

# FEASIBILITY STUDY

## CHEMUNG CANAL CONNECTOR TRAIL CHEMUNG COUNTY



ELMIRA-CHEMUNG TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL  
400 EAST CHURCH STREET  
ELMIRA, NEW YORK 14901

PREPARED BY



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this engineering report is to present the possible best alternatives trail corridor to connect the 13 mile long existing Catherine Valley Trail (CVT) from its current terminus at Huck Finn Road in the Town of Veteran to the 8.5 mile existing Lackawanna Railroad Trail (LRT) terminus at Village of Elmira Heights. The proposed project is to connect the two trails resulting in a single 29.5 mile trail corridor starting from Watkins Glen to Lowman, as it connects the 8 mile gap from the existing end terminus of CVT to LRT. The work includes the completion of the trail corridor routing study, cost estimates, phasing, obtaining the public opinion, land acquisition and right of way impact, and environmental impact study. The Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council has retained Fagan Engineers & Land Surveyors, PC (FE) to assist on scoping the study and design of trail connector in accordance with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) standards of practice for Federally Aided Locally Administered (LAFA) Project.



Historic Chemung Canal Route in Elmira Heights, New York.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND & HISTORY

### a. Project History

The report references the “Final Design Report for An Extension to The Catharine Valley Trail from Mark Twain State Park to Wygant Road” prepared by Hunt Engineers, Architects & Land Surveyors, P.C. in 2010. A trailhead / parking area has been constructed along Huck Finn Road as proposed in the 2010 report at the southern terminus of the CVT. The trail south of Huck Finn Road has not been constructed at this time and is included in this corridor study.

The existing Catharine Valley Trail (CVT) extends from its northern terminus point at the Seneca Harbor in Watkins Glen south to the Mark Twain State Park on Huck Finn Road in the Town of Veteran. The trail is 13-miles long and is mostly a graded gravel path. The path crosses over NYS Route 13 near Millport on a pedestrian and bicycle bridge. The CVT is maintained and operated by NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). The Friends of the Catharine Valley Trail are a volunteer group that supports the trail with planned events, clean ups, and trail maintenance as well. The OPRHP has stated that there are no plans to extend the CVT further south, and the current trail is the extent that they will operate and maintain.

The Lackawanna Rail Trail (LRT) extends from Eldridge Park in the City of Elmira to the hamlet of Lowman (Town of Ashland). The trail follows the abandoned Lackawanna Railroad corridor. There is an extension from Eldridge Park east to Lake Road. There is also a proposed extension north to McCann’s Boulevard in Elmira Heights. The extension of the trail to existing paved trail is included in this study. This is the southern terminus of this corridor study. The trail is 8.5 miles long and is operated and maintained by Chemung County. This trail is predominantly a paved asphalt trail. There is no friends group or other private entity established for the maintenance of this trail.

The proposed trail corridor for the study will follow the historic Chemung Canal Towpath. The corridor is approximately 8 miles long and is located in the Village of Elmira Heights, Town of Horseheads, Village of Horseheads and the Town of Veteran. There has been some interest in forming a friends group to support this trail and the existing LRT.

### b. Feasibility Study Area

This plan is referencing the existing CVT and LRT and expands to connect the two trails.

The trail connector predominantly follows the old Chemung Canal Towpath. Following the decline of the Canal, a series of railroads and trolleys acquired the Chemung Canal towpath. The Pennsylvania Railroad took over the towpath right-of-way in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The Elmira and Seneca Harbor Railway Company operated one of the first electric railways in New York. The “Glen Route” provided a trolley that linked Horseheads and Millport, Montour Falls and Watkins Glen on the Chemung Canal towpath. Trolley service was ended after severe damage to the railroad lines during the flooding caused by tropical storm Agnes in 1972.

The feasibility study plans to follow this historic route where possible. Chemung County owns the property the route follows from Interstate 86 through Eldridge Park. The multi-use trail will allow access to the history of the Chemung Canal.

**c. Aerial Survey**

Fagan Engineers survey department utilizes a Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS) (Drone) for several services including aerial panoramas, topographic mapping and orthomosaics. FE has completed a drone orthomosaic survey of the preferred alternative trail alignment. The drone uses GPS data and the drone photographic images to create a 3D point cloud of the alignment. The 3D point cloud was used to generate surface topography and aerial images on the proposed alignment. These were imported into AutoCAD to generate the project drawings. They can be used in the future for detailed design of the trail.



Trail @ McCann's Blvd

**d. Route Alternatives**

Several alternative trail corridors were explored to connect the existing CVT and LRT. These alternatives have been discussed with project stakeholders, at the public meeting and during the trail walk. The entire length of the trail was walked by Fagan Engineers staff. A large portion of the proposed trail corridor was bicycled by Fagan Engineers staff. The entire length of the CVT and LRT have also been bicycled by Fagan Engineers staff. The area of trail was separated into three sections: Huck Finn Park to Hanover Square; Hanover Square to I-86; and I-86 to Eldridge Park.

**Huck Finn Park to Hanover Square**

This section of the trail was studied in the “Final Design Report for An Extension to The Catharine Valley Trail from Mark Twain State Park to Wygant Road” prepared by Hunt Engineers, Architects & Land Surveyors, P.C. in 2010. The trail follows the existing trolley/rail path from Huck Finn Park to Wygant Road. The trail is through the Queen Catharine Marsh, and the only alternative route would be to follow NYS Rt 14 Bicycle Route. This would require a guide rail to separate the trail users from the vehicle traffic and is not



Queen Catharine Marsh near Huck Finn Rd.

ideal. The section of trail through the Queen Catharine Marsh offers a great opportunity to observe the flora and fauna of the marsh and would be a highlight of the trail system. The preferred option is following the existing trolley/rail path.

From Wygant Road to Old Ithaca Road two alternatives were explored: along the edge of Southern Tier Logistics or following the active railroad line through the Chemung County Sportsmen's Federations Property. The Chemung County Sportsmen's Federations is opposed to allowing bicycle traffic through their property. The trail would also be along an active Norfolk Southern rail line. ECTC has been in contact with Southern Tier Logistics, and they are supportive of allowing the trail to be located on their property along the edge of the Queen Catharine Marsh. A trailhead is proposed in this section and would allow fishing access to deeper sections of the marsh. The path through Southern Tier Logistics is the preferred path.

The proposed path from Old Ithaca Road to Hanover Square will be on the top of the Town of Horseheads flood levee. This levee follows Newtown Creek and bypasses a high traffic area. The other alternative would require the trail to follow along the shoulder of high volume roads and require guide rails to separate the trail from vehicles. The levee is the preferred option.

#### Hanover Square to I-86

The alternative studied included following the Chemung Canal tow path or following along Newtown Creek. The Chemung Canal tow path is privately owned for a majority of this section of the trail. It is the preferred path, but there could be issues obtaining easements. The Village of Horseheads owns a large vacant lot, just north of Brickyard Park. A trailhead is proposed for this location.



Hanover Square at East Franklin Street.

Both banks of Newtown Creek were studied. The west bank is all privately owned and would cross a large number of properties on South Main Street it would potentially be difficult to deal with so many property owners. One property owner not allowing the path to cross their property would block the entire alternative. From East Mill Street to Hanover Square would follow the same path and the preferred route. The east bank of Newtown Creek from I-86 to East Mill Street is farm land, but it would require a long bridge over Newtown Creek to access the property. The East Bank of Newtown

Creek from East Mill Street to Hanover Square is all land owned by the Town of Horseheads and the Village of Horseheads. This would be a good area for the trail.

However, the bridge over East Franklin Street does not have any shoulder. A new bridge at East Franklin Street would be required to use this route.

I-86 to Eldridge Park

The route is planned to use the existing Brickyard Park trail and the existing bicycle crossing infrastructure at Grand Central Avenue and I-86. Chemung County is the property owner of the Chemung Canal tow path property from I-86 to Eldridge Park. The property was used for the Chemung Canal and later for railways. The route is well suited for the multi-use path and is the preferred route. An alternative route following Newtown Creek was also studied. This route would require the path to cross multiple wetlands and cross Newtown Creek multiple times. This would require raised boardwalks and bridges that would significantly increase the cost and complexity of project. The route would also cross multiple landowners' property and require easement agreements with a large number of landowners.



Brickyard Park Bicycle / Pedestrian Path.

The final preferred trail route and the alternative route were developed largely based on input from the public participations of local government, ECTC and Chemung County citizens.

## II. Anticipated Right-of-Way

### a. NYSOPRHP

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) owns and maintains the existing CVT. The OPRHP has completed the trail to Mark Twain State Park and do not plan any extensions south towards Horseheads. The extension of the trail south from Mark Twain State Park will be owned and/or controlled by Chemung County. We do not anticipate any additional trails being built and maintained by the OPRHP.

### b. NYSDEC

No portions of the trail are owned by NYSDEC; however, a portion of the trail will be adjacent to the Queen Catharine Marsh. In the past, the NYSEC has allowed trail development parallel to the marsh. Final design plans must be submitted to NYSDEC for review and approval through a joint permit with the ACOE.

