

Very dangerous road crossing location (please see enclosed map)

Please recognize that a crossing at Route 2 is required to link up with the Williamstown section of the Mohawk Trail, which ends at the municipal border. The use of properly designed pedestrian crossings can be an effective means of altering driver behavior along sections of road where drivers routinely exceed the speed limit. The proposed crossing location is strategic in that it makes this connection and offers excellent east/west sight lines. The crossing will be supplemented with a pedestrian traffic control device, most likely a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (see attached image). This will increase the safety of crossing Route 2 compared to the unsignalized crossing near Hamel Ave. Any crossing will go through significant safety review by MADOT.



Would create a bottleneck on highly traveled State Highway, Route 2

The crossing signal would only be activated during times of use, at which times the traffic needs to be slowed to a stop. Based on experience, weekends will see the greatest time of use; while weekday use of the trail generally occurs between the morning and evening rush hour, or after the dinner hour. Current crossings on Park Street in Adams as well as on Route 8 in Cheshire seem to be successful.

When will the traffic study be completed?

As part of the 25% Design Submission, there will be a Function Design Report. That will be compiled by GPI and it will consider the different components of the area to determine the best type of crossing. GPI will submit this to MassDOT for their review and recommendations.

City bus and school bus stops

The trail crossing could actually be advantageous to public transportation as it can provide access to the bus stops. One of the major goals of the project is to offer improved connectivity between residents along the Route 2 corridor and the surrounding community. The fact that the path brings you close to bus stops and that the crossing will double as a crossing for bus patrons is seen as an effective element of multi-modal design.

Interference with two businesses

Once the crossing point is known, we will certainly have conversations with the two businesses on the north and south sides of Route 2 near the crossing. Engineers and MADOT will assure both access and safety for the businesses involved as well as all concerned and as such the trail will cause minimal disturbance to the businesses and will provide additional access for patrons to get to the businesses.

Illegal parking

Any parking for the trail will be at the Spruces or the Airport. Signage can be installed to discourage trail parking except at designated parking locations and signage will be provided to direct trail users to available parking. Any parking along Route 2 or Chenaille Terrace will not be allowed and strongly enforced.

Spring flooding

The engineers will look at this but would need neighbors to elaborate as the proposed trail location at this location is above the 100-year flood limit. Without being on-site regularly, engineers are unaware of any flooding that occurs. Additional information will be gathered and considered during the design process. With that said, trail projects are often built along river corridors and are able to withstand some seasonal flooding.....as is the case along sections of the Ashuwillticook Trail.

Location of bike trail too close to homes

According to very preliminary information gathered by engineers, the bike path would be in the range of 100-150' away from homes along the west side of Chenaille Terrace. The trail will be set as far from the homes as possible without causing any major environmental impacts. The exact distance will of course depend on surveying the site and delineating wetlands and other potential terrain challenges. As for the entrance on the northerly side of Route 2, all efforts will be made to keep the crossing to the west of the doctors building but again, until this is further engineered, nothing is certain.

Loss of privacy and quiet back yards

There is no denying that the bike path will bring people into an area that does not now host people. Residents with a strong desire for further privacy are welcome to request separation in the form of vegetation or fences. The noise level is already that of a suburban neighborhood and aviation traffic creates unusual noise that most suburban neighborhoods don't experience.

Potential for increased crime

This is addressed in the information sent to neighbors in January. Statistics do not support increases in crime in neighborhoods that support bike paths. There have been countless studies done across the country and in New England regarding trails and their impact on crime. Studies have shown that the rate of vandalism and break-ins as well as other crimes is well below the neighborhood average. Generally, cyclists on bike routes are headed to a specific destination and are not interested in lingering in neighborhoods. Trail users often serve as "eyes on the street" and discourage unwanted activity. *(We are aware that studies do exist showing the opposite but they are far outnumbered by those showing positive impacts.)*

Noise, litter, loitering, and dog waste

Trail etiquette is addressed in the information sent to neighbors in January. Enforcement will again be key in minimizing impacts. These are community wide concerns and the expectation is that users of the trail would respect the trail and the abutting properties. Trail rules signs will be posted to guide the users.

Decrease in property values

Property valuation is addressed in the information sent to neighbors in January. There seems to be no evidence that bike/pedestrian pathways reduce property values, in fact many areas see an increase in resale value and data shows that homes near trails often sell more quickly. As this project progresses, the city may consider granting easements to homeowners who have come to maintain lawn and/or structures on the land that they do not own.

Fragmenting and destroying natural habitat

Because much of the area is wetland and is strictly regulated, there will be an inherent effort to minimize the footprint and impacts of the path. Maintaining vegetated cover for wildlife will be part of that effort. The intent of the path in this area is to minimize impacts to natural habitats. During design, there will be close coordination with the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program to ensure there is no take of habitat, in addition to the Department of Environmental Protection. The project will not be permitted by either authority if they believe there will be negative impacts.

Fences would hinder wildlife movement, deer, bears, bobcats, etc.

Fences can be designed to allow wildlife movement. If there are regular migration routes or deer runs that neighbors are aware of, they should work with the project to design a fence line that might be able to accommodate wildlife movement. Fences would not be installed unless requested by the abutting land owner or required by grade. A vegetative buffer (bushes and trees) is always a preferred alternative to provide screening.

Strangers having direct access to resident properties

The access from the trail would be no greater than that from the roadway. Residents with a strong desire for further privacy are welcome to request separation in the form of vegetation or fences.

Disturbing a beautiful residential and quiet neighborhood

The intent of the path would be to enhance the beauty of the neighborhood while allowing others a chance to admire what is already enjoyed by the current residents. Trail projects are sometimes misconstrued as pathways that are being developed for hordes of outsiders, but in reality the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail is highly used by Berkshire residents, with a smaller percentage being out-of-towners who ride the full length of the trail. Because the Williamstown-North Adams trail will only be 3.5 miles in length, we expect that North Adams and Williamstown residents will be the greatest beneficiaries, with families and other leisure users traveling short sections. The beauty will not change for the majority of homeowners because vegetation such as trees and shrubs will continue to grow between the residential properties and the bike path. Admittedly the homeowners may hear voices when they are in their backyards.

Cul-de-sac located on Chenaille Terrace has been a school bus turnaround for over 50 years

The building of the bike/pedestrian path will not impede in any way existing bus traffic on the street. The cul-de-sac will not be impacted by the proposed trail.

Actual construction of bike trail very disruptive and dangerous

Any construction is disruptive however actual construction of this area would take a relatively short amount of time certainly when compared to the life of the trail. All necessary precautions would be taken to ensure the safety of everyone involved in and near the construction.