

### Ulster & Delaware Corridor Advisory Committee

**DATE & TIME:** January 30, 2025 at 5:00 PM  
**LOCATION:** Legislative Chambers, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, County Office Building, Kingston  
**PRESIDING OFFICER:** Chair Collins  
**LEGISLATIVE STAFF:** Michael Tierney, Legislative Support Specialist  
**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Legislators Kovacs, Litts, Nolan, Sperry, Uchitelle  
**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Legislator McCollough  
**QUORUM PRESENT:** Yes  
**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Legislator Manna Jo Greene, Legislator Eric Stewart, Legislator Aaron Levine, Deputy Executive Amanda LaValle, Planning Director Dennis Doyle, Tourism Director Lisa Berger, Helen Chase, Steve Rice, Karl Beard. Nick Mercurio, Kevin Smith, Patty Goodwin, Annie Bergelin, Ralph Durham, Maryanne Resnick, Keisha Hoerner, Lee Kalisin, Mary McNamara, Stewart Auchincloss, Susan Auchincloss, Ernie Hunt

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Chair Collins called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM and asked Clerk Tierney to call the roll.

Chair Collins described the agenda to the committee and members of the public attending the meeting, stating that public comment will be limited to the end of the meeting, and only Legislators would be able to question presenters.

Chair Collins recognized Karl Beard to provide a presentation on the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Rail-With-Trail standards. Mr. Beard stated that several portions of the Undesignated Corridor leave insufficient space for both Rail-With Trail without significant adjustments to the structure of the Stoney Hollow fill and rock cut sections of the trail.

Legislator Uchitelle inquired if other proposals given to this Committee regarding Rail-With-Trail were disregarding AASHTO standards when stating feasibility of the project. Mr. Beard stated there was no reference to compliance with or incorporation of AASHTO standards for previous presentations. Chair Collins asked the Committee if compliance with AASHTO standards are a value the Committee would like to incorporate into their decision making. Legislator Litts stated that no engineering firm would provide plans that are non-compliant with AASHTO standards.

Chair Collins recognized William Sheldon to provide a presentation on the economic impact of both trails and rails in Ulster County. Dr. Sheldon spoke to the economic projection data for both the Catskill Mountain Railroad and the network of rail trails in Ulster County.

Legislator Uchitelle questioned the actual reduction in car use with CMRR serving as the connection between Kingston and the Ashokan Rail Trail, as Kingston and the surrounding area are still car oriented. He stated that a better trail connection would likely serve a better purpose and could mimic the success of CMRR in drawing people into Kingston.

Legislator Litts stated that if the Committee is examining the full economic impact of the CMRR and the trail network, the Committee should take into consideration the ongoing maintenance required for trails. Legislator Litts also asked if the Stone Consulting firm which provided the

first study would be able to provide an update for this other statement. Legislator Nolan questioned the usefulness of comparing other rail trails to this corridor as the rock cut and fill for the area is unique and stated that since Stone has been hired by CMRR it would not be appropriate to retain their services. Legislator Litts stated that cutting rock is not a unique cost as it would be the same calculation for cutting rock to widen a road.

Chair Collins stated that the rest of the meeting would be used for public comment, to be directed at the chair.

Susan Auchincloss stated that access to open spaces and mental health benefits of outdoor recreation should be taken into consideration.

Ernie Hunt, President of the Catskill Mountain Railroad, stated that measuring economic impact is different from economic activity, and that CMRR's extension of the rail to Basin Road would generate greater economic activity.

Steven Rice stated that the air pollution generated by CMRR is dangerous to children and users of a rail with trail system.

Kevin Smith, Chair of the Ulster County Trails Advisory Committee, stated that expanding connectivity between Kingston and Woodstock is vital to transportation safety and move cyclists off Route 28. Mr. Smith stated that since Stone Consulting was hired they have since made statements regarding expansion of CMRR to Basin Road is a necessity in larger rail fights, Stone has disqualified itself from future consideration as a neutral resource.

Larry Roth stated that federal grant money should not be relied on. Mr. Roth also stated that the demographics of users should be taken into consideration. He claimed that there is more multi-generational user groups utilizing the CMRR than the ART.

Chair Collins clarified for all that this Committee is solely tasked with recommending a use for the undesignated corridor, not with the use of the trail currently under lease by CMRR.

Nick Mercurio stated that the network of Ulster County trails and the Empire State Trail attracts people to the area to access the trails.

### **Adjournment**

**Motion By:** Legislator Litts  
**Seconded By:** Legislator Sperry  
**TIME:** 6:27 PM  
**Respectfully Submitted By:** Michael Tierney, Legislative Services Specialist  
**Minutes Approved:** February 27, 2025