### c. ACOE

The Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) will work jointly with the NYSDEC to evaluate any impacts to the existing NYSDEC wetlands along the trail corridor. The majority of the wetlands are within the Queen Catharine Marsh. This project may be eligible for an ACOE Nationwide Permit Program, which is an expedited process for minor impacts.

### d. Norfolk Southern Railroad

Norfolk Southern Railroad operates a short section of railway north of Wygant Road. A short section of rail line is used as a spur to direct rail cars into the Southern Tier Logistics site. A portion of the towpath is not being used and has no rails. The proposed trail will require adequate separation and fence between the railroad and the proposed trail.

### e. Southern Tier Logistics

Southern Tier Logistics owns a large industrial park south of Wygant Road. The Operators are interested in allowing the trail to be located within their property. They are currently working with Chemung County on several scenarios. This would allow the trail to bypass the Chemung County Sportsmen's Federation property.

### f. Chemung County Sportsmen's Federation

The Chemung County Sportsmen's Federation owns a large portion of land west of Southern Tier Logistics and within the Queen Catharine Marsh. They are opposed to allowing bicycles through their property. The current trail corridor avoids their property. If there are issues with Norfolk Southern Railroad or other land owners, the trail may need to be relocated on their property.

### g. Town of Horseheads

A portion of the trail is proposed to be located on the top of the Town's flood levee. This may require additional stipulation for the trail to ensure the integrity of the levee is not

compromised. Final design elements should incorporate comments from the NYSDEC and Town officials.

h. Village of Horseheads

Portions of the trail are located on the Village of Horseheads property. The Village owns a large vacant lot between South Main Street and Interstate 86. This is a likely location for a trailhead / parking area to provide additional access to the trail system.

i. Private Owners

The trail requires easements from several private land owners. Three landowners own large sections of the old Chemung Canal towpath.

Dan and Katherine Tramm own a large abandoned industrial facility near Interstate 86. They are from out of state and there has not been any activity on the property for many years. In the past they were not interested in selling the property. If negotiations to obtain an easement are unsuccessful, Chemung County could use eminent domain to obtain the property.

Cheryl Geinitz owns the property between South Main Street and Mill Street in the Village of Horseheads. This property includes several retail businesses. The trail would potentially impact the parking along the rear of the property.

Susan Alexander owns the property from Mill Street to Franklin Street in the Village of Horseheads. This property is a mix of vacant land and retail businesses. The trail follows the western bank of Newtown Creek.

A full table of the all the property owners in the proposed trail corridor is included in Appendix A.

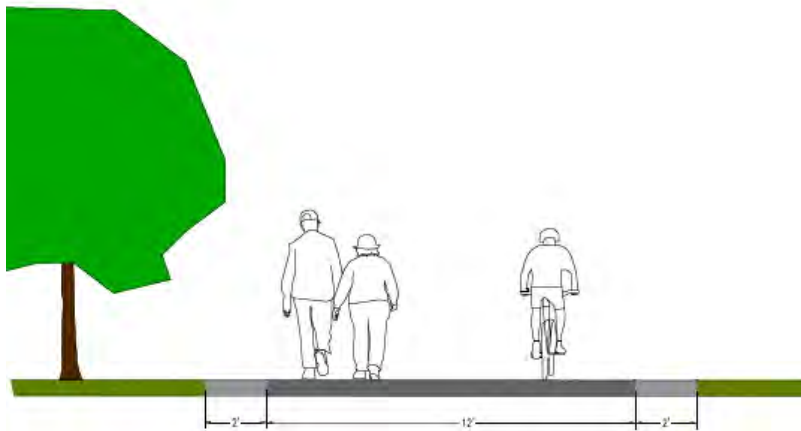
### III. Proposed Trail Description

#### a. Trail Specifications and Features

The trail will be designed to meet NYSDOT regulations as recommended:

- Trail should be 10-12 feet wide,
- Vertical clearance of 8-10 feet,
- Slope should generally be between 0-5%, and maximum of 5-10% for sustained lengths. If unavoidable, short length can be steeper, but it is discouraged,
- Trail centerline marking is not usually necessary but can be helpful in areas such as blind curves, or portions of the trail with high volume use.

The trail is planned with a width of 12-feet with an option to scale down to a minimum width of 8-feet if constraints require. The grade will be less than 5%, except for short distances where unavoidable. The existing LRT is paved and maintained by Chemung County and the City of Elmira while the majority of the CVT is limestone



dust. The County Department of Public Works has reviewed both trails and has indicated a preference for an asphalt trail due to ease of maintenance.

Boardwalks – Sections of the trail within the Queen Catharine Marsh will require boardwalks where the towpath is no longer present. Installing fill to re-create the towpath is not feasible due to US ACOE wetland permitting constraints. Boardwalks can be an asset and attraction for the trail. The construction and maintenance costs of boardwalks will need to be balanced. Boardwalks are typically wooden, but can be concrete decks, or steel depending on funding constraints.

#### b. Trail Users

The trail will have the same use requirements as the existing LRT and will allow pedestrians and bicyclists. Horses and motorized vehicles will be prohibited. Pets are allowed on the trail as long as they are leashed. Pedestrians travel slower than other users of the trail, and larger groups tend to spread out across the trail. Children and older adults also travel more slowly and can require additional space for wheel chairs, motorized scooters and strollers. Adequate trail width is needed to allow for maneuverability and safe passing of faster trail users.

Bicycles have a large variety of sizes and include traditional bicycles, recumbent bicycles, tricycles and electric assist bicycles. Electric assist bicycles can be heavy (50-80 lbs.) and

difficult to maneuver off vehicle racks. Cyclists travel at a variety of speeds from “Smell the Roses” pace to “Race Pace” velocity. Bicycles typically require a personal width of 5-feet to allow for passing and interacting with other trail users which requires a 12-foot-wide trail design. Bicyclists have a responsibility to slow down to safely pass pedestrians and slower paced users.

New York State allows for electric bicycles and scooters with speeds that range from 20 mph to 25 mph. However, many electric bicycles and scooter users disable the speed limiters and can travel at upwards of 40 mph. These speeds are not safe on a mixed-use trail. An electric bicycle traveling over 30 mph on a mixed-use trail has the potential for major accidents between bicycles and pedestrians. Signs and educational materials about safe travel and passing speeds should be considered at kiosks along the trail.

c. Trailheads / Amenities

Trailheads and parking areas should be located throughout the trail corridor to provide easy access intermittently along the trail. Trailheads should be equipped with several amenities, where practicable, including restroom facilities, bike racks, information kiosks, fix-it stations, trash/recycling receptacles, water fill stations, benches and picnic tables.

Benches should be placed for interesting views, near educational or historical trail elements and spaced at consistent intervals. Areas that provide shade, or shelter from winds are also good locations for benches along the trail.

Bicycle Racks should be located adjacent to benches and in areas where cyclists are likely to travel to a specific destination. For example, bicycle racks located near Hanover Square would allow cyclists to securely lock their bikes and shop or dine at area businesses.

Bicycle Repair Stands should be located along the trail and at least 6-feet from the trail edge to allow room to repair a bicycle without blocking the trail. The stands should be located in places with high visibility to deter vandalism and theft of tools. Chemung County currently has provided bicycle repair stands located along both the CVT and the LRT.

Trailhead lighting using photovoltaic (PV) light poles with solar panels should be located at the parking areas, benches and kiosks to create a safe and welcoming environment. Lights should be programmed to turn off at a set time as a courtesy to neighbors, and to discourage trail use in the middle of the night.



Restroom facilities should be located at trailheads when feasible. Depending on the availability of public water and sanitary sewer services, composting toilets can be an option. Chemung County Soil and Water operates a composting toilet at their conservation cabin located at the Chemung County Fairgrounds.

There are five(5) proposed trailheads along the trail that allow trail access and information about the proposed connector trail.

Trail Heads are proposed at the following locations:

Southern Tier Logistics	Village of Horseheads	STA 10+50
Village of Horseheads Vacant Lot	Village of Horseheads	STA 230+00
Chemung County Fairgrounds	Town of Horseheads	STA 311+00
Lenox Ave	Town of Horseheads	STA 346+00
Taras Shevchenko Park	Village of Elmira Heights	STA 396+50

The trail also crosses the following roads that allow user access. These locations do not include the full amenities of the trail heads. They will have pedestrian cross walks across the road, and bollards to block access of vehicles on the trail. These are located at the following locations:

Wygant Road	Town of Horseheads	STA 92+50
Southern Tier Logistics	Village of Horseheads	STA 180+00
Old Ithaca Road	Village of Horseheads	STA 177+00
Franklin Street	Village of Horseheads	STA 197+00
Mill Road	Village of Horseheads	STA 214+00
South Main Steet	Village of Horseheads	STA 221+00
Brickyard Park / I-86	Village of Horseheads	STA 214+00
Fairport Lane / I-86	Village of Horseheads	STA 271+00
14 <sup>th</sup> Street	Elmira Heights	STA 365+00

**d. Maintenance Activities**

The trail will be maintained by Chemung County. Activities will include mowing, plowing, fallen tree removal, trail repair and repaving. A “Friends” group will be utilized to help with trash removal when possible. For example, The Friends of the Chemung River Watershed currently organize cleanups of the LRT along Newtown Creek and the Chemung River.

