

Ulster & Delaware Corridor Advisory Committee

DATE & TIME: August 22, 2024 at 4:30PM
LOCATION: Legislative Chambers, 6th Floor, County Office Building, Kingston
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chair Collins
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Michael Tierney, Legislative Support Specialist
MEMBERS PRESENT: Legislators Collins, Litts, McCollough, Nolan
MEMBERS ABSENT: Legislators Kovacs, Sperry, Uchitelle
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes
OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislator Manna Jo Greene, Legislator Eric Stewart, Meg Carey, Catskill Mountain Rail Road President Ernest Hunt, Marcia Roosa, Harry Jameson, William Sheldon, Stuart Auchincloss, Ulster County Trails Advisory Committee Chair Kevin Smith

Chair Collins called the meeting to order at 4:39 PM.

The Committee discussed their walkthrough of the Undesignated segment of the U&D Corridor. Legislators Stewart and Collins highlighted the engineering challenges related to rail with trail regarding both wetlands and the width of cut rock portions of the corridor. Legislator Nolan stated that while walking the corridor it was apparent that herbicide was applied to the FAI LLC portion of the corridor, which is likely a violation of the easement.

Chair Collins recognized Ernest Hunt, President of the Catskill Mountain Rail Road to give a presentation on CMRR's proposed use of the undesignated corridor and outlined plans for a station and parking lot at the intersection of Basin Road. Legislator Nolan inquired what market studies have been done to support the assertion of CMRR that extension of their use of the Corridor would increase ridership. Legislator Nolan also asked if DEP has granted access to the Ashokan Rail Trail, currently on the other side of the Basin Road Bridge. Legislator Stewart asked if the proposed facility would be open to the public not riding the train to Basin Road. Chair Collins highlighted that the property in the Town of Woodstock is zoned "Neighborhood Commercial" and that this might not be an allowable use of the property.

Legislator Litts inquired on the width of the easement. Mr. Hunt stated that the easement is sixty-six feet for most of the length of the rail, but extends to 150 feet for the Stoney Hollow Fill portion, with the fill itself being 120 feet wide at the base.

Hearing no further questions, Chair Collins thanked Mr. Hunt for the presentation and stated that the next meeting would be a presentation by the Open Space Institute on a trail-only use of the undesignated corridor.

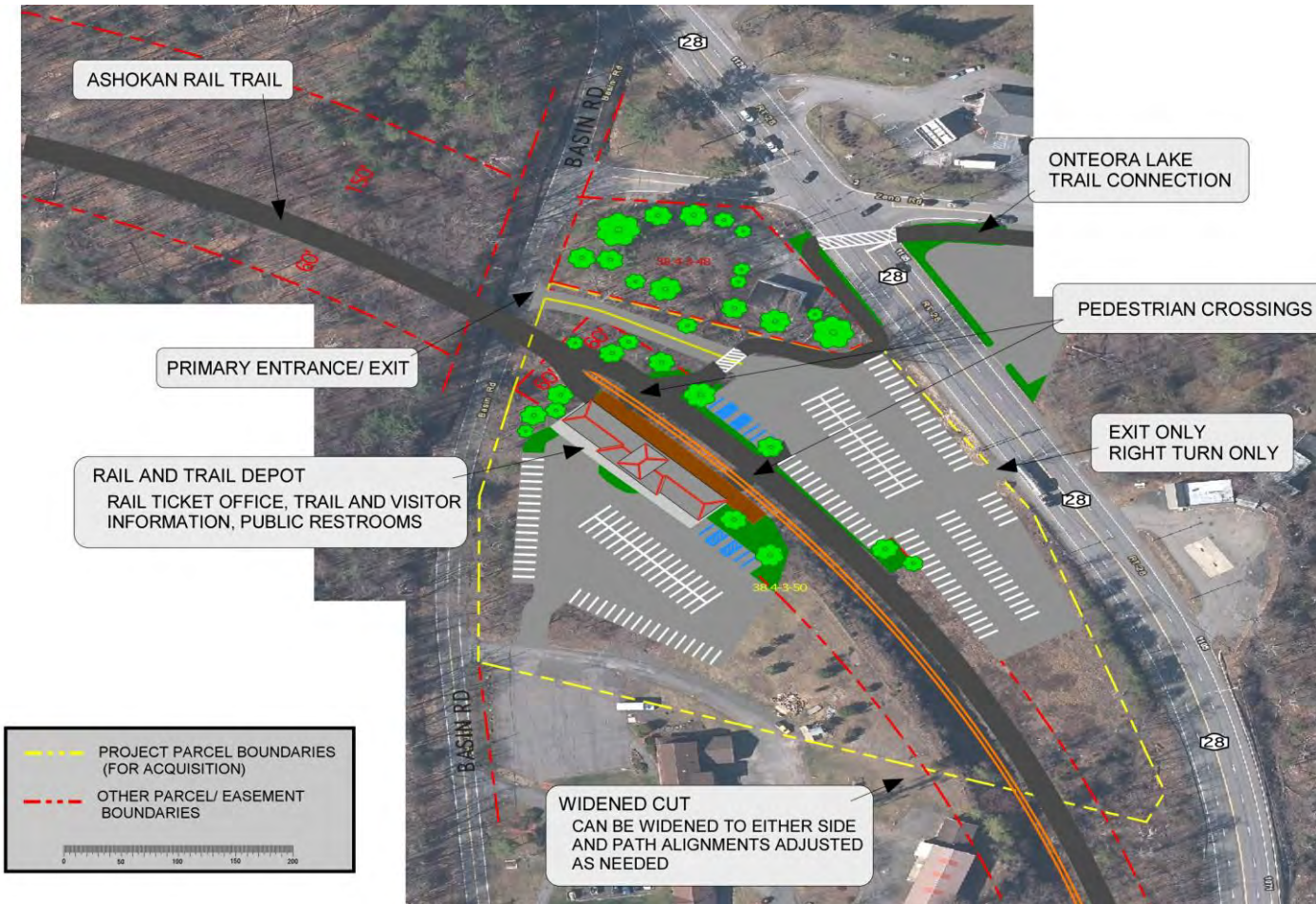
The next meeting of the Ulster & Delaware Advisory Committee is scheduled for Thursday September 26, 2024 in Legislative Chambers.

Adjournment

Motion By: Legislator Litts
Seconded By: Legislator Nolan
TIME: 5:55 PM
Respectfully Submitted By: Michael Tierney, Legislative Support Specialist
Minutes Approved: September 26, 2024



