

**Active Transportation Committee**  
**October 25, 2024 Zoom Meeting Summary**

**Quick recap**

The meeting covered various aspects of trail development and community projects, including discussions on AI in government operations, progress on the Main Street extension project, and potential trail connections to schools and other areas. The team also addressed operational policies for trails and rail bikes, as well as the upcoming launch of a trails maintenance fund and the need to update regional plans. Finally, the meeting touched on sidewalk projects, potential collaborations with Penn State's Hamer Center for Community Design, and an announcement of a departure in May 2025. (Zoom Meeting Summary stated this as Laurie's departure, but that is incorrect.)

**Next steps**

Matt to follow up with John from Northeast Track Solutions regarding Mainline Canal Greenway Segment 13.

Nathan to measure the distance from Mapleton High School to the Riverwalk Trail for the school board proposal.

Alisha to hold off on investigating the trail connection near Mount Union due to ongoing negotiations.

Matt to send out the link for the November 20th Penn State cooperative extension land use webinar to the committee.

Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau to launch the Trails Maintenance Fund application process in early November.

**Summary**

AI in Government Operations and Edits

Matt discussed the potential of AI in government operations and mentioned the need for edits to the AI summary of the previous meeting. The team, including Nathan, George, Alisha, Jeff McCauley, and Patrick, discussed the AI summary and an email to Cheryl Marino about the idea for Borough Council meetings. The team also acknowledged the absence of Judy, who sent a brief report about working on a presentation for ACCO.

**Main Street Extension Project Update**

Judy discussed the progress of the Main Street extension project, expressing optimism about gaining access to two properties behind the building. She also mentioned the Trail Summit, suggesting it might be beneficial to devote a meeting to discuss its feasibility. Matt talked about promoting the Plan, mentioning the creation of social media pages and an upcoming presentation at a land use webinar by Penn State Cooperative Extension. Lastly, Matt discussed the September 11th National Memorial and the Greenway Corridor, mentioning a presentation to ACCO corporate officials and an email sent to Northeast Track Solutions.

### **Trail Connections and Property Discussion**

An interaction with Chris Roberts, a trail runner and property owner, who is amenable to hikers using his land was discussed. A potential parking lot property near the Mapleton Fire Trail was also discussed. A visit with the Mount Union School Board was mentioned since a proposal regarding a trail connection to the Riverwalk trail was presented. However, the school board is likely to reject the proposal unless more information is provided about the trail's distance and length. Nathan offered to help measure the distance using GPS technology.

### **Trail Connections and Nondisclosure Agreement**

Potential for a trail connecting Southern Huntingdon High School to Three Springs was discussed. This connection would be a significant addition to the County's walkable paths for students. The possibility of a trail along the railroad near the high school was also mentioned; however, it was noted the current route of the Standing Stone Trail passes by Spring Farms Elementary School, which is not directly adjacent to residential areas. The idea of a path connecting the Linear Park to the Kistler Bridge was brought up and noted as an easy connection. Due to a nondisclosure agreement between the EBT Foundation and Larry Sloan details of this could not be discussed. Alisha, who was tasked with looking into the trail connection, was informed to leave the matter alone for now.

### **Trail Development and Campground Plans**

The progress of various trail development projects was reported. It was noted the connection between Saltillo and Three Springs is underway, with a campground planned for the area. Also discussed was the potential for a trail connection between Saltillo and 3 Springs, and the possibility of a campground in Shirley Township. \_\_\_\_ mentioned attending a meeting where a couple proposed a campground in Shirley Township, and were urged them to contact the EBT Foundation. Preserving farmlands and the potential for a trail off 994 to accommodate hikers was discussed, along with the need for trail development at the EBT properties in Robertsdale, and the possibility of an interpretive walking tour in the area.

### **Rail Bikes and Operational Policies**

Current operational policies of trails and rail bikes were discussed, with emphasis on the need for a guide due to potential issues such as chain pops. Also mentioned was the possibility of recreating the engine house to enable larger rail operations. Excitement was expressed about the prospect of rail bikes, something that had been discussed before the EBT Foundation bought the railroad. It was noted that rail bikes are becoming increasingly popular and are now available in various locations.

### **Huntingdon County Trails Maintenance Fund**

Matt discussed the upcoming launch of the Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau Trails Maintenance Fund in early November. He mentioned that the application form is ready, and they plan to send out notices through the county's planning office, municipalities, and a press release. The need to establish connections with surrounding counties, including Fulton, was discussed. An issue with the connector from Musters Gap was reported and noted that this connector is being held up by the Department of Transportation. Matt also mentioned the Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission's Outdoor Recreation Plan and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Southern

Alleghenies, which is in its final phase. Lastly, Matt discussed the need to update the six county Greenways Plan, which has not been updated in a long time and is affecting eligibility for funding.

### **New Project and Sidewalk Concerns**

The potential for a new project along the 522 area was mentioned as a connection to the Riverwalk trail. It was noted this idea has been talked about for decades but has not progressed due to lack of initiative. Also mentioned was the need for sidewalks in certain areas, particularly around the projects, and a suggestion regarding a possible connection between Larry Salone's property and the Housing Authority's property. Concern was expressed about the safety of the current walking routes and the potential for accidents. The conversation ended with a discussion about the possibility of a sidewalk program as mentioned in the comprehensive plan.

### **Penn State's Hamer Center and Sidewalks**

The possibility of involving Penn State's Hamer Center for Community Design was noted as a way to work on a sidewalk project in the Borough; since the Center's students could provide conceptual designs, but engineering work would still be needed. It was also mentioned that PennDOT would likely require the Borough to agree to maintain any new sidewalks. Additionally, \_\_\_ announced that she will be leaving the area in May 2025 due to work commitments, but is willing to continue contributing remotely until then. Discussion also touched on the financial challenges faced by a neighboring borough.

(Last edited Laurie Nearhood, Huntingdon County Planning (Host) Dec 05, 2024 04:21 PM)