**e. Trail Signage**

Trail signage will be installed throughout the trail. The Chemung Canal Trail was proposed as the name of the new connector trail during one of the public meetings. Trail signage allows for better visibility, wayfinding and also allows for potential fundraising and sponsorship of portions of the trail.

Trailhead Kiosks will be installed at trailheads with parking areas. Five kiosks are proposed along the trail corridor. Kiosks will include maps, trail rules and historical and

natural history of the area. Interpretive Signs displaying interesting historic, natural resources along the trail will also be placed where appropriate.

Mileage marker will be provided every 0.25 miles. Additional signs showing mileage to points of interest, or signs giving general information about local business may be placed in appropriate places along the trail.

#### **IV. Project Design Issues**

a. Easements

The majority of the proposed trail corridor is owned by Chemung County. However, there are several easements required on public and private property. The area of easements required for each parcel is included in Appendix A. An easement width of 20-feet was used to estimate the area.

b. Trail Relocation Options

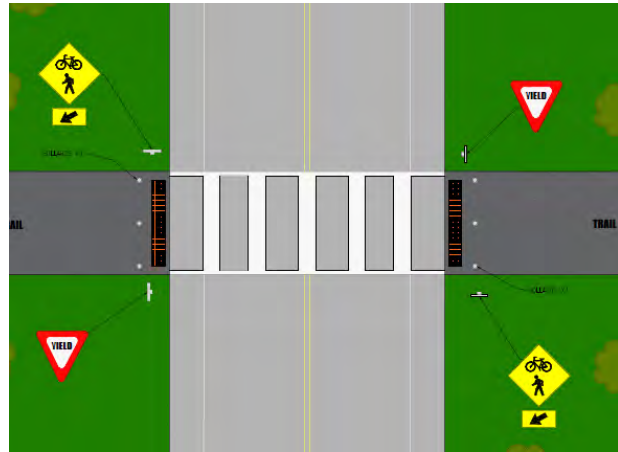
The northern section of the trail corridor from Mark Twain State Park to Wygant Road is owned by NYSEG and the southern section is owned by Norfolk Southern Railroad. Ownership or easements for this section of the trail are required to allow Chemung County to build the trail. If an agreement cannot be reached, the trail could be relocated to the NYS Route 14 right-of-way. NYS Route 14 is a designated Bike Route. A guiderail would be required to create separation between the trail and the highway. This is not the preferred option, but sections of the CVT are currently built in this manner.

c. Drainage

In general, stormwater will sheet flow across the path and infiltrate within the green areas. The project exceeds the 1-acre threshold and therefore will require a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). NYSDEC allows linear trail projects of this type to have a Simple SWPPP that only includes erosion and sediment control. The proposed trailhead access points with parking lots may require additional stormwater quality/quantity mitigations depending on the size. Areas within wetlands may also require bottomless equalization culverts to maintain aquatic and hydraulic connectivity through the wetland.

d. Trail Access

The trail will be accessed at designated trailheads and other minor road crossings. Trailheads will include vehicle parking areas, kiosks with maps and other information. Minor road crossings will not include parking areas but will allow user access to the trail. Trailheads are proposed at Southern Tier Logistics, the Village of Horseheads property north of Interstate 86, the Chemung County Fair Grounds and at the Memorial Park in Honor of Taras Shevchenko on McCanns Blvd.



Typical Road Crossing Signs and Bollards.

e. Road Crossings

When the trail crosses a public road, the standard road crossing will include a painted crosswalk with signs for motorists and trail users, and 3 bollards across the trail in each direction to prevent motor vehicles from entering the trail. These bollards will be removable to allow emergency vehicles access to the trail system. Intersections with larger traffic volumes or higher speeds may require more intensive road crossing, such as signalized crossing or traffic circles. For example, the proposed trail crosses South Main Street in the Village of Horseheads near a bend in the road that limits visibility. South Main Street also has high volumes of traffic with higher average speeds. A signaled crosswalk that flashed caution lights or includes traffic lights that stop traffic may be appropriate for this crossing. A traffic circle at this intersection could also help with sight distances at the bends in the road.

f. Site Lighting

Site lighting was investigated for this project. LED lights with solar panels can be utilized to illuminate areas of the project. Lights would include timers to turn lights off at a certain time at nights as a courtesy to neighbors and discourage late night use of the trail. The cost of installing lights along the entire trail is prohibitive. Lights at trailheads and select areas could be beneficial. Light poles are proposed at the trailheads.

g. Wetlands

The trail corridor travels on the abandoned raised trolley bed through the Queen Catharine Marsh and along the old Chemung Canal towpath. The southern end of the alignment follows an unnamed tributary to Newtown Creek.

There is the potential for small disturbances that are unavoidable in the narrow trail corridor. Wetland impacts with less than 1/10 of permanent loss can be permitted using the ACOE Nationwide permit system. Larger potential impacts will require boardwalks to eliminate or mitigate the impact.

ACOE Nationwide Wetland Permit 14 – Linear Transportation Projects allows for wetland impacts under 1/10-acre (4,356 SF). When linear projects cross wetlands at separate and distant locations, each crossing is considered a single and complete project. NYSDEC considers the project one project and limits disturbance thresholds of 300 linear feet or ¼ acre. NYSDEC does not allow new linear transportation facilities within a FEMA designated 100-year floodplain. If more than 1/10 of an acre will be disturbed at a single project site, wetland mitigation is required at minimum of 2:1. This means for every one acre of disturbed wetlands, two acres must be provided for mitigation. A NYSDEC/ACOE Joint Permit application will be required.

h. NYSDEC SEQR

The NYSDEC Environmental Assessment Form was completed for the project using the EAF mapper. The system flagged several issues. The project has or is contiguous to buildings or sites listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places. The site is adjacent to archaeological sites on the NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). There are several threatened or endangered bird species listed. The species are the Pied-billed Grebe, Least Bittern, Upland Sandpiper and Northern Harrier. All of these concerns can be mitigated. Building the trail on the surface and not excavating will preserve any historic or archaeological sites. Not impacting any nesting or breeding areas or filling any wetlands will protect the bird species.

i. US Fish and Wildlife Service

The US Fish and Wildlife Services IPaC system to evaluate the project for impacts to fish and wildlife and a species list was developed. US Fish and Wildlife Services identified three threatened, endangered or candidate species, however no critical habitats were identified. The species listed are the Northern Long-ear Bat, Green Floater Mussel, and Monarch Butterfly. No project impacts are anticipated for the project.

j. Regulatory Agency Coordination

NYSDEC	Freshwater Wetland Permits, and Construction SPDES Permit
ACOE	Freshwater Wetland Permits
Chemung County	Roadwork / Curb Cut Permits
Village of Elmira Heights	Roadwork / Curb Cut Permits
Village of Horseheads	Roadwork / Curb Cut Permits
Town of Horseheads	Roadwork / Curb Cut Permits

k. Cultural Resources (CRR)

The “Final Design Report for An Extension to The Catharine Valley Trail from Mark Twain State Park to Wygant Road” prepared by Hunt Engineers, Architects & Land Surveyors, P.C. in 2010, included an analysis of cultural resource impacts.

Deuel Archaeology & CRM (Deuel) in Attica, New York provided guidance regarding the Cultural Resources Review for the project area. This review confirmed that the Catharine Valley Corridor is rich in history. The area is known for both its Native American and Colonial settlements. Early Catharine Valley development also provided a canal corridor connecting the prosperous Chemung River Valley to the Finger Lakes at Watkins Glen. It is this canal works that later provided for railroad development necessary to continue routes for north-south commerce.

Initial recommendations indicate the development of the canal towpath is possible by coordinating with OPHRP's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Placing road fabric at the existing grade and not disturbing the existing ground but building up will preserve any historically or culturally significant items. Trail development on the towpath is consistent with our goal to provide not only trail transportation through this corridor, but to enhance the educational value of this culturally significant area.

## V. Public Participation and Information

### a. Public Information Meeting

As part of the study, a public information meeting was held at the Village of Elmira Heights Village Hall in the evening of June 14, 2023 at 6:30 PM. The meeting was well attended by members of the public and local officials. There were 23-28 people at the meeting. WENY News covered the event. The meeting was also live-streamed for those that could not attend in-person. There were representatives from the Village of Elmira Heights, Town of Horseheads, Village of Horseheads, Chemung County and the Horseheads Historical Society at the meeting.

The idea of connecting the two trails located in Chemung County to create one 28.5 mile long trail that links Watkins Glen to the hamlet of Lowman was discussed as a great opportunity to create a destination of the trail system. The trail system could also be used to host a marathon or other events. The trail could be used for longer bike tours. The trail would have a positive impact on businesses adjacent to the trail. Many participants did not feel safe bicycling on public roads only use trail systems. This requires driving to the trail for recreation. A trail traveling through the center of Chemung County will create a direct connection between the residential neighborhoods adjacent to the trail and bring access to a recreation trail directly to a large population.