CATSKILL MOUNTAIN RR Extension to Basin Road



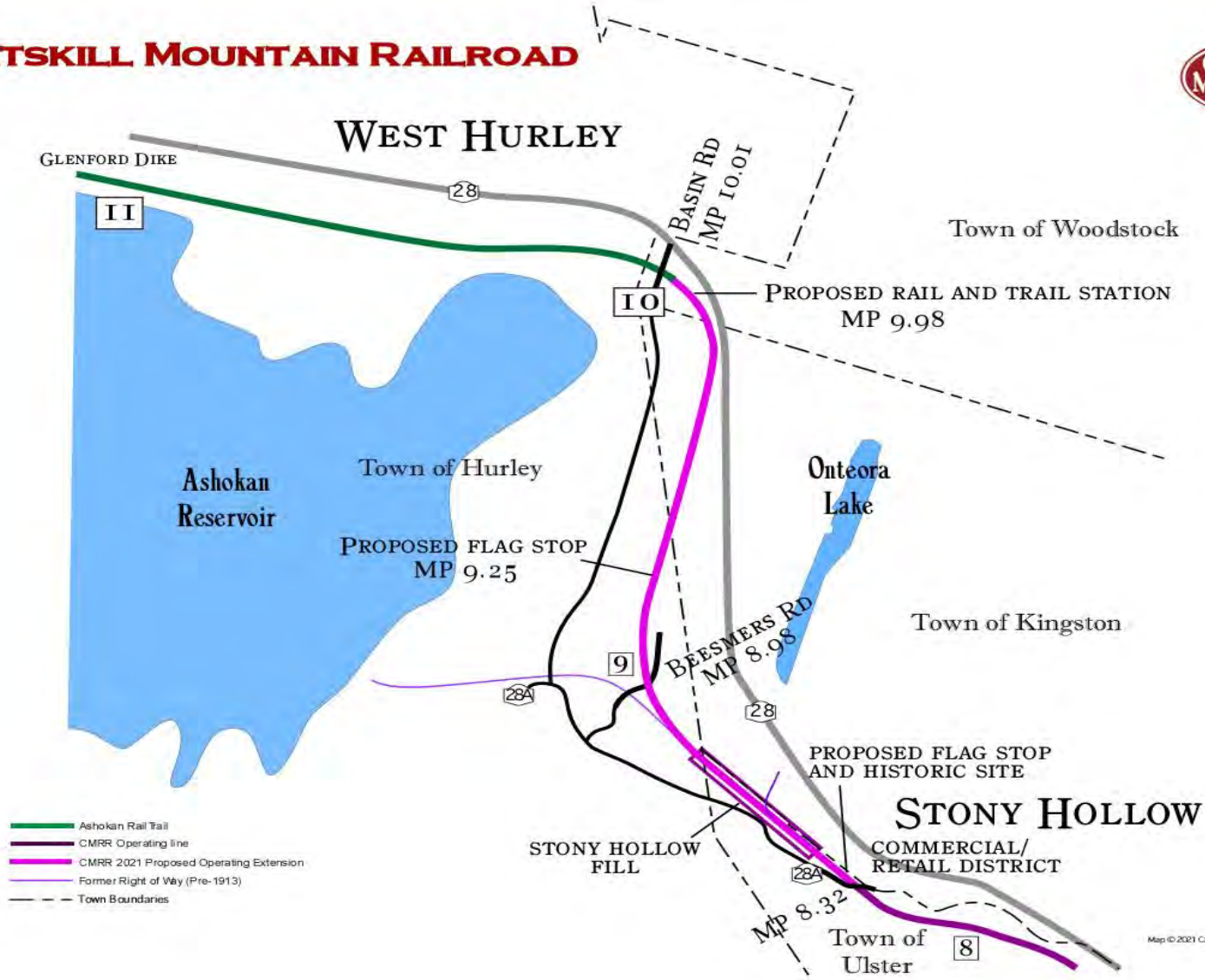
August 2024



Executive Summary

- **Extension Request:** The [Catskill Mountain Railroad “CMRR”](#) is requesting permission to renovate and operate a 1.67 mile length of railroad track from the end of its current permit in Stony Hollow to connect to the Ashokan Rail Trail at Basin Road. The extension will add a terminal at Basin Road and stops at Beesmer Road, Stony Hollow, and Washington Avenue in Kingston for a ride up the steep grade to the [Ashokan Rail Trail “ART”](#).
- See Video at: [Catskill Mountain Railroad - Proposed Extension to Basin Road – YouTube](#)
- **Tourism Gateway:** The CMRR has entered into a long term land lease to build a Rail and Trail Station at Basin Road. This facility will have indoor bathrooms, parking and an event facility for both the [ART](#) and the [CMRR](#). It will also serve as a gateway to the [U&D Corridor](#) and the proposed expanded [Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway](#).
- **Economic Benefits:** The project will create a combined attraction that will rival the [Walkway over the Hudson](#) benefiting the County, the ART, the Railroad, the City of Kingston, the Towns of Woodstock, Hurley, Ulster and Kingston, UC Businesses and the Community in general. CMRR estimates the combined attraction will increase the economic impact of both the CMRR and the ART by over 50%, and will allow the CMRR to increase from **three to ten full time employees and double its payroll**. The period station and flag stops will also be a great location for movie productions.
- **Sustainability:** Replacing cars with trains will reduce GHG emissions by up to 95%, alleviate parking shortages at the Woodstock Dike ART trailhead and reduce traffic on Route 28.
- **Local Endorsements:** The Towns of [Hurley](#), [Kingston](#), and [Ulster](#) have recognized the potential economic impact of this extension by passing resolutions of support, and we have received over 35 letters of support from the public for the extension.

CATSKILL MOUNTAIN RAILROAD



Map © 2021 Catskill Mountain Railroad Company



Connection to the UC ART

- The [Basin Road Rail and Trail Station](#) will provide a direct rail connection between the [ART](#) and Midtown and [Uptown Kingston](#), and bring thousands of new visitors via the CMRR to the ART and the Towns of [Kingston](#), [Ulster](#), [Hurley](#) and [Woodstock](#), creating a destination attraction that will rival the [Walkway over the Hudson](#).
- [ART](#) users can leave their cars in Kingston where they can stop for lunch or dinner before or after their trip by rail to the Ashokan Rail Trail, allowing Midtown and Uptown Kingston a direct link to the economic impact of ART visitors.
- The [CMRR](#) can run regular shuttle service from Kingston up the hill to the ART on a two hour turnaround allowing the railroad to provide a transportation function.
- Bicyclists can load their bikes in Kingston Plaza or Washington Avenue for a trip up to the ART and back, avoiding the steep 5 mile 2% grade from Kingston to the [Ashokan Reservoir](#).
- Rail Shuttle Service from Midtown and [Uptown Kingston](#) to the new [Basin Road Rail and Trail Station](#) will ease congestion on Route 28 and reduce parking needs at the ART trailhead in West Hurley. This service can be offered free to disadvantaged Kingston residents and those who cannot afford bicycles to ride to the [ART](#).
- The [Basin Road Rail and Trail Station](#) will also be a Gateway to the Catskills through its connection to the [U&D Corridor](#) and the [Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway](#).



Benefits to Ulster County

- Combines the railroad and the ART for a single destination attraction greater than each attraction is by itself that will rival the [Walkway over the Hudson](#).
- Expands the CMRR's extensive (80%) out-of-county visitor base for a combined experience of Midtown and Uptown Kingston, the railroad and the ART.
- Provides more out-of-county visitors for the ART and increases its economic impact.
- Creates a Tourism Gateway for western Ulster County and the [Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway](#) with a UC Tourism information booth.
- Through new event space and indoor bathrooms, allows the ART and the Railroad to be included on the "Attractions" signs on the New York Thruway.
- Provides a great movie production location with a period train station.
- Provides access to the ART that is not controlled by the NYCDEP.
- Decreases GHG emissions by taking automobiles off Route 28 and replacing them with train riders in furtherance of Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger's goal of [creating the boldest climate agenda in New York State](#).
- Cost of this project will be entirely born by the CMRR, the local the landowner, and NYSDOT, which has already provided [\\$667,000 in funding](#).



Benefits to the UC ART

- Safer access to the ART at West Hurley through Route 28 Stoplight at Basin/Zena Road
- Provides a safer method for ART users to cross Route 28 at Basin/Zena Road.
- Provides additional parking for the Woodstock Dike Trailhead.
- Provides event space and indoor bathrooms for ART patrons. The indoor bathrooms will allow the ART to be listed on the “Attractions” signs on the NY Thruway.
- Provides commercial space for ART patrons to rent bikes and buy food and drink.
- Can provide a connection between the ART, the Onteora Lake Trail network and possibly Woodstock along Zena Road.
- Provides ART patrons a safe direct connection to Basin Road and Route 28A.
- Will bring more out-of-County patrons to the ART via the railroad, which has 80% of its customers from outside the County, increasing the UC ART’s economic impact.
- Encourages Cross Country Skiing on the ART in the winter when combined with the railroad’s “Ski Train”.
- Provides an alternate Woodstock Dike Trailhead location when the Woodstock Dike is rebuilt by the NYCDEP, and allows a trail entrance not controlled by the NYCDEP.
- Will allow more disadvantaged Kingston residents access to the ART through free rides on the railroad to the ART from Kingston.



