

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF AHET TRAIL ROUTE CHANGES: FROM DRAFT TO FINAL CONCEPT PLAN

The AHET Trail Draft Concept Plan was issued on August 7, 2017. During the four-month period from August through December, the AHET Trail design team, comprised of staff from the Hudson Greenway (HRVG), Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI), and Alta Planning + Design (Alta), further studied the entire 35-mile route from the City of Rensselaer to the City of Hudson, and carefully reviewed comments submitted by local officials, stakeholders, and members of the public (see attached Summary of Public Comments).

The updated AHET Trail route is described in the detailed maps in this Final Concept Plan. Overall, the AHET Trail remains largely the same to the route proposed in the prior Draft Plan, predominantly following the historic trolley corridor for over 70% of the route, now owned by National Grid. However, after further studies, the design team made revisions to the AHET Trail route in discrete sections where appropriate. The specific changes to the AHET Trail route in the Final Concept Plan are described below (the changes are presented in “north to south” order).



TOWN OF EAST GREENBUSH

- 1. Southern Avenue.** The August, 2017 Draft Plan proposed to construct a separate off-road path on the National Grid ROW, parallel to Southern Avenue, from Hampton Avenue to Maryland Avenue, for a distance of four-tenths of a mile (2,027 feet). Further study has determined engineering challenges with constructing an off-road path in this section, including topography and wetlands issues. Furthermore, the extremely low volume and speed of vehicles on Southern Avenue make it safe for pedestrians and bicyclists to utilize the road in its current configuration. **The Final Concept Plan eliminates this section of off-road path. Instead, the AHET Trail route will be designated as a shared pedestrian/bicycle roadway directly on Southern Avenue.** At the southwest end of Southern Avenue, the AHET Trail route will shift back to be an off-road trail constructed on the National Grid ROW.
- 2. Off-Road Path Behind the Funplex.** The AHET Trail route from Old Troy Road to Route 4 will be an off-road trail. A large gully exists behind the Funplex complex, creating a break in the trail that must be addressed. The August 2017 Draft Plan proposed to install a bicycle/pedestrian bridge to span over the gully. Further analysis has determined that installing a culvert and placing fill to restore the ROW can meet applicable environmental standards and is a more cost-effective approach. **The Final Concept Plan proposes to install a culvert, eliminating the need for a bridge at this location.**
- 3. Route 4 Crossing.** The prior Draft Plan proposed to utilize a Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at the location where the AHET Trail will cross Route 4. The design team collected data on traffic volumes and speeds at this location. The data indicates that a more robust crossing treatment is warranted. **The Final Concept Plan proposes a High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) signal be installed to provide for pedestrian and bicycle safety at this location. The AHET Trail design team will further consult with NYSDOT before finalizing the appropriate Route 4 crossing treatment.**

TOWN OF SCHODACK

- 4. Berkshire Drive and Tamarack Lane.** A half-mile section of the National Grid ROW between Point View Drive and Greenwood Drive is not conducive to constructing an off-road trail. At some point in the past, portions of the trolley bed were removed, and a series of drainage structures were installed to collect stormwater run-off. The August 2017 Draft Plan proposed using Berkshire Drive and Highland Drive as the on-road AHET Trail route to bypass the unusable ROW section. Upon further study, the design team concluded Berkshire Drive is not desirable as the designated AHET Trail route, due to its narrow pavement width (20 feet), prevalence of on-street parking, steep grades and sight distance concerns, deteriorated sidewalks in some locations, and potential traffic and parking conflicts with an adjacent private school and church. The design team concluded that Tamarack Lane provides the best on-road route in this location, due to its wider width (32-35 feet), low traffic volumes and speeds, better sign distances, and overall roadway configurations. **The Final Concept Plan identifies Tamarack Lane as the on-road AHET Trail connecting route between Point View Drive and Greenwood Drive.**
- 5. East Greenbush Trailhead.** The Final Concept Plan recommends an existing DOT-owned parking lot, located on the southeast side of Clinton Street where it intersects with Route 20, be designated an AHET Trail Trailhead parking location. This is an additional trail head location to supplement the proposed location within the City of Rensselaer located at Riverfront Park.
- 6. Miller Road Crossing.** The AHET Trail will cross Miller Road slightly to the west of the Exit 10 Interchange on I-90. The design team evaluated numerous options to develop the proper treatment to provide a safe pedestrian and bicycle crossing of Miller Road. **The Final Concept Plan anticipates installation of a High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) signal at the intersection of Miller Road and Empire State Boulevard. The AHET Trail design team will further consult with the Town and NYSDOT before finalizing the Miller Road crossing treatment.**
- 7. East Schodack.** The August 2018 Draft Plan proposed to designate an on-road section of the AHET Trail route along State Route 150 and County Route 7 in East Schodack, with pedestrians and bicyclists using the shoulders of the roads for a distance of one-half mile (the on-road section would have avoided the need to replace a missing bridge and skirt a small substation on this section of National Grid ROW). Upon further study, the design team concluded these roads are not desirable for the AHET Trail route: both have narrow shoulders; Route 150 has high traffic speeds and volume; and the “triangle intersection” where County Route 7 meets Route 150 presents challenges for pedestrian and bicycle safety in addition to the very narrow ROW along in this area which restricts potential for improvements. **Accordingly, the Final Concept Plan proposes constructing**