Public Comments During the Public Information Meeting.

The Chemung County Historical Society was interested in the connections of the trail to the old Chemung Canal and are interested in placing historical markers along the trail. The trail through the Queen Catharine Marsh will bring great opportunities for bird watching and education about wetland ecosystems.

Access to public restrooms at trailheads were discussed. The lighting and fencing were discussed as ways to make the trail safe for users and separated from neighboring properties. The public were interested in forming a friend's group for the trail in the future.

The meeting was productive with all the comments being positive for creating this trail connection. The idea of naming the connector "The Chemung Canal Trail" was introduced by one of the public commentators, and those that were in attendance were generally supportive. The presentation with audio of the group discussion is available along with a

summary of the group discussion and a meeting sign in sheet. This information is included in Appendix B.

b. Public Trail Walk

A trail walk was hosted by Chemung County for the portion of the trail in the Village of Horseheads on Sunday, July 9, 2023. The walk was attended by 12-15 people. The full 8.5 mile length of the trail was also too long for a public walk to complete in one day, there are also portions of the trail that are privately owned and we didn't have permission to walk these areas. The section of trail from the Chemung County Fairgrounds to Hanover Square was chosen for the walk. It is approximately 3 miles long, there are sidewalks to avoid private property and this section of trail is through a dense residential and commercial area.

The section of the trail from Eldridge Park to Interstate 86 was omitted from the walk. This section is owned by Chemung County and it's ideal for the trail. Portions of the trail are overgrown and not feasible for a public walk. The area north of Hanover Square was also omitted. This section is mostly located on private property and through the Queen Catharine Marsh. This section was also not ideal for a public walk.



Trail Crossing at South Main Street.

The tour gathered at the Village of Horseheads Historical Society Museum and utilized a public CTRAN bus to bring the group to Pleasant Street, near the Chemung County Fairgrounds. The group walked along the proposed trail alignment back to the museum for further discussion. The museum allowed the group into the building to see their display of the Chemung Canal. Many of the participants stayed for a presentation of the proposed trail alignment drawings.

During the walk trail options were discussed. The trail plans to use the Chemung County North-South Bicycle Route to cross under Interstate 86 on Grand Central Avenue. The North-South Bicycle Route is a under construction bike lane corridor connecting the City of Elmira to Hanover Square the predominantly follows Davis Street and Grand Central Avenue. There will be a dedicated bicycle lane on Grand Central crossing under Interstate 86. Chemung Canal Connector trail will utilize the bike lanes and the existing Brickyard Park multiuse path to travel east back to the old Chemung Canal property. The Village of Horseheads owns a large property just north of Interstate 86 on South Ave, this location was discussed as a good location for a trailhead. There is a short section of property owned by Norfolk Southern Railroad without and tracks and connect to other properties. Chemung County discussed obtaining this parcel using eminent domain.

The trail will cross South Main Street near South Ave at a busy section of road with limited visibility in both directions. The idea of crossing signal or roundabout in this area was

discussed to improve the safety of the crossing. From this point to Hanover Square, the trail would be adjacent to several businesses along the west bank of Newtown Creek. There is the possibility that the trail could cross Newtown Creek at East Mill Street and travel along the east bank of Newtown Creek. This land is owned by the Village of Horseheads and the Town of Horseheads. This would require a new bridge at East Franklin Street. The existing bridge on East Franklin Street does not have a shoulder as there is no room for bike/pedestrian travel. The Town of Horseheads recently acquired a property on the north side of East Franklin Street that they would like to develop into a park in the future. The Town is also interested in improving the East Franklin Street bridge. The bridge would need be widened to allow for a protected bicycle/pedestrian lane. Starting at East Franklin Street, the Town of Horseheads maintains a levee for Newtown Creek. The idea of the trail traveling on the top of the levee was brought up by the Town of Horseheads. This is a good route from Hanover Square to the Southern Tier Logistics property. Based on the discussion during this trail walk, an enhanced crosswalk was added to the budget for South Main Street, and the preferred trail alternative was relocated to the Town of Horseheads Levee at Hanover Square. A summary of the discussion is included in Appendix B.

## VI. Budget & Funding Opportunities

### a. Project Budget

The budget cost estimates have been developed using R.S. Means data with actual construction bidding for similar projects and projecting inflation of construction costs. The feasibility study budget has been divided into three phases:

**Phase 1** – Stating at Eldridge Park to Southern Tier Logistics. This trail is mostly in residential areas. Chemung County owns a large portion of the trail corridor through this section.

**Phase 2** - includes new trail on Southern Tier Logistics property. Southern Tier Logistics is working with Chemung County to construct this section of trail.

**Phase 3** - includes the trail from Wygant Road through Huck Finn Road. This section of the trail follows the existing trolley line through the Queen Catharine Marsh. This section includes a portion of trail parallel to an active Norfolk Southern Rail line. The section of rail line is a dead end and is only used to direct rail cars to and from Southern Tier Logistics.

### b. Project Funding Sources

Chemung County and ECTC are looking for funding opportunities for this project. There are grants for alternative transportation available. Some of the funding resources that will be investigated include:

**NYS DOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)** – Governor Kathy Hochul recently announced that \$165 million in new funding is available. The program is utilized to create new and enhance existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Applications are due in January 2024.

**Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) & Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board (STC)** – STC is the local administrator for ARC grants for transportation and natural and cultural resources. ARC grants are up to \$500,000 and require a local match of at least 50%. Applications are due September 2024.

**US DOT Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)** – RAISE grant applications are due by the end of February 2024.

**Climate Smart Communities** – The Climate Smart Communities Grant Program works through the Consolidated Funding Applications (CFA) and is available to fund projects to reduce vehicle usage and congestion.

**Private Grants** – There are a number of local businesses and organizations that offer smaller grants to implement community amenities. The ECTC will contact these organizations directly to sponsor sections of the trail or particular elements, such as trailheads.

c. Project Phase Engineer’s Opinion of Cost

The following table is the engineer’s opinion of cost for the entire project from Huck Finn Road to Eldridge Park. A portion of the trail is on Southern Tier Logistics property and is not the responsibility of Chemung County or ECTC.

<b>Engineer's Opinion of Cost Project Phases</b>	
<b>Project Phase</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Phase 1 - Eldridge Park Through STL HOST</b>	
Phase Construction Cost	\$3,850,000
12% Contingency	\$460,000
Land Acquisition	\$10,000
Legal, Finance, Admin	\$62,000
Preliminary Design (8%)	\$308,000
Engineering Design (12%)	\$462,000
Construction Inspection/Administration (10%)	\$385,000
<b>Total Phase Probable Cost</b>	<b>\$5,537,000</b>
<b>Phase 2 - STL HOST</b>	
Phase Construction Cost	\$985,000
12% Contingency	\$118,000
Land Acquisition	\$0
Legal, Finance, Admin	\$15,700
Preliminary Design (8%)	\$78,800
Engineering Design (12%)	\$118,200
Construction Inspection/Administration (10%)	\$98,500
<b>Total Phase Probable Cost</b>	<b>\$1,414,200</b>
<b>Phase 3 - Wygant Road to Huck Finn Road</b>	
Phase Construction Cost	\$1,570,000
12% Contingency	\$190,400
Land Acquisition	\$5,000
Legal, Finance, Admin	\$26,600
Preliminary Design (8%)	\$125,600
Engineering Design (12%)	\$188,400
Construction Inspection/Administration (10%)	\$157,000
<b>Total Phase Probable Cost</b>	<b>\$2,263,000</b>
<b>Total Project</b>	
<b>Total Construction Cost</b>	<b>\$6,405,000</b>
12% Contingency	\$768,400
Land Acquisition	\$15,000
Legal, Finance, Admin	\$104,300
Preliminary Design (8%)	\$512,400
Engineering Design (12%)	\$768,600
Construction Inspection/Administration (10%)	\$640,500
<b>Total Project Probable Cost</b>	<b>\$9,214,200</b>

d. TAP Grant Engineer's Opinion of Cost

The following table is the engineer's opinion of cost for Phase 1 and Phase 3 only. It does not include Phase 2. Phase 2 is on Southern Tier Logistics property. This engineer's opinion of cost is for the TAP Grant application.