Benefits to the UC Railroad

- **Railroad will serve a transportation function, not just a scenic ride**
- **Gives the railroad a destination and period terminal station.**
- **Allows passengers to detrain and access the ART and Basin Road.**
- **Passengers can rent bikes if they want to travel the entire trail and buy food and drink.**
- **Event space can be used for a variety of special train events, including a North Pole.**
- **Indoor bathrooms allow to Railroad to be put on Thruway attractions signs**
- **Kingston/ART 2 hour Shuttle Service will railroad double patronage in Spring and Summer.**
- **Railroad will increase from three to ten full time paid employees.**
- **Period station and flag stops will be a great location for movie shoots including the train.**
- **Increased out-of-county passengers and in-county expenditures will increase the economic impact of the UC Railroad to the Ulster economy by over 50%.**
- **Without the extension the railroad's ability to increase its ridership is extremely limited.**





Kingston City Benefits

- Instituting regular rail shuttle service between [Kingston Plaza](#) and the [Basin Road Rail and Trail Station](#) will allow visitors to combine the [CMRR](#), the [ART](#), Midtown and [Uptown Kingston](#) into a single visit. Shuttle service will run from Kingston Plaza to the Ashokan Rail Trail on two hour intervals.
- This connection will let Midtown and [Uptown Kingston](#) businesses tap into the economic impact of the [Ashokan Rail Trail](#) by attracting visitors who might otherwise skip Kingston altogether and drive straight to the ART in West Hurley.
- The CMRR's existing terminal in Kingston is at Kingston Plaza near Westbrook Lane. [Kingston Plaza](#) is a longtime partner with the CMRR and is committed to the CMRR using Kingston Plaza as the CMRR's eastern terminal permanently. The station is a short walk from [Uptown Kingston](#) along Westbrook Lane and Midtown Kingston along the [Kingston Midtown Linear Trail](#).
- Currently, the CMRR's many out-of-town visitors ([44,657 in 2023](#)) to the [CMRR's station at Westbrook Lane](#) are encouraged to stop in Midtown and [Uptown Kingston](#) while they are in town. This is well known to local vendors during [Polar Express™](#) when families clad in pajamas (as in the PE movie) are highly visible. This will grow with the addition of the [Basin Road Rail and Trail Station](#).
- The CMRR can also offer free rides to the [Ashokan Rail Trail](#) for disadvantaged Kingston residents or those who cannot afford to buy a bicycle to ride directly up to the [ART](#).



Township Benefits

- This extension will add historic station stops in the Towns of [Ulster](#), [Kingston](#), [Hurley](#) and [Woodstock](#) to the CMRR's existing train service, which currently ends with no terminal in the woods just east of Route 28A in Stony Hollow.
- The extension will allow these Towns to benefit from the thousands of out-of-county visitors the [CMRR](#) brings each year to Ulster County. This will be done through four new station/flag stops:
- **Basin Road.** A terminal near Basin Road in the [Town of Woodstock](#) will deliver [CMRR](#) visitors not only to the [ART](#), but to other attractions in the Town of Woodstock as well as revitalize the southwest corner of Route 28 and Zena Road and the [Route 28 Overlay District](#) in West Hurley. The CMRR has signed a long-term lease for the terminal site.
- **Beesmer Road.** A period station stop near Beesmer Road in the [Town of Hurley](#) will bring CMRR visitors to a future railroad museum and local businesses off of Route 28.
- **Stony Hollow.** A U&D station stop in the Towns of [Kingston](#) and [Ulster](#) at Stony Hollow will bring CMRR visitors to the Stony Hollow commercial district off of Route 28. It will also create an historic district in Stony Hollow near the [1835 Madden House](#).
- **Washington Avenue** – A flag stop will be added immediately west of Washington Avenue in Kingston to allow pedestrians and bikers using the [O&W Rail Trail](#) from the [Town of Hurley](#) to access to the [ART](#) via the new [Kingston Rail Trail](#).



UC Business Benefits

- Ulster County businesses will benefit greatly from the additional benefits of a destination regional tourist attraction that will rival [Walkway over the Hudson](#).
- When the County purchased the railroad from the Penn Central estate in 1979 it was primarily to benefit the business community through tourism and freight delivery from the railroad. Originally the plan was to bring the [Steamtown National Historic Site](#) from Vermont to Kingston, but it instead went to Scranton, Pennsylvania.
- As the freight railroad business has waned, the tourism potential for the railroad began to be recognized by the business community through the many out-of-town visitors the railroad brings to Kingston each year ([44,657 in 2023](#)).
- The importance of the railroad to the business community was recognized in 2023 when the CMRR was voted "Tourism Business of the Year" by the Ulster County Chamber of Commerce.
- The railroad recently expressed its thanks to the Kingston Uptown Business Community through the KUBA charter train this year that was attended by many uptown business leaders.
- KUBA President Miriam Gibbons stated: "As President of the "Kingston Uptown Business Association we are proud of the Catskill Mountain Railroad and their dedication to extend the rail line. The initiative aimed at revitalizing the local economy and enhancing the vibrancy of our business district, further solidifying the dedication to fostering growth and prosperity within our community."



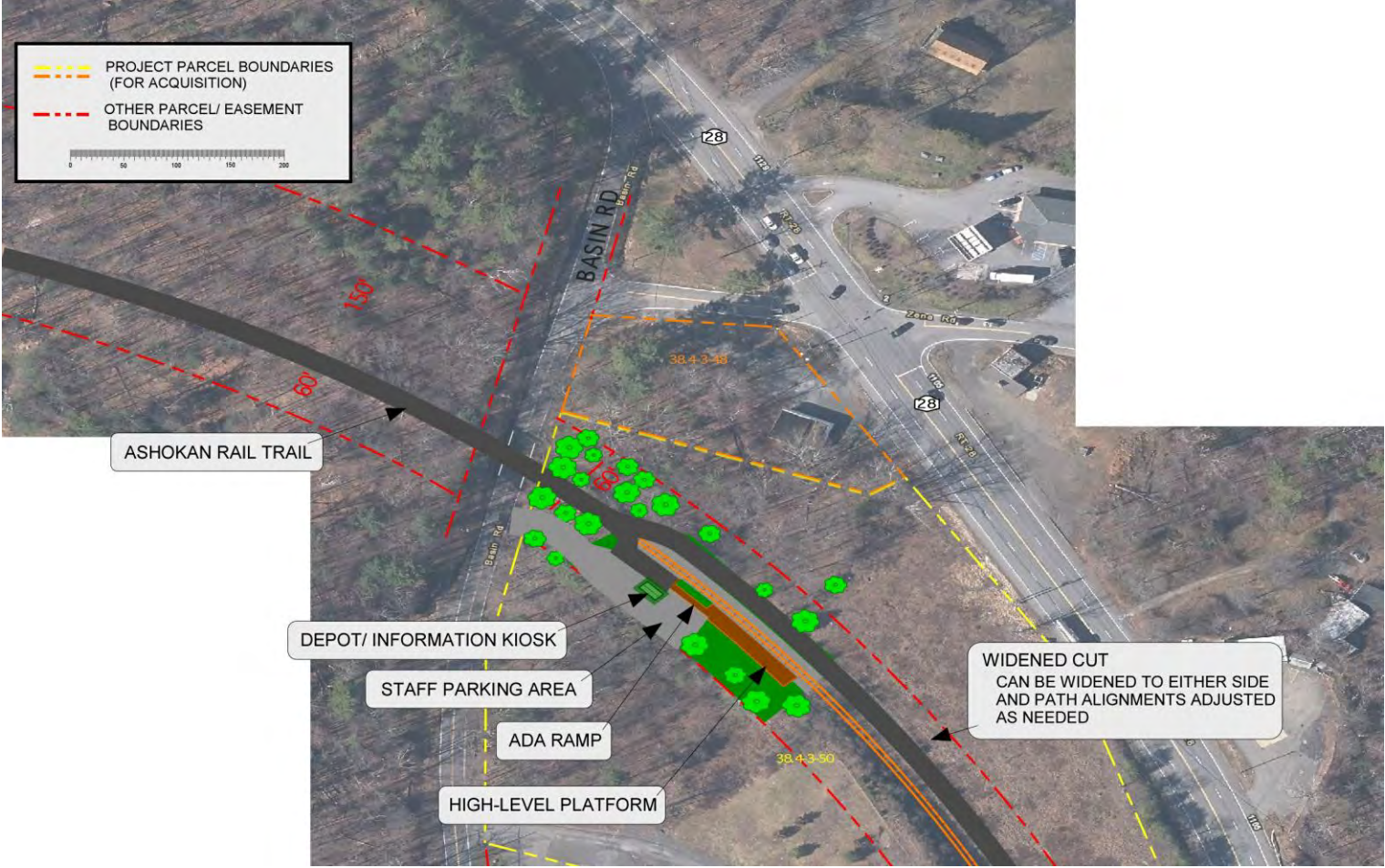
Community Benefits

• The CMRR has offered donated tickets to many needy organizations in the Hudson Valley that will now also have access to the Ashokan Rail Trail. Recent donations:

