail trail could be added to the Dutchess County and Hudson Valley tourism attractions that already have a significant economic impact. Additionally, the Maybrook corridor Rail Trail would similarly add a desirable quality of life attraction to potential employers and employees.

We feel that a rail trail should be a permanent use of the Maybrook corridor. Using existing studies as models, the Maybrook corridor should certainly meet the above objectives and goals.

Sincerely,

Lori Horner

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