Engineer's Opinion of Cost Preferred Corridor				
Item Description	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total
<b>Huck Finn Road Through Wygant Road STA 00+00 to STA 93+00 Total Length of Trail 9,300 LF</b>				
Clearing & Grubbing (20' Wide)	21,000	SY	\$ 4.00	\$ 84,000.00
Fine Grading (16' Wide)	16,500	SY	\$ 3.50	\$ 57,700.00
1" Top Course (12' Wide)	12,400	SY	\$ 20.00	\$ 248,000.00
3" Binder (12' Wide)	12,400	SY	\$ 30.00	\$ 372,000.00
6" Subbase (12' Wide)	12,400	SY	\$ 10.00	\$ 124,000.00
6" Topsoil (2' along both edges of the trail)	4,120	SY	\$ 10.00	\$ 41,200.00
Establish Grass / Stabilize	4,120	SY	\$ 5.00	\$ 20,600.00
Silt Fence	18,600	LF	\$ 2.00	\$ 37,200.00
Road Crossing	1	Each	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Fence Along Railroad	3,900	LF	\$ 40.00	\$ 156,000.00
Directional Trail Signs	7	Each	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 7,000.00
Railroad Crossing Signs	1	Each	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
Bench & Bike Rack	2	Each	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Boardwalk	250	LF	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 375,000.00
<b>Wygant Road Through STL HOST STA 93+00 to STA 162+00 Total Length of Trail 6,900 LF</b>				
<b>Please Note: This Section is By the Private Owner of the Property</b>				
<b>Southern Tier Logistics to Eldridge Park STA 162+00 to 415+39 Total Length of Trail 25,339 LF (1,700 LF of Existing Thru Brickyard Park)</b>				
Clearing & Grubbing (20' Wide)	53,000	SY	\$ 4.00	\$ 212,000.00
Fine Grading (16' Wide)	42,000	SY	\$ 3.50	\$ 147,000.00
1" Top Course (12' Wide)	31,600	SY	\$ 20.00	\$ 632,000.00
3" Binder (12' Wide)	31,600	SY	\$ 30.00	\$ 948,000.00
6" Subbase (12' Wide)	31,600	SY	\$ 10.00	\$ 316,000.00
6" Topsoil (2' along both edges of the trail)	5,200	SY	\$ 10.00	\$ 52,000.00
Establish Grass / Stabilize	5,200	SY	\$ 5.00	\$ 26,000.00
Silt Fence	47,400	LF	\$ 2.00	\$ 94,800.00
Trail Head Kiosk	4	Each	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
Parking Area (5 Spaces)	4	Each	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 160,000.00
PV Light Poles at Parking Areas (5 Lights per Trail Head)	20	Each	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 200,000.00
Fence Along Homes	11,700	LF	\$ 50.00	\$ 585,000.00
Major Road Crossing - S. Main St	1	Each	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Road Crossing	6	Each	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 150,000.00
Directional Trail Signs	19	Each	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 19,000.00
Bench & Bike Rack	5	Each	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Brickyard Park & I-86 Crossing Signs	1	Each	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Invasive Species Removal	1	Each	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
PV Light Poles at the Pedestrian Bridge (2 Lights)	2	Each	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Pedestrian Bridge to Taras Shevchenko Memorial Park	1	Each	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
<b>Total Construction Cost</b>				<b>\$ 5,420,000.00</b>
12% Contingency				\$ 650,400.00
Land Acquisition				\$ 15,000.00
Legal, Finance, Admin				\$ 88,600.00
Preliminary Design (8%)				\$ 433,600.00
Engineering Design (12%)				\$ 650,400.00
Construction Inspection/Administration (10%)				\$ 542,000.00
<b>Total Project Probable Cost</b>				<b>\$ 7,800,000.00</b>

**APPENDIX A**  
**TAX PARCEL DATA TABLE**

**TAX PARCEL PROPERTIES DESCRIPTIONS**  
**CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION - ALTERNATE 1**  
**FE PROJECT #2023-001**  
**DECEMBER 20, 2023**

S.N.	Printkey	Swiss	Parcel Loc	Municipality	Current Owner	Owner Address	Area	Zoning	Property Class	Land Assessment	Full Market Value	Total Assessment	Starting STA	Ending STA	Project Phase	Length of Trail (FT)	Assessed Value (per SF)	Easement Area (SF)	Estimated Easement Cost
1.	38.00-1-16	072600	3559 Watkins Rd	Town of Veteran	NYSEG	NYSEG Electric Parkway Horseheads, NY 14845	12.2		270 - MFG Housing	\$ 25,900	\$ 47,700	\$ 47,700	0+00	51+50	Phase 3	5,150	\$ 0.0487	103,000	\$ 5,202
2.	49.01-1-13	073489	N/A	Town of Horseheads	PENNSYLVANIA LINE LLC	Taxation Department 650 W Peachtree St NW Atlanta, GA 30308	11.8	N/A	N/A	\$ -	\$ 199,561	\$ 197,565	51+50	89+00	Phase 3	3,750	\$ 0.3844	8,333	\$ 3,203
6.	49.03-3-6.11	073401	224 N. Main St	Village of Horseheads	Horseheads Real Property LLC	224 N Main St Horseheads, NY 14845	35.4	VH08 - M-1	340 - Vacant Indus	\$ 339,800	\$ 343,232	\$ 339,800	154+00	173+50	Phase 2	1,950	\$ 0.2204	4,333	\$ 955
7.	49.03-3-6.151	073401	71 Old Ithaca Rd	Village of Horseheads	American Legion Post 442	71 Old Ithaca Rd Horseheads, NY 14845	5.11	VH10	534 - Social Org.	\$ 185,300	\$ 1,604,040	\$ 1,558,000	173+50	175+25	Phase 1	175	\$ 0.8325	389	\$ 324
8.	59.01-1-3.1	073489	112 Old Ithaca Rd	Village of Horseheads	United States of America		11.8	TH04	311 - Res vac land	\$ 75,800	\$ 76,566	\$ 75,800	175+75	179+25	Phase 1	350	\$ 0.1475	778	\$ 115
11.	59.10-3-15	073401	206 E Franklin St	Village of Horseheads	ALEXANDER SUSAN	400 West Hill Rd Elmira, NY 14903	3.11	VH05 - C-1	340 - Vacant indus	\$ 4,400	\$ 44,545	\$ 44,100	196+00	213+25	Phase 1	1,725	\$ 0.0325	3,833	\$ 125
12.	59.14-4-62.2	073401	703R S Main St	Village of Horseheads	Cheryl B Geinitz	703C S Main St Horseheads, NY 14845	1.04	VH05 - C-1	311 - Res vac land	\$ 4,700	\$ 4,747	\$ 4,700	213+75	220+25	Phase 1	650	\$ 0.1037	1,444	\$ 150
13.	59.14-4-62.1	073401	SAYRE ST	Village of Horseheads	PENNSYLVANIA LINE LLC	Taxation Department 650 W Peachtree St NW Atlanta, GA 30308	1.2	N/A	842 - Ceiling tr	\$ -	\$ 69,093	\$ 68,402	221+25	227+50	Phase 1	625	\$ 1.3086	1,389	\$ 1,817
15.	59.18-1-27.1	073401	1011-R SOUTH AVE	Village of Horseheads	TRAMM DAN & TRAMM KATHERINE	1662 320th Ave Isle, MN 56342	0.98	VH09 - L-1	330 - Vacant comm	\$ 12,300	\$ 12,424	\$ 12,300	233+50	241+50	Phase 1	800	\$ 0.2881	1,778	\$ 512

Total Length of Trail Easement = 15,175 FT

\$ 2,348,367

Total Easement Cost Estimate: \$ 12,220

Last Update: 12-20-2023

**APPENDIX C**  
**FEASIBILITY DRAWINGS &**  
**STANDARD TRAIL DETAILS**

# Catharine Valley Trail to Lackawanna Trail

**Connection Study**

**KICKOFF MEETING**



Chemung County, New York



# CATHARINE VALLEY TRAIL (CVT) TO LACKAWANNA TRAIL (LRT) TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- ▶ Evaluate trail alternatives.
- ▶ Identify potential issues.
- ▶ Develop preliminary cost estimates.
- ▶ Develop a corridor study.
- ▶ Identify grant opportunities.



# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

## CHALLENGES FOR CONSIDERATION

- ▶ Wetlands
- ▶ Historic & Cultural Resources
- ▶ Accessibility
- ▶ Landowner Agreements



# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY



# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Southern end of the trail study linking  
the Lackawanna Trail and Eldridge  
Park.





# **CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY**

End of the Lackawanna Trail in Elmira Heights.





# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Neighborhood backyards encroaching on the Chemung County owned trail corridor. Privacy fence could be required.



# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Trail corridor along Camden Ave. and  
The Chemung County Fairgrounds.





# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Trail corridor at 14<sup>th</sup> St. in Elmira Heights looking south. Villa Serene can be seen on the right.





# **CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY**

Section of the proposed trail south of  
Lenox Ave. looking north.





# **CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY**

Looking south from Lenox Ave. in  
Elmira Heights.





# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Facing north at Lenox Ave. in Elmira Heights.