• Hudson Valley National Center for Vets, Saugerties, NY	4	Sept 28, 2024
• Family of Woodstock, Kingston, NY	16	August 3, 2024
• Esopus Community Foundation, Esopus, NY	8	July 20, 2024
• Hudson Valley Bridge Builders, Wappinger Falls, NY	4,	July 20, 2024
• The Best Hudson Valley, Hopewell Jct, NY	4	July 20, 2024
• Highland Public Library, Highland, NY	4	July 12, 2024
• Dutchess Divas Softball, Red Hook, NY	4	June 15, 2024
• RUPCO (Silent Auction), Kingston, NY	4	June 15, 2024
• Leptondale Elementary Parent Teachers Org., Wallkill, NY	4	June 2, 2024
• Hope & Community Center, Troy, NY	4	June 1, 2024
• ST DENIS ST Columba School Gala Hopewell Jct, NY	4	Dec 29, 2023
• Ellenville Nursery School, Ellenville, NY	4	Dec 29, 2023
• KHS Winter Basket Raffle, Kingston, NY	4	Dec 28, 2023
• UNITED WOMAN OF ROCKLAND, Stony Point, NY	4	Dec 27, 2023
• The Arc Mid Hudson, Kingston, NY	4	Nov 18, 2023
• Rapp Program Cornell Cooperative, Kingston, NY	50	Nov 18, 2023
• UCSPCA Fur Ball, Kingston, NY	4	Oct 21, 2023
• Pregnancy Support Center OF UC, Kingston, NY	4	Oct 15, 2023
• Bloomington Fire House, Bloomington, NY	4	Oct 14, 2023
• 1ST Responders Stair Climb, Latham, NY	2	Oct 14, 2023
• Farmingville Fire Dept, Farmingville, NY	4	Oct 7, 2023
• Volunteer Fireman's Museum, Kingston, NY	4	Sept 30, 2023



Phase I – Basin Road CMRRR/ART Connection





Phase I - Basin Road CMRR/ART Connection

- An initial connection between the [CMRR](#) and the [ART](#) can be made east of Basin Road within the 120 foot wide U&D corridor.
- The CMRR has the resources to build this connection, which would be similar to its existing facility at [Kingston Plaza](#).
- The connection will allow rail passengers and bicyclists to transfer to the ART and vice versa.
- Plan fulfills the “ski lift” concept originally proposed in the [2006 ALTA study](#), envisioning the railroad to move passengers from Kingston to West Hurley, which is the steepest grade (2%) in the U&D corridor from Kingston to Phoenicia.
- In fact, the CMRR will plan to run “Ski Trains” from Kingston to the ART in the winter for cross-county skiers when snow prevents bicycle use.
- Rail shuttle service between Kingston and Basin Road can begin once the CMRR’s permit is extended from Stony Hollow to Basin Road and track renovation on the 1.67 mile extension is completed.
- In March 2024 the [CMRR received a grant of \\$667,000](#) from NY State DOT through their Passenger and Rail Freight Program to develop the site. The funds include building road access, parking, renovating 1,000 feet of track and building a trail parallel to those tracks just east of Basin Road.



Phase I - ART Shuttle Service



- Once Phase I is complete, Rail Shuttle service can run from morning to evening on 2 hour intervals from [Kingston Plaza](#) and Washington Avenue to Basin Road. Service can be offered year-round on a daily schedule.
- The shuttle service will connect to the [Kingston Midtown Linear Park](#) at Westbrook Lane and the new [Kingston Rail Trail](#) at Washington Avenue.
- Rail shuttle Service will allow pedestrians, bicycle riders, automobile users and visitors to Midtown and [Uptown Kingston](#) to ride the train up the steep grade from Kingston to the [ART](#).
- Shuttle service fulfills the “ski lift” concept originally proposed in the [2006 ALTA study](#), envisioning the railroad moving passengers from Kingston to West Hurley, which is the steepest grade (2%) in the U&D corridor from Kingston to Phoenicia
- In fact, the CMRR will plan to run “Ski Trains” from Kingston to the ART in the winter for cross-county skiers when snow prevents bicycle use.



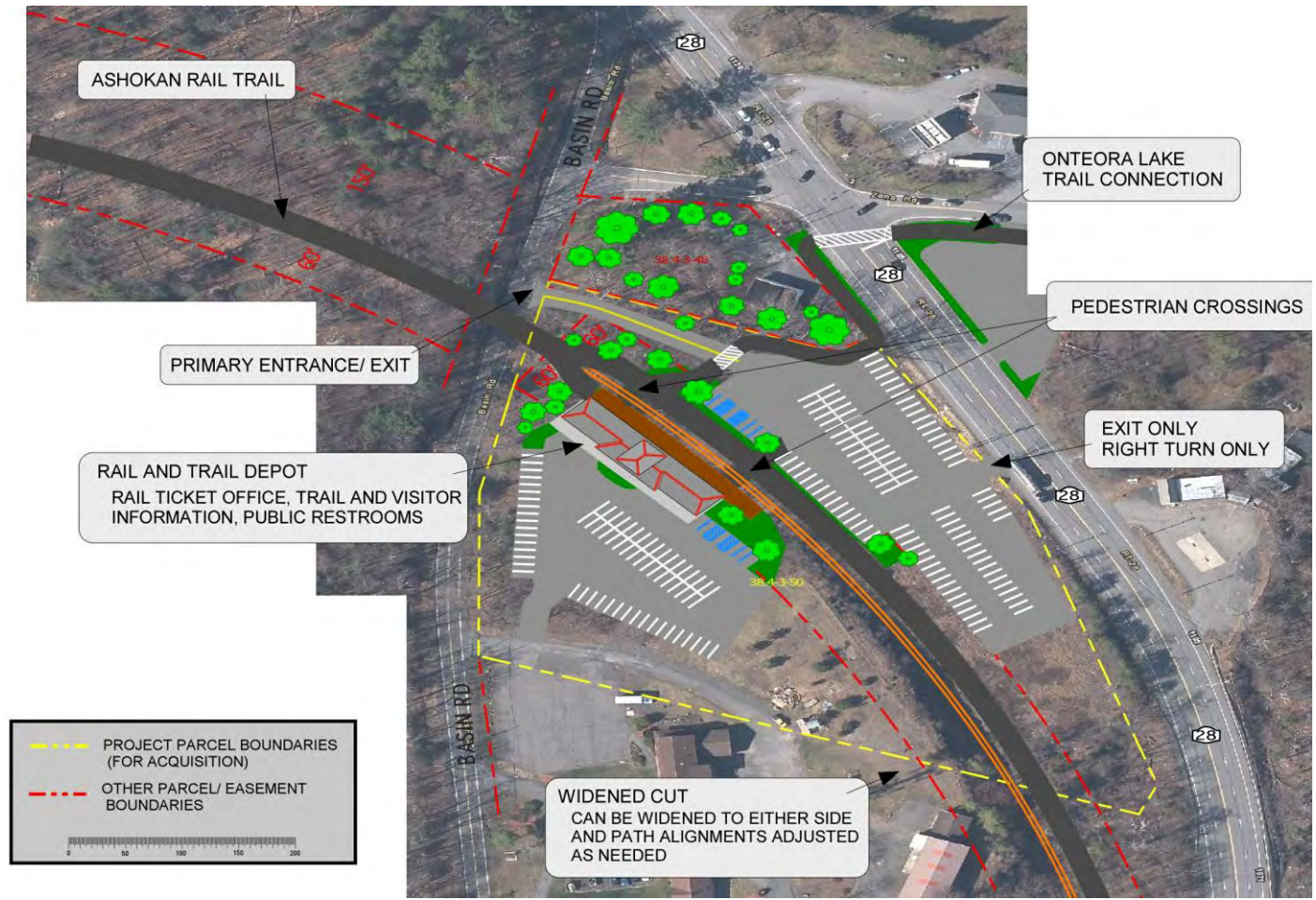
Phase I - Basin Road CMRR/ART Connection



Proposed Phase I Basin Road Station – similar to the existing Westbrook Station in Kingston Plaza.