an off-road trail on the National Grid ROW from Route 150 to the intersection with East Hill Road. The National Grid ROW is sufficiently wide to accommodate construction of the trail around the existing substation and a new bridge will be installed across the Moordener Kill. **The AHET Trail route will then run southeast on East Hill Road for 700 feet, which is a very low traffic road that services a small number of residences** (no changes will be made to the road other than installation of AHET Trail directional signage). After the short East Hill Road section, the AHET Trail will continue southeast as an off-road trail on the National Grid ROW.

8. West of Nassau Lake. The August 2017 Draft Plan proposed constructing an 1,100-foot section of off-road trail on the National Grid ROW, from the intersection of Trolley Way and Long Branch Road, to a point where the trail crosses over County Route 7. Several issues (including septic fields on the ROW) have been identified relating to residences built immediately adjacent to National Grid's property. **The Final Concept Plan continues to identify the AHET Trail route as off-road trail on the National Grid alignment from Long Branch Road to County Route 7 (no change from the Draft Plan); however further study will be required during the engineering design phase to consider constraints at this location.**

9. Schodack Trailhead. The location of the proposed Schodack Trailhead as originally proposed in the draft concept plan was be located along Reno Road. Significant grading along with ROW challenges prevent construction of the trail head in this location. A new location is now proposed south along County Route 7 on Rensselaer County property. **This new proposed Trailhead is located on a vacant county-owned parcel adjacent to County Route 7.**

VILLAGE AND TOWN OF NASSAU

The Final Concept Plan utilizes the same AHET Trail route proposed in the Draft Plan (no changes) in the Village and Town of Nassau.

TOWN OF CHATHAM

10. North Chatham to Electric Park Road. The August, 2017 Draft Plan proposed that the AHET Trail route be constructed as off-road trail, on the National Grid ROW, from County Route 32 in North Chatham to Little Lake Road. South of Little Lake Road, the August, 2017 Draft Plan proposed the AHET Trail route be designated on the shoulders of State Route 203 for three-quarters of a mile (4,000 feet). Use of Route 203 would avoid the need to install a new bridge over the Valatie Kill. The design team has carefully studied Route 203, and concluded it is not desirable for pedestrians and bicycles due to narrow shoulders and high traffic speeds (posted 55 mph). Widening State Route 203 to provide improved trail user conditions would require ROW property acquisition, relocation of numerous utility poles, reconfiguration of private driveways, and additional impacts to adjacent residences. **Accordingly, the Final Concept Plan proposes a continuous off-road path from Route 32 in North Chatham to the point where it intersects with Electric Park Road, including utilizing the National Grid ROW south of Little Lake Road. This change will require installation of a missing bridge across the Valatie Kill, and significant grading of the trolley alignment embankment north and south of Little Lake Road.**

TOWN OF KINDERHOOK AND VILLAGES OF KINDERHOOK AND VALATIE

11. Village of Valatie. The Final Concept Plan continues to designate the AHET Trail as an off-road trail north and south of Main Street in Valatie, where Main Street intersects with Route 9. The design team continues to evaluate the preferred road crossing design for providing safe passage for pedestrians and bicyclists through the Main Street/Route 9 intersection.

12. Village of Kinderhook. The August, 2017 Draft Plan proposed a trailhead parking area be created at Mills Park. **The Final Concept Plan proposes locating the trailhead parking area at a different location – at Rothermel Village Park, where the village playground and little league fields are located.** The new location is much larger and can better accommodate trail parking, and provides access to existing park amenities including seasonal restrooms and picnic tables. Also in Kinderhook, the Final Concept Plan anticipates more robust trail crossings (Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacons) where the AHET Trail crosses Albany Avenue and Eichybush Road in the Village and anticipates using the Historic Society ROW from Albany Avenue bypass a section of the National Grid transmission line where ROW limits restrict placement of the trail.