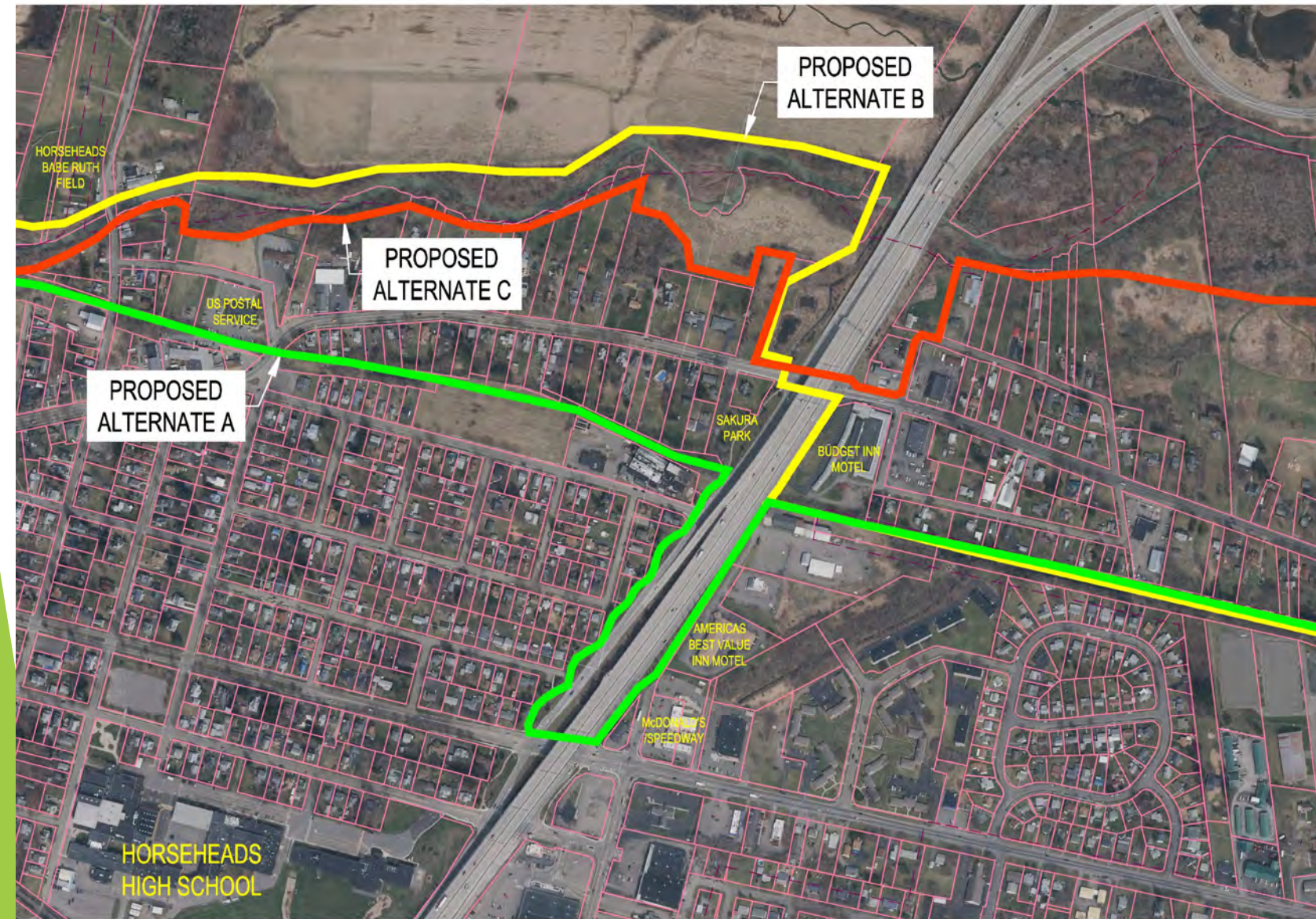
# **CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY**

Trail corridor that is currently being used at a local trail.



# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Trail corridor along Interstate 86 and  
through the Village of Horseheads.





# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Facing south at Interstate 86 at  
narrow overgrown trail corridor.





# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Grand Central Ave. passing under  
Interstate 86. Chemung County is  
planning a bicycle route along Grand  
Central Ave.





# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Brickyard Lane – Linear Park north of  
Interstate 86.





# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Overgrown trail corridor looking south from East Mill St. This portion is privately owned.





# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Village of Horseheads owned property on South Ave. The trail corridor is along the tree line.





# **CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY**

Trail corridor along the Village of Horseheads owned property.





# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Trail corridor owned by the railroad.





# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Trail corridor in the Village of  
Horseheads near the Post Office.



# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Proposed trail in the Village of Horseheads, Hanover Square and the Holding Point.





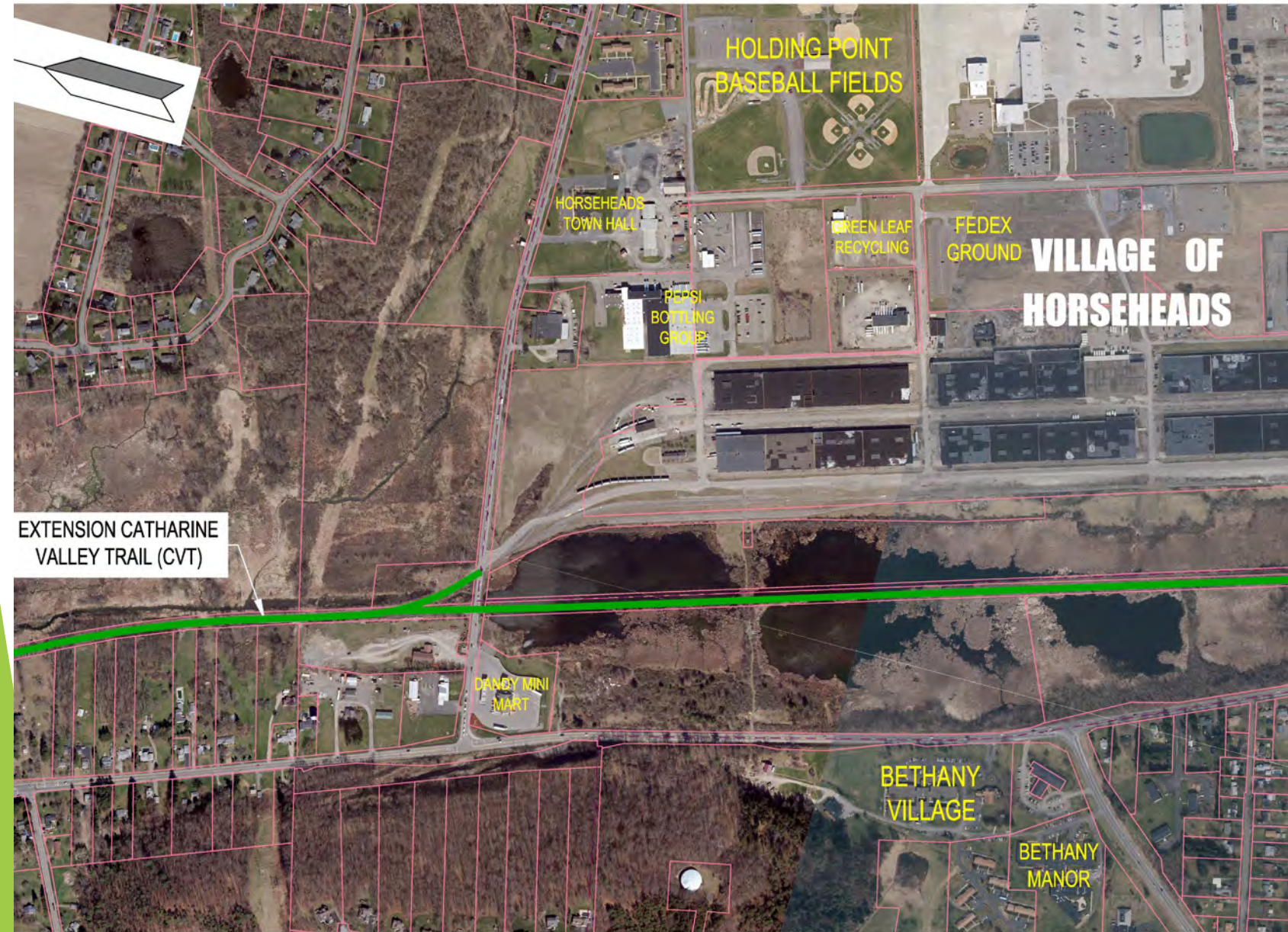
# **CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY**

Overgrown trail corridor near  
Hanover Square.