Phase II – Tourism Gateway





Phase II - Basin Road Tourism Gateway

- The CMRR recently signed a long-term lease with the owner of the 5.94 acre parcel 38.4-3-50, where the CMRR/ART connection will be located. With this lease, the Basin Road ART/CMRR link can be expanded to become a Rail/Trail/Highway multi-model Tourism Gateway.
- **In this key parcel, the U&D Corridor is owned by the property owner and the County only has a railroad-only easement through it; however the CMRR's lease has obtained the right to build a parallel trail through the length of the property.**
- Site access is from the stoplight on Route 28 at Basin/Zena Road. **This is much safer way to access to the ART's Woodstock Dike Trailhead than the current entrance on Route 28.** The lack of a stoplight at the current trailhead entrance forces ART patrons headed westbound on Route 28 to make a dangerous turn across the highway. Exiting westbound is prohibited for safety reasons through often illegally made by drivers.
- Gateway will be not be dependent on the NYCDEP and can be used as an alternate trailhead when the NYCDEP [renovates the Woodstock Dike](#) in a few years.

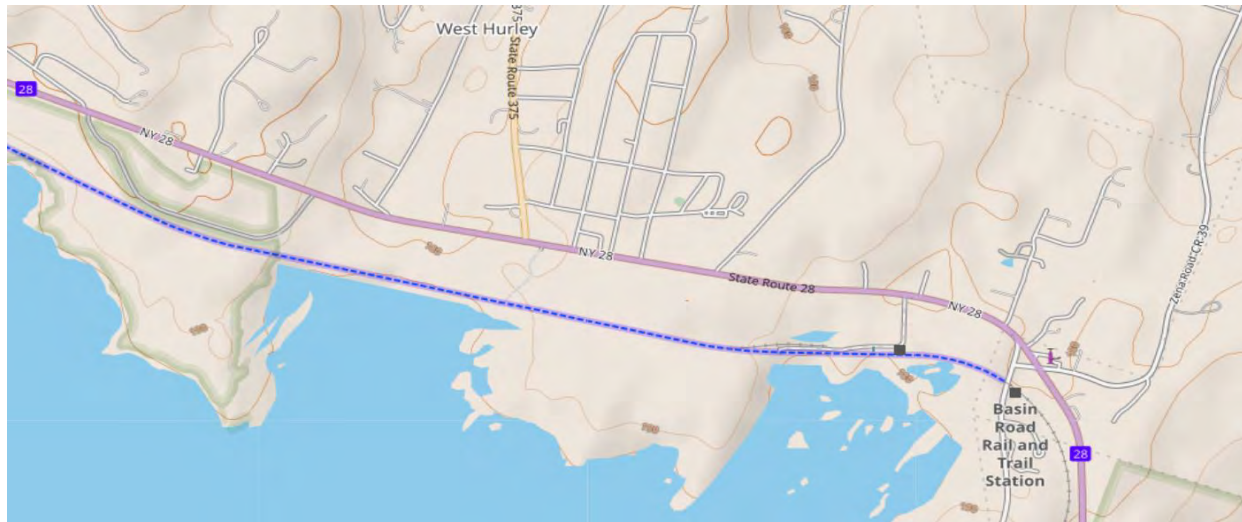


Phase II - Basin Road Tourism Gateway

- Incorporating a stop by the Ulster County Area Transit (UCAT) [Z Route](#) into the hub would allow Ulster County residents without personal transportation convenient and affordable access to the ART.
- Hub can also be connected to the [Onteora Lake Trail network](#) with a short connection across 28 along Zena Road through land owned by the Town of Woodstock near DiAndria Road. This link could also be extended to Woodstock along Zena Road.
- In March 2024 the [CMRR received a grant of \\$667,000](#) from NY State DOT through their Passenger and Rail Freight Program to develop the site. The funds include renovating 1,000 feet of track and building a trail parallel to those tracks just east of Basin Road.
- The site can serve as a Gateway to the [Ashokan Rail Trail](#) as well as the newly expanded [Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway](#). It will create parking off of Basin Road, and provide a link for Rail service and the ART. Entrance will be via Basin Road.



Phase II – Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway Gateway



- In 2022 the Town of Hurley applied to join the [Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway](#).
- This addition will add 4.5 miles of the [Ashokan Rail Trail](#) to the Scenic Byway.
- The Basin Road Rail and Trail Station will become the gateway to the expanded Scenic Byway, which parallels the former Ulster and Delaware Railroad Corridor.
- The station will enhance the Scenic Byway by highlighting the historic connections between the Byway and the [U&D Railroad Corridor](#) which cross at multiple locations.
- The new station will also help jumpstart development of the [Route 28 Overlay District](#) between Zena Road and Route 375 in the Town of Hurley.



Phase III - Basin Road Rail and Trail Station

- A Multi-Modal Rail and Trail Station can be built at Basin Road to an historic Ulster and Delaware Railroad design that will include:
 - [ART](#) and [Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway](#) Information
 - Ulster County Tourism information and UCAT Stop
 - Public indoor bathrooms
 - Event space for the ART and the Railroad, with a covered area and electric source.
 - Commercial retail space (food and drink, bicycle repair and rental, or other convenience uses)
 - A ticket office for the CMRR.
- **The inclusion of indoor bathrooms will allow the [CMRR](#) and the [ART](#) to be listed on the “Attractions” signs on the New York State Thruway.**
- Parking facilities can also contain bicycle racks and electric car charging stations.
- Commercial Space and Event Space can enhance both the ART and the CMRR.
- Facility will serve as a local hub for tourism, and increase property values on adjacent commercial properties in the Towns of [Woodstock](#), [Kingston](#) and [Hurley](#).
- The historic Rail and Trail Station can be a bridge between trail and rail users, and help combine both attractions and the [Scenic Byway](#) into a destination regional tourism draw like the [Walkway over the Hudson](#).



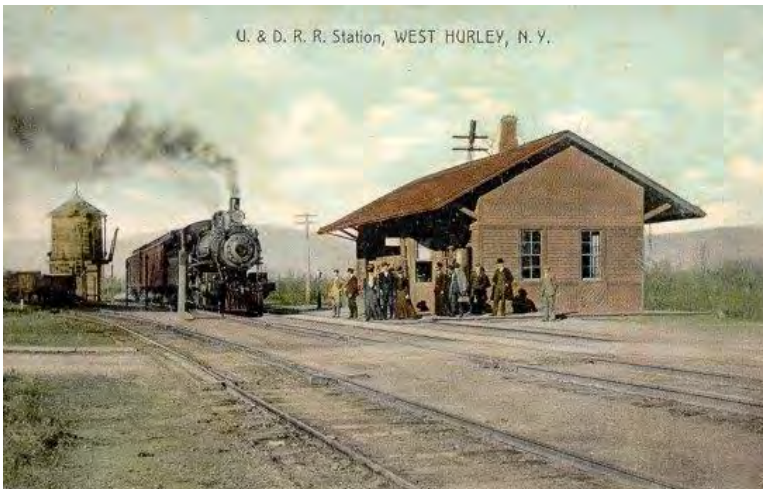
Phase III – Movie Locations

- The new period station at Basin Road will make a great location for movie productions combined with the Railroad's vintage railway equipment.
- The new historic station location will increase the Railroad's use as a reliable partner for movie productions. Recent Past examples include:
 - The Bride / Warner Bros. Productions 2024
 - Stone Street, LLC. / Movie Shoot / September 2024
 - Pretty Little Liars / HBO Movie 2022
 - Here and Beyond / Movie Shoot 2022
 - Stranded Hobos / Music Video Production 2022
 - ITV Productions / B-Roll footage 2021
 - I Know This Much Is True / HBO Movie 2019
 - Fifth Column Features / Movie Shoot 2019
 - Unreel Productions / Sci-fi Movie Shoot 2018
 - Furlough Productions, Inc. / "Furlough" Movie 2017
 - VOX Media / B-Roll of CMRR Fall Foliage Train 2017
 - Food Network / Farm House Rules TV 2015
 - Super Dark Times / Movie Shoot 2015
 - BBC Television / Great American Railroad Journeys' 2015
 - Cold In July / Movie 2013





Phase III - Basin Road Rail and Trail Station



Historic Ulster & Delaware stations:
Above – Second West Hurley Station – MP 10.2
Above Left – Woodstock Station – MP 11
Lower Left – Original West Hurley Station – MP 9.8 (now under the Ashokan Reservoir)



Beesmer Road Station



Former Boiceville Station - a model for Beesmer Road Station



Beesmer Road Station

- New station at Beesmer Road in the [Town of Hurley](#) at MP 9.
- [CMRR](#) will create an historic railroad station adjacent to this stop. Right of Way is 120 feet wide here.
- Station will also double as a railroad museum in conjunction with the Empire State Railway Museum or another non-profit.
- At MP 8.81 the former U&D right of way branches off the current one, and could become a connecting trail to Dike Road.
- Although a stop can be made at Beesmer Road within the existing corridor, expanded use of the site may require leasing or acquiring land adjacent to the corridor.