TOWN OF STUYVESANT

13. Smith Road and Sunnyside Road. The August, 2017 Draft Plan identified several options for the AHET Trail south of Smith Road. The design team has eliminated consideration of developing an off-road trail on the National Grid ROW immediately south of Smith Road. The ROW in this location passes directly adjacent to a large dairy farm operation and buildings located on both sides of the corridor, creating an unsafe condition for trail users. **The Final Concept Plan identifies the following route in this area: the Trail will be a separated sidepath along Smith Road to the intersection of Route 9 and will continue as a separated sidepath for a short distance south along the west side of Route 9; the route will then cross Route 9 and follow Sunnyside Road south until it intersects with the National Grid ROW; from that point the trail will be constructed as an off-road path running south on the National Grid ROW.** A safe crossing treatment will be designed where trail users cross Route 9 at Sunnyside Road.

14. Stuyvesant Falls. The August, 2017 Draft Plan proposed the AHET Trail would include a short on-road section on Route 25A and Woods Lane. Further study by the design team has determined the National Grid ROW is suitable for off-road trail at this location. **The Final Concept Plan eliminates the off-road route at this location; instead an additional 500-foot section of off-road trail will be built on the ROW from Route 25a to New Street, including appropriate**

trail crossings at Route 25A, Frisbee Lane, and New Street. Also, a small new trailhead parking area is proposed at Stuyvesant Falls.

15. Hamlet of Stockport. The AHET Trail route includes a 1.83-mile on-road section utilizing Rossman Road, Route 25, and Urban Road in the hamlet of Stockport. The National Grid ROW is not usable for off-road trail in this section because large railroad bridges that once spanned long distances across the Kinderhook Creek and Claverack Creek no longer exist and installing new bridges is cost-prohibitive and potentially will have significant environmental impacts to the stream beds of both creeks. The August, 2017 Draft Plan proposed several short sections of off-road trail that would be built on parts of the National Grid ROW in this area. However, further study by the design team has concluded that real property ROW ownership issues and additional engineering issues including drainage and wetlands preclude development of these short off-road trail sections. **Accordingly, the Final Concept Plan identifies this entire AHET Trail section as an on-road route along Rossman Road, Route 25, and Urban Road. In this stretch, bicyclists and pedestrians will travel on the road shoulders, as a shared roadway largely in their current condition. Signage will be installed informing motorists to be alert for bicyclists and pedestrians. Traffic calming measures as outlined in the EST Deign manual in consultation with Columbia County will be investigated.**

TOWN OF STOCKPORT AND TOWN OF GREENPORT

16. New Off-Road Trail South of Stottville. The August, 2017 Draft Plan proposed that the off-road portion of the AHET Trail would end where the National Grid ROW intersects with Atlantic Avenue (County Route 20) in Stottville. From there, the August, 2017 Draft Plan proposed the AHET Trail would be an on-road route along Atlantic Avenue, Fairview Avenue, Joslen Boulevard, and Harry Howard Avenue into the City of Hudson. Further study by the design team has concluded: a) Atlantic Avenue, Fairview Avenue, and the northern part of Joslen Boulevard have relatively high traffic volumes and speeds and narrow shoulders, making them less desirable for bicyclists and pedestrians; and b) an off-road trail can be constructed on the National Grid ROW for a significant distance south of Stottville. **Accordingly, south of Stottville, the Final Concept Plan proposes the AHET Trail route will continue as an off-road trail running south of Atlantic Avenue through Stockport and into Greenport (the new off-road trail segment will be two miles long). The off-road trail will end at the intersection with Kipp Lane (southern driveway). At that point, the AHET Trail will follow a new separated sidepath for a short distance (700 feet) along the east side of Fairview Avenue. The route will cross over Fairview at the intersection with Livingston Parkway, and will continue west along Livingston to Joslen Boulevard**

(appropriate treatments will be installed at all road crossings). From there the AHET Trail route will follow a short stretch of Joslen to Harry Howard Avenue, into the City of Hudson. Continuing the AHET Trail as an off-road path on the National Grid Row south of Atlantic Avenue creates an additional two miles of off-road trail, thereby eliminating the need to locate the route on-road for a distance of 2.2 miles on Atlantic Avenue, Fairview Avenue, and the north part of Joslen Boulevard.

17. Stottville Trailhead. The Final Concept Plan proposes to create a trailhead parking area in Stottville at the existing town park and little league field on Park Place. The plan anticipates installing improved parking facilities, amenities, and landscaping where cars currently are parked adjacent to the ballfield on Park Place (designation of the trailhead is contingent upon approval by the Town).



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