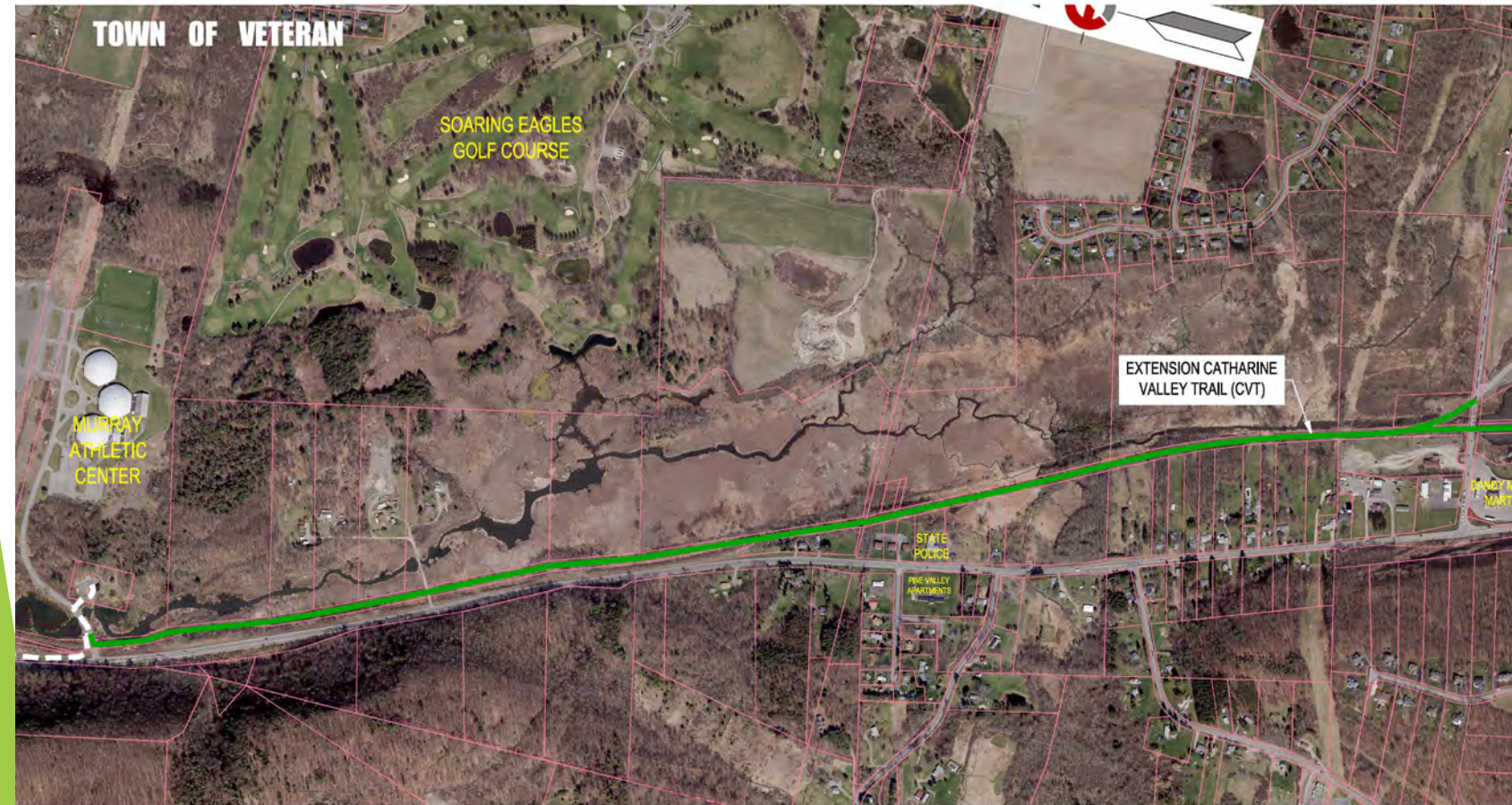
# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Trail corridor through the Holding Point and past Wygant Road.



# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Northern end of the proposed trail connecting the Catharine Valley Trail at the Murray Athletic Center (The Domes).





# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY

Large wetlands south of the Murray  
Athletic Center.





# **CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY**

Large wetlands south of The Murray  
Athletic Center.





# **CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY**

Typical raised wooden walkway through wetlands with an observation platform.





# **CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY**

Typical raised wooden walkway  
through wetlands.



# Some questions for you...

- ▶ From where you live, how connected do you feel to recreational opportunities?
- ▶ If it were built, would you use the trail connection?
  - ▶ What would make you more likely? Less likely?
- ▶ How would you see yourself using this trail?
- ▶ What times of year would you use the trail?
- ▶ What time of day would you use the trail?
- ▶ What kind of trail design elements or amenities are important to you?
- ▶ Is there anything else we should know or consider?



# Questions? Comments?

You can get in touch with ECTC staff by email at

[ectc@chemungcountyny.gov](mailto:ectc@chemungcountyny.gov)

or you can give us a call at

**607-737-5511**



# LACKAWANNA RAIL TRAIL + CATHARINE VALLEY TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY



## Why are we doing this study?



Support alternative transportation within Chemung County



Improve quality of life



Promote economic development



Increase outdoor recreation opportunities



Understand community preferences and priorities

## What are we hoping to do with this study?



Gain support and buy-in from the overall community and local elected officials



Seek grant funding for implementation (detailed design and construction)

Name

Municipality

Email

Lee Woregon  
~~Jim Merrill~~

Elmira  
Othman's camp

olowegj@chemungcountryny.gov  
EMMAN@chemungcountryny.gov

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Horsesheds

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Andy Key  
GARYM BATELCHAS

County DRW

KAGMP3@gmail.com

Elmira Heights Board

over →

over →

William Goodwin

161 Sunset Dr  
Deputy mayor HUDS

b. Goodwin  
Horseland, org.

Ormel Turner

850 Euclid Ave  
Elm 14901

Craig Keltz

618 McDowell 14904

Kon Henry Katz

659 Euclid Av

Art Gol

Elmira 14901

Nathan Nyck

259 W 17th S west

Paul Kungert

Village of Horsehead  
Elmira NY

Aaron Kather

Elmira Heights, NY



Rev. No.	Date	Revision Description
1		

It is a Violation of The New York Education Law, Article 145 Section 7209, For Any Person, Unless He is Acting Under The Direction Of A Licensed Professional Engineer Or Land Surveyor To Alter An Item in Any Way, If An Item Bearing The Seal Of An Engineer Or Land Surveyor is Altered. The Altering Engineer Or Land Surveyor Shall Affix To The Item His Seal And The Notation "Altered By" Followed By His Signature And The Date Of Such Alteration, And A Specific Description Of The Alteration.

SEAL

**CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY**  
CHEMUNG COUNTY, NY

**FAGAN ENGINEERS & LAND SURVEYORS PC**  
113 East Chemung Place  
Elmira N.Y. 14904  
Phone (607) 734-2165  
Fax (607) 734-2169  
www.FaganEngineers.com

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	11x17 Prints are 1/2 Size
Date:	DECEMBER 21, 2022
Design By:	IAP, CEL
Drawn By:	IAP, CEL
Checked By:	JBG
Project No.:	2023.001
Drawing Name:	2023-001_basemapping.dwg

**HOLDING POINT TO FAIRGROUNDS**

**C1**

**Note:**  
Utility information has been plotted from available sources and their locations and size should be considered approximate only. The contractor is responsible for determining exact utility locations, sizes, and elevations prior to commencing construction. If uncharted or misplotted utilities are encountered, the contractor is required to notify the owner immediately.

New York State law requires excavators to contact the one-call notification system prior to digging to prevent damage to buried facilities.  
**IT'S THE LAW!**  
Call three days before you dig!  
1-800-962-7962  
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SEAL

**CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY**  
CHEMUNG COUNTY, NY

**FAGAN ENGINEERS & LAND SURVEYORS PC**  
113 East Chemung Place  
Elmira N.Y. 14904  
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Scale:	1" = 400'
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Drawn By:	IAP, CEL
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## Catharine Valley Trail to Lackawanna Trail Connection Public Meeting Notes

This is a summary of the public comments during the June 15, 2023 Public Meeting for the proposed CVT to LRT connection study.

Remarks from Public:

### **How connected do you feel to recreational opportunities?**

- Have to ride along streets a little way to gain access to current trails, does not feel safe along route 14.
- Chemung County is the most unsafe place to ride a bike added one citizen, son got hit outside high school.
- Wants bike lane on lake road.
- Currently hard to figure out safest bike route to nearest trail.

### **If it were built, would you use it?**

- Would use it because currently the Catherine valley trail has no destination from Watkins, able to ride from Elmira to Watkins.
- Would be a good tourist walk.
- Possibility for marathons, runs.
- Horseheads Historical Society would be interested in putting up historical markers if kept along old Chemung Canal.
- All in favor of trail.
- A lot of retired couples look for trails.
- Safety concerns – should have lighting all along said trail, possible fencing, crosswalks.

### **How would you see yourself using the trail?**

- Biking and walking.
- Would make it easier to safely traverse the area.
- Economic effects – restaurants, possibility for events/markets?

### **What trail design elements or amenities are important?**

- Bathrooms.
- Consistency in trail length and trail surface.
- Mile posts.
- EMS stations/checkpoints.
- Interactive/informational signs.
- Good barrier between trail and highway (trees?).
- ADA compliant.

### **Any other questions/concerns?**

- Name of trail? Suggest “Chemung Canal Trail”.
- Fishing/camping access to trail.
- Funding?
- Is there a committee for Lackawanna Trail? Because there is one for the CVT.

I have attached a summary of the public comments from the July 9, 2023 public field walk for the CVT to LRT connection study.

Overall, the comments I received were generally in favor of our planned alternatives. The biggest comments I got were from Andy Avery.