Stony Hollow Station





Stony Hollow Station

- New station will create a small historic district in the Towns of [Kingston](#) and [Ulster](#) and give Stony Hollow a revitalized identity.
- Reconstruction of the [Historic Madden House](#) will be central to this attraction.
- A section of the historic [Ulster and Delaware Turnpike](#) can be rebuilt on this site. Old bluestone paving blocks can still be seen there, with ruts made by old freight wagons still visible.
- Station will be linked by sidewalk/plank road to commercial properties at Route 28 and Route 28a.
- The former branch line from [Stony Hollow to Onteora Lake at MP 8.55](#) can be rebuilt as a trail to connect to the Onteora Lake Trail network.
- The [Ulster and Delaware Railroad](#) had a [station stop](#) at Stony Hollow that was discontinued about 1905. A similar station can be rebuilt at the site.
- All land needed for this historic district is already owned by Ulster County.



Kingston Flag Stop





Kingston Flag Stop

- This new flag stop will be adjacent to the Washington Avenue trailhead of the new [Kingston Rail Trail](#). The [Kingston Rail Trail](#) connects to the Hurley segment of the [O&W Rail Trail](#).
- The flag stop will allow pedestrians and bikers from the [O&W Rail Trail](#) in the [Town of Hurley](#) via the new [Kingston Rail Trail](#) to board the train at Washington Avenue and ride by rail to the [Ashokan Rail Trail](#).
- This allows pedestrians and bikers the ability to avoid the steep grade from Kingston to the Ashokan Rail Trail, as well as from having to cross Route 209 in the Hurley Flats and Route 28A in Stony Hollow.
- Once the CMRR expands its operations to the new Basin Road Rail and Trail station, it will initiate regular year-round shuttle service from Kingston to the Ashokan Rail Trail.
- Pedestrians and bikers will be able to board the train either at the CMRR's Westbrook Station adjacent to the [Kingston Midtown Linear Park](#), or at the new Kingston flag stop just west of Washington Avenue from the [Kingston Rail Trail](#).
- The CMRR is also looking forward to working with NYSDOT and Ulster County to assist with the new active pedestrian crossing that has been proposed by Ulster County recently in [Resolution 696 of 2023](#). This will run parallel to the railroad tracks near the new terminal for the [Kingston Rail Trail](#).



Economic Impact CMRR/ART Connection

- **Gateway to the Catskills.** Linking the [CMRR](#), the [ART](#), and the [Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway](#) at Basin Road will create a highly marketable Gateway to the Catskills for Ulster County tourism, far greater than the already significant impact of each individual attraction.
- **Increased Visitors from Outside Ulster County.** The link will bring the [CMRR](#)'s customer base, which is over 80% from outside Ulster County, to the Towns of Ulster, Kingston, Hurley and Woodstock and directly connect the [ART](#)'s customer base to Midtown and [Uptown Kingston](#).
- **CMRR Economic Impact:** The CMRR currently has an estimated economic impact of **\$7.0 million** on Ulster County businesses, of which \$5.3 million is from Out-of-County visitors and \$1.7 million from expenditures by the CMRR itself.
- **ART Economic Impact:** The ART currently has an estimated economic impact of **\$5.3 million** on Ulster County businesses from Out-of-County visitors.
- **Increase due to Connection:** Linking both at Basin Road will allow the CMRR to increase its economic impact to \$10.0 million per year, including doubling payroll, and the ART an to increase to at least \$8.4 million totaling **\$18.4 million or a combined increase of 50%.**
- **Local Economic Impact:** Linking these attractions will allow the Towns of Ulster, Kingston, Hurley and Woodstock access to the CMRR's substantial Out-of-County visitor customer base, and the ART's users to combine a visit to Midtown or [Uptown Kingston](#) via riding the CMRR.
- **Local Endorsements.** The Towns of [Hurley](#), [Kingston](#) and [Ulster](#) have recognized the potential economic impact of this extension by passing resolutions of support.



CMRR Economic Impact

- **Out-of-County Visitor Impact:** The CMRR carried [51,610 riders in 2023](#), **44,657** or **87% of whom were from outside of Ulster County**. This up from the [46,745/40,535 carried in 2022](#). The [2013 Camoin Trail Study](#) estimated the economic impact from Out-of-County visitors to be \$97.84 per person, escalated to \$119.26 in 2023 which translates to **\$5.3 million of impact on Ulster County businesses**.
- **CMRR Expenditure Impact:** The CMRR also creates economic impact through direct expenditures in Ulster County. In 2023 these totaled \$840,000(including \$441,000 in payroll), using a RIMS II multiplier of 1.97 yields an additional Economic Impact of **\$1.7 million, for a total of \$7.0 million**. The CMRR currently employs 3 full time staff and over 100 part time.
- **Increase from CMRR Extension to Basin Road:** The CMRR extension to Basin road will allow the railroad to fully develop its economic potential by providing a destination with a link to the [ART](#). Adding rail shuttle service from Midtown and [Uptown Kingston](#) to the Basin Road Rail and Trail station will increase pre-Polar ridership from 20,021 in 2023 to 40,000 or more by 2026. Running five days a week year-round will allow the CMRR to **double its payroll to 10 full time staff** including a hiring a full time General Manager and Superintendent.
- **Polar Express.** The CMRR's [Polar Express™](#) runs from mid-November through Christmas and attracted 31,689 passengers in 2023. This event is currently running at capacity.
- The increased economic impact from 72,000 passengers in 2026 is expected to be \$7.9 million. The economic impact of the expenditures of the CMRR itself will increase to \$2.1 million in 2026, **with a total economic impact of \$10.0 million, an increase of nearly 50%.**



ART Economic Impact

- **2023 Out-Of-County Visitor Economic Impact:** The ART had an estimated 192,000 users in 2023 ([16,000/month per UC Planning](#)). 75% were walkers/runners 25% bicyclists (also per UC Planning). The [2013 Camoin Trail Study](#) estimated that 23% of trail users would be from outside Ulster County. **This would mean up to 44,160 trail users are estimated to come from outside of the County**, most of whom use the trailhead at West Hurley due to its proximity to the NY State Thruway. **These visitors had an economic impact of \$5.3 million in 2023** on UC businesses, using the Camoin rate of \$97.84 in 2013 inflated to \$119.26 in 2023.
- **Constraints at the Woodstock Dike Trailhead:** Ulster County has stated that 47.3% of trail users use the Woodstock Dike Trailhead or 91,000 per year. However, this could be much greater as use of the ART is constrained at peak times by limited parking (74 spaces) at the Woodstock Dike Trailhead. This constraint can restrict visitors who do not want to travel to the Woodstock Dike trailhead if they are not sure if they can park when they get there.
- **Basin Road Rail and Trail Station.** There are also no fixed bathroom or event/tourism facilities at the trailhead which are highly important for Out-of-County visitors. Having this facility adjacent to the trailhead will help attract more out-of-county visitors.
- **Increase by Utilizing the CMRR:** Utilizing rail shuttle service to access the Woodstock Dike Trailhead by the CMRR's ridership base of Out-of-County visitors will also attract more out-of-county visitors to the ART.
- **Increase of out of county visitors.** The station and connection will increase out-of county visitors to the ART by 50% overall. This will increase the ART's Economic Impact to **more than \$8.4 million per year or 60%** without adding additional traffic on SR 28.



Enhancing Intermodal Connectivity

- The [Basin Road Rail and Trail Station](#) is the first step in establishing intermodal connectivity between rail, trail and highway on the entire [Ulster and Delaware Railroad Corridor](#) between Kingston and Boiceville.
- With a similar connection at Boiceville, this connectivity can include [Rail Explorers](#) between Boiceville and Phoenicia.
- Similar connections can be made to the [Shandaken Rail Trail](#) at Phoenicia and Highmount so that the entire U&D Railroad Corridor can be fully integrated and intermodally continuous from Kingston to Highmount where a connection to Delaware County's [Delaware and Ulster Railroad](#) can be made. This will allow the U&D Corridor to reach its highest and best use as a public asset for Ulster County.
- With the upcoming additions of the Town of Hurley and the Town of Roxbury to the [Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway](#), the entire 57 mile U&D Corridor from Kingston to Roxbury can be fully integrated and interactive with the Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway, starting with the [Basin Road Rail and Trail station](#).
- The interweaving of the [U&D Railroad Corridor](#) and the [Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway](#) combining rail, trail, and highway with the beautiful scenery of the Catskills can create a powerful regional attraction that can become world famous.



Sustainability

- The connection between the [CMRR](#) and the [ART](#) at Basin Road will increase sustainability by decreasing Greenhouse Gas “GHG” emissions or CO₂ by replacing car trips with a train ride from Kingston Plaza to Basin Road.
- The 91,000 visitors to the Woodstock Dike trailhead, with 30,333 car trips per year, produce 158 million grams or 174 tons of CO₂ every year, just from Kingston to the trailhead.
- This can be reduced by up to 95% if visitors take the train instead of drive.
- Shifting auto traffic between Kingston and West Hurley to the train will also reduce traffic congestion on Route 28.



Sustainability - Decreased GHG Emissions

- The extension to Basin Road will reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions (CO₂) for every automobile trip replaced by a train trip from Kingston Plaza to West Hurley.
- Currently there are an estimated 91,000 visitors to the Woodstock Dike Trailhead per year (see earlier estimate). This translates to 30,333 cars per year at 3 persons per car. Automobiles use 0.591 gallons of gasoline for the 13.0 mile round trip from Kingston Plaza to Basin Road and emit 400 grams per mile or 5,200 grams of CO₂. **This amounts to 158 million grams or 174 tons of CO₂ per year.**
- Taking the train for the 12.4 mile roundtrip from Kingston Plaza to Basin Road with the CMRR's existing locomotive and equipment will use 0.129 gallons of diesel per person at 50% capacity (140) and half of that at full capacity. This is based on the CMRR's 2020 consumption of 12.8 gallons of diesel per train (increased to 18.1 gallons for Basin Road). At 10,180 grams per gallon, this translates to 1,313 grams per person of CO₂ at 50% or 656 grams per person at full capacity. **This means up to 98 million grams/108 tons of CO₂ or 62% can be eliminated by taking the train.**
- These amounts will be at least 50% less using biodiesel and another 50% less with a more modern and more fuel efficient Tier III or IV locomotive. With such a locomotive running on Biodiesel, CO₂ emissions will be reduced by an additional 52 million grams or 57 tons, for a total potential elimination of up to **150 million grams or 165 tons of CO₂ per year, or 95%.**
- All estimates are based on ["GHG Emissions from a Typical Passenger Vehicle", EPA-420-F-23-014.](#)



Sustainability – Decreased Locomotive Emissions

- The CMRR is in the process of upgrading its locomotives to modern emissions and fuel efficiency standards. All railroads use Diesel Electric locomotives that utilize a diesel generator to produce electricity to power electric motors that are mounted on the engine's wheels. The CMRR's engines are similar though older.
- In March 2024, the CMRR began using 100% Biodiesel in both its locomotives in Kingston. According to the [US Department of Energy](#), the use of biodiesel reduces Carbon Dioxide (Greenhouse Gas) emissions by 74% compared to regular diesel fuel. Additionally, it reduces carbon monoxide and particulate emissions by nearly 50%, and hydrocarbon emissions by nearly 70% compared to regular diesel. Additionally, the composition of the remaining particulates is much less adverse than that from normal diesel as they are biodegradable.
- In March 2024, the CMRR was awarded [two grants totaling \\$3.818 million under NYSDOT's Passenger and Freight Rail Assistance Program \(PFRAP\)](#) relevant to Locomotive Emissions Reduction. The Clean Diesel Upgrade will allow the CMRR to upgrade one of its locomotives to an EPA Tier 3 locomotive resulting in reductions of carbon monoxide, particulate matter, hydrocarbon and nitrous oxide emissions by 75%. The \$2.3 million Clean Diesel upgrade was accompanied by a \$1.518 million award for engine house construction necessary to support the newly upgraded locomotive and to allow the CMRR to maintain its equipment and employ our full-time staff on a year-round basis.
- Each of these projects make the CMRR the leader in sustainability in the US Railroad Tourism industry and shows the CMRR's commitment to Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger's goal of [creating the boldest climate agenda in New York State](#).



Sustainability - Other



- CMRR is moving towards sustainability in several additional areas:
- Installing solar chargers at crossings (pictured) and on most equipment.
- Moving towards plug-in electrical power and batteries instead of diesel powered generators to heat and light passenger cars.
- Using battery instead of gas powered maintenance equipment.
- Adding Level 3 EV charging stations for its customers at Westbrook Station.



CMRR U&D Railroad Reconstruction



New Crossing at US 209



Track Reconstruction at MP 6.2



CMRR U&D Railroad Reconstruction

- **CMRR Investment.** Since 2016, the CMRR has invested over \$700,000 of its own funds to renovate the corridor, replacing over 8,000 ties, 900 plates, 34,000 spikes and 2,000 bolts. The entire 4.7 mile permit area is in service. The CMRR has recently purchased new maintenance of way equipment and now employs a full time three-person track crew to continue track renovations.
- **New York State Investment.** In 2018, New York State replaced the Route 209 grade crossing at a cost of over \$300,000. In cooperation with the CMRR, in 2022 New York State upgraded the 209 crossing with modern gates and flashers at a cost of an additional \$300,000. For 2023 NY State invested \$850,000 to replace the Washington Avenue crossing which was completed in August 2023. Modern flashers and gates will be installed in 2025.
- **Annual Rent Payments to Ulster County.** In addition to funding the renovation of the track up to Stony Hollow, the CMRR has paid \$50,000 per year in rent to Ulster County since its permit was renewed in 2016 (2016 was a partial year payment of \$20,901). This includes \$50,000 during the Covid-19 years of 2020 and 2021. From the inception of its current permit in August 2016 through June 2024 it has paid \$400,901 in rent and is fully current on its rent payments.
- **Total Return to Ulster County.** Since 2016 the CMRR has funded a total of \$1.1 million in track improvements and rent to Ulster County. This of course does not include the additional return to the local economy from bringing out-of-county riders to the County and the benefits of the \$840,000 in local expenditures it makes in the County annually as stated earlier.



CMRR U&D Railroad Reconstruction



CMRR crews hard at work replacing ties near MP 8 in Stony Hollow in 2019.



CMRR U&D Railroad Extension Plan

- [CMRR](#) can renovate track to Basin Road by the end of 2026 using its own funds and/or [NYS PFRAP grant](#) funds. PFRAP grants are for railroads only and do not require matching by the County, just a 10-year commitment to keep the railroad in place.
- Track work will include replacing up to 4,000 railroad ties between Stony Hollow and Basin Road. Except for tie replacement, the track and right of way are in good condition.
- Temporary “Flag Stops” can be created at Basin Road, Beesmer Road, Stony Hollow and Washington Avenue until permanent facilities are completed.
- In conjunction with NYSDOT, the crossing at Route 28A in Stony Hollow can be quickly reopened for immediate service.
- In March 2024, the CMRR obtained a New York State PFRAP ([Passenger & Freight Rail Assistant Program](#)) Grant for the [future terminal at Basin Road](#) that included complete renovation of 1,000 feet of track adjacent to the terminal in addition to constructing a parallel trail. Additional NYS funding is available to fully rebuild the Route 28A crossing in Stony Hollow.



Policy Update Needed

- In order to implement this plan, the County's Rail with Trail policy for the U&D Corridor passed in [Resolution 488 of 2015](#) needs to be updated to implement a rail with trail policy for this specific segment of the U&D Corridor.
- The original policy passed in [Resolution 275 of 2014](#) advocated the removal of the railroad from Kingston to Boiceville. This caused such a huge pushback from rail and economic development advocates that the Ulster County Legislature created the U&D Corridor Advisory Committee through [Resolution 155 of 2015](#).
- Resolution 155 authorized \$30,000 to hire a an independent consultant through a procurement process to conduct "a thorough reexamination and study of the work completed to date, with the addition of an economic assessment, by township, with respect to optimum economic feasibility of the U&D Corridor."
- [Stone Consulting](#) was selected by the committee as the consultant and its [study completed in 2015](#) formed the basis of [Resolution 488 of 2015](#).
- However, [Resolution 488 of 2015](#) did not address the 4% segment of the U&D Corridor from MP 8.33 to MP 10.01. The resolution stated that this segment "will require further investigation on the future feasibility of rail with trail".



Filling the Policy Gap

- Policy for the MP 8.33 to MP 10.01 segment was deferred in 2015 because the [2015 Stone Consulting report](#) identified the Stony Hollow fill as the primary obstacle to Rail-with-Trail from Stony Hollow to Basin Road. The Stony Hollow fill starts at MP 8.56, ends at MP 8.77 and is 1100 feet long.
- Widening of the fill to create room for a parallel trail is impeded by about 600 feet of wetland areas at the base of the fill from MP 8.62 to MP 8.73.
- However, since publishing its report in 2015, [Stone Consulting](#) has indicated that the feasibility problem of Rail with Trail on the Stony Hollow fill has been resolved by using a parallel boardwalk as the body of practice for Rail-with-Trail has grown. Mr. Gustafson of Stone Consulting wrote on 17 March 2021:

Recently Stone Consulting has investigated approved boardwalk construction standards to allow a parallel trail structure to be constructed at the base of the fill as an alternative to minimize environmental impacts without impacting the existing rail corridor.

- A similar [525 foot boardwalk](#) was built for the [ART](#) near Shokan. Stone has also indicated that shared use between rail and trail is also possible on the fill.
- In May 2024, the Ulster County Legislature passed [Resolution 241 of 2024](#) to re-create the U&D Corridor Advisory Committee to finalize policy for this segment.



Rail with Trail

- Since Resolution 488 was passed in 2015, the Trail Community has continued to advocate a bikeable trail connection between the [Ashokan Rail Trail](#) and the [Empire State Rail Trail](#) in Kingston. The CMRR believes that it is equally important for rail service to be extended from Kingston all the way to the [Ashokan Rail Trail](#) as is explained earlier in this presentation.
- However, when [Resolution 488 of 2015](#) was passed in 2015, the CMRR had only renovated trackage up to MP 6.45, and the [Ashokan Rail Trail](#) had not yet been built.
- Since then, the CMRR has renovated trackage to the end of the current permit at MP 8.33, the [Ashokan Rail Trail](#) has been built, as well as the [Kingston Midtown Linear Park](#).
- Now that trail and rail have been fully implemented both west of MP 10.01 and east of MP 8.33, it is time to complete the policy for this segment.
- [Rail-With-Trail "RWT"](#) will allow both rail and trail to reach their highest and best use from Kingston to Basin Road. A 1,000 foot section of [Rail-With-Trail](#) has already been completed parallel to the railroad tracks for the [Midtown Linear Park](#). Another 1,000 feet of Rail-With-Trail has been funded near Basin Road with the current PFRAP grant described on page 41.
- However, neither rail nor trail can be implemented in this segment until the gap in policy left from [Resolution 488 of 2015](#) is resolved.



Cost of RWT

- [Rail-with-Trail](#) “RWT” is more expensive than rail or trail alone. Trail advocates fear that the cost of Rail-With-Trail will be so high that a parallel bicycle capable trail will never be built from Kingston to the Ashokan Rail Trail.
- However, In 2015 Stone Consulting put together detailed cost estimates to construct RWT from Hurley Mountain Road at MP 5.9 to Stony Hollow at MP 8.33.
- Stone estimated 10-foot wide RWT costs from MP 5.9 to 8.33 at \$2.025m (\$2.673m today or \$1.1m per mile). This would be done by widening the shale cuts, using the material to widen fills, and relocating track as needed.
- The ten foot width has been used for the recent [Kingston Rail Trail](#) and about a mile of the Ashokan Rail Trail.
- Estimating the cost for RWT from MP 8.33 to MP 10.01 using Stone’s methodology of widening cuts of \$1.54m and adding \$1.01m for the boardwalk (the Ashokan Boardwalk cost \$850k), results in \$2.55 million for this segment. This is larger than the cost of trail only, but allows for both rail and trail to co-exist. The cost can however be reduced by shared use in the tighter sections of the corridor.
- While this \$5.22 million cost may seem large, it is less than half the \$12.3 million cost of the recently proposed 5 mile long [Shandaken Rail Trail](#), and allows both the railroad and the trail to reach their highest and best use – allowing both to co-exist and reach their highest potential from Kingston to the Ashokan Rail Trail.



Proposed Policy Update

- The CMRR recommends that [Resolution 488 of 2015](#) be amended to include the following language for the segment from MP 8.33 to MP 10.01:
- *RESOLVED, the segmented “rail with trail” policy established in Resolution 488 of 2015 shall be amended to include an increased available railroad segment, co-located with a bicycle capable public trail, in the segment between MP 8.33 and Basin Road at MP 10.01, which would increase the potential for Kingston based tourism theme trains by allowing them to be linked to the Ashokan Rail Trail at Basin Road at MP 10.01 and allow bicycle capable public trail connectivity from Kingston to the Ashokan Reservoir.*
- The CMRR also advocates that the existing Policy from Kingston to MP 8.33 be slightly modified to add “bicycle capable” public trail to the language so that RWT can be implemented in this segment as well.
- With the passing of an amendment to [Resolution 488 of 2015](#) making rail with a “bicycle capable public trail” official policy from MP 8.33 to Basin Road, the CMRR can implement its extension plan and the County can begin the process of designing and seeking state and federal funding for a parallel trail from Kingston to the [Ashokan Rail Trail](#).
- MP 8.33 to MP 8.77 is in the Town of Ulster; MP 8.77 to MP 9.35 is in the Town of Hurley; MP 9.35 to MP 9.86 is in the Town of Kingston and MP 9.86 to MP 10.01 is in the Town of Woodstock.
- MP 8.33 to 8.77 is in District 4 (Kitchen), MP 8.77 to MP 9.35 is in District 18 (Stewart); MP 9.35 to MP 9.86 is in District 3 (Kovacs) MP 9.86 to MP 10.01 is in District 1 (Levine) and a few hundred feet from District 23 (Collins).



Conclusion

- The [CMRR](#) asks its landlord, Ulster County, to extend its operating permit length by an additional 1.67 miles from Stony Hollow to connect to the [ART](#) at Basin Road. **The extension to Basin Road requires no funds from the County, only its permission and cooperation.**
- Connecting the [CMRR](#) to the [ART](#) will create a year-round destination regional tourist attraction with a larger economic impact than each attraction can be by itself rivaling [Walkway on the Hudson](#). This will allow the CMRR's thousands of out-of-county visitors to visit the ART and the Towns of [Ulster](#), [Hurley](#), [Kingston](#) and [Woodstock](#), and allow ART patrons to stop in Midtown and [Uptown Kingston](#) before taking the CMRR to Basin Road. The CMRR will run a regular rail shuttle between Kingston and the ART.
- The eventual construction of a [Rail and Trail Station](#) at Basin Road It will also serve as a gateway for interlinking the County's 38 mile [Ulster and Delaware Railroad Corridor](#) and the newly expanding and parallel [Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway](#).
- To start the process of connecting the Railroad to the Ashokan Rail Trail, an update to [Resolution 488 of 2015](#) is needed to make [Rail-With-Trail](#) the official policy of Ulster County from Kingston to the Ashokan Rail Trail.
- Updating this policy and allowing the CMRR to extend its recently renewed permit to Basin Road will allow the CMRR at its own expense to begin the track renovations needed to start operations to the [Ashokan Rail Trail](#) as quickly as possible.
- Updating the policy to include a parallel bicycle capable trail from Kingston to Basin Road will allow the County to begin an engineering study so that it may apply for available state and federal funding to extend the [Ashokan Rail Trail](#) to Kingston.



Catskill Mountain Railroad Company, Inc.
P.O. Box 1415, Kingston, New York, 12401

www.catskillmountainrailroad.com/cmrr-expansion/

[Catskill Mountain Railroad - Proposed Extension to Basin Road - YouTube](#)



West Hurley Train Station at MP 10.2, 1966. Torn down in 1967.

Foundation is adjacent to the current Woodstock Dike Trailhead DEP Permit Parking lot.