1. It would be best to stay out of the I-86 property south of the interstate.
2. Chemung County could potentially use eminent domain to purchase the old factory owned by Dan Tramm. There has been almost no activity at the property in many years, and it's a potential environmental liability for Chemung County
3. The short isolated section of the Chemung Canal located south of South Main that is owned by the railroad (Pennsylvania Lines LLC) could be purchased using friendly eminent domain process.
4. The unsafe crossing of South Main Street could be mitigated by using a roundabout in that intersection.
5. If the trail were to travel on the east side of Newtown Creek to E Franklin St, a wider bridge with pedestrian and bike access would be needed. The Village of Horseheads owns a large parcel of land on E. Franklin that they are going to convert into a public park. The connection of the trail and public park to Hanover Square would be helpful to get grant funding for the bridge replacement. The existing bridge doesn't have any shoulders and is not safe for pedestrians to cross.

The Horseheads Historical Society told me that when they renovated Hanover Square an element of the project was to connect the CVT to Hanover Square. The Chemung County Federation was against allowing bicycles through the wetland. There was no pushback, the portion of the project was eliminated.

Thanks,

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Project Manager  
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# Chemung Canal Trail

## Introduction

This document describes possibilities for a trail between the south end of the Catharine Valley Trail at the Domes on Huck Finn Road and the north end of the Lackawanna Trail at Eldridge Park. The working name for this trail will be “Chemung Canal Trail” because it closely follows the routing of the former Chemung Canal.

## Overview

There are two well-established trails in Chemung County. The northern one, The Catharine Valley Trail (CVT) starts at Watkins Glen in Schuyler County and ends at Huck Finn Road. It is a state park along some of its length. The southern one, the Lackawanna Trail (LT), starts at Lowman and ends slightly east of Eldridge Park. Since one long trail is better than two separated trails, talks have been going on for years about how to connect the two.

The CVT is built on an abandoned railroad bed. Originally the Chemung Railroad, it went through a variety of ownerships, from the Erie to the Pennsylvania, from 6' gauge to standard gauge. The last train to operate on these tracks was 1/2/1956 (effective 1/3). They remained idle until Elmira attorney Ed Hoffman purchased them in 1997. The Norfolk Southern (NS) Railway operates a portion of this line as the Horseheads Industrial Park branch from a point 1388' north of Wygant Road to the NS Southern Tier line, a total of 3.11 miles. There are another 575' of connected but unused rails to the north, and the railroad retains ownership to 42.2 degrees N, slightly north of Donovan Road.

The CVT reportedly uses the Chemung Canal towpath in places, although exactly where is unclear. The canal operated from 1833 through 1878, and the Chemung Railroad from 1850 to 1956, so for at least 28 years the two rights-of-way coexisted.

The LT is also built on an abandoned railroad bed, the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western (DL&W) railroad. A portion between Third Street and Water Street was rerouted east to go under highway bridges because the Church Street bridge was demolished. This part of the DL&W was abandoned in 1958 prior to its merger with the Erie in 1960 via trackage rights with the Erie. In places, particularly west of Corning, the DL&W had the better routing, and so the merged Erie-Lackawanna used the DL&W and abandoned the Erie tracks.

The LT makes its way alongside DL&W tracks into Eldridge Park, then mid-way through the park cuts over past Grand Central Avenue to Lake Street along a de-novo right-of-way. Mid-way

along that trail it crosses the Chemung Canal, still watered (!) and the Lehigh Valley (LV) Railroad Elmira & Corning branch.

## Connections

Now we get to the meat of the discussion: how to connect the two? There are several scenarios and sub-scenarios.

### Scenario 0

This is the current state of affairs for travel along the corridor under discussion.

Grand Central Avenue or Lake Street are reasonable routes to the center of Horseheads. There is no special provision for pedestrian or bicycle riders. Mixed residential / light commercial. Hanover Square at the center of Horseheads is problematic. Traffic enters the square from nominally five, really six directions, all but South Main Street controlled with a stop sign. There is no crosswalk on West Franklin Street.

North Main Street out of Horseheads also has no special provision. There is a sidewalk up to the southern (closed) entrance to the Holding Point on the west side. Shoulders are not separated with a fog line until north of the tracks, but are nonetheless wide enough.

There is no access permitted to the Holding Point, so travel must continue on to Watkins Road. It is signed 30mph with half-width shoulders but no sidewalks up to NY-14, also called Watkins Road. Still no sidewalks, still half-width shoulders. The speed changes to 55mph until Huck Finn Road and the CVT trailhead.

### Scenario 1

This scenario is the same routing as Scenario 0, but with signage showing the route of the Chemung Canal Trail, and painted crossings / diamond signs as needed (they already exist at the northern end of the LT).

### Scenario 2

This scenario tries to be off-road as much as possible. No asphalt paving is considered. The possibility depends on the section, thus we will split this into sub-scenarios, one for each section. We will proceed south to north.

#### Scenario 2.1

The north end of the LT connects to the Lehigh Valley Railroad's bed next to Chemung Canal prism, or what's left of either. The bed is rideable up to East McCanns Boulevard, although it's grass and there are some gopher hole impediments. Improvements needed are: strip off the turf

and topsoil, and lay landscape fabric and crushed rock. And signage identifying the trail as “The towpath of the Chemung Canal and railbed of the Lehigh Valley Railroad”

## Scenario 2.2

From East McCanns Boulevard to NY-17, the towpath / railbed is owned by Chemung County. It's also completely overgrown and a priori occupied by abutting landowners, e.g. cars at 3191 South Main Street near Latta Brook Road, or a garage at 153 Fairview Road. Most egregious is 3027 Camden Ave, where half the house is built on county property.

Thus, the first improvement needs to be to survey the property, so that property owners can be properly informed of the county property. No doubt there will be some grumpy people who will try to shout down the creation of a trail. Literally NIMBYs (Not In My Back Yard). A full list of abutters can be made only after a survey.

The deeds will likely give the width of the railbed as being 66'. This is the standard width of four surveyor's rods. The property lines on the tax map viewer at <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=7900479f2de747d981e01b362f5ba3da> show a consistent width except at the corner of Ohanlon Ave and Baker Ave where Conwell Oil Corporation's tax map lines are drawn as if they own half the right-of-way.

The northern-most 730' of this section is only 25 feet wide on the tax map. This seems narrow, but it will be resolved by a survey. Still, 25' is plenty wide enough for a trail.

As this section is entirely owned by the county, no easements are needed.

## Scenario 2.3

The county property of Scenario 2.2 connects to Fairport Lane and a sidewalk. This goes 530' east to a protected 235' crosswalk under NY-17 / I-86. It connects to an existing winding trail that goes from South Main Street past South Street to Center Street. The former Lehigh Valley railbed, owned by Dan Tramm, might be usable since he seems to have made little to no use of that parcel. If he isn't, then the trail can proceed on South Street up to South Main Street.

If Mr. Tramm is amenable to an easement, his property connects on the north side to a Village of Horseheads parcel. The next parcel is owned by the railroad (Pennsylvania Lines LLC) up to the crossing at South Main Street.

## Scenario 2.4

We're now at South Main Street in Horseheads. The Lehigh Valley railbed is owned by only two people: Cheryl Geinitz up to Mill Street, and by Susan Alexander from Mill Street to East Franklin Street.

If they are amenable to an easement, then we're now at East Franklin Street, just 350' from Hanover Square. If not, then the trail must be routed north on South Main Street, again to Hanover Square.

## Scenario 2.5

We're now in Hanover Square, the center of Horseheads. The only plausible routing here is up North Main Street for 1800' to the railroad crossing. Perhaps we can convince the current owners of the Holding Point (Horseheads Real Property LLC) to let us route the trail on the western-most edge of their property, where there is an existing lightly used road.

Or perhaps we can convince NYSEG to allow us to use their 6,830' right-of-way, which is the former Elmira and Seneca Lake (E&SL) Railway, the trolley from Elmira to Watkins Glen. This extends all the way up to Wygant Road but unfortunately, while at one point a trolley ran on it, the level of the water seems to have risen to drown the trolley bed.

A worse (longer and more congested) option is to run from Hanover Square out Old Ithaca Road to Ridge Road, then west on Wygant Road. It's more than twice the distance at 13,687'.

The worst option is the Scenario 0 option, which is to route the trail on NY-14, a 55MPH road with no sidewalks. It's 8,840'.

## Scenario 2.6

We've gotten to Wygant Road, by hook and by crook. Scenario 0 is always available to us, routing on NY-14, but again, a 55MPH road for 9,040 feet. There are two other possibilities: The Pennsylvania Railroad bed, and the Elmira and Seneca Lake Railway. They ran side by side the entire length of this section. We will consider them separately.

### Scenario 2.6.1

The Pennsylvania Railroad bed has NS tracks on it, as mentioned earlier. The southern 1388' is active rail, used for switching into the Holding Point. The Holding Point used to be switched from the southern end by the LV, but that has no connection to the NS. There is sufficient room on the eastern side of the tracks for a trail where there are active tracks, and in the center where the rails have been removed.

Ownership to the Town of Veteran line (approximately, exactly latitude 42.200N) is by NS's holding company, Pennsylvania Lines LLC. North of there it is publicly owned. The railroad right of way seems to neck down to 16' wide, at least on the tax map. A survey is needed. There is sufficient room for a trail off the shoulder of the highway.

## Scenario 2.6.2

The E&SL trolley line is in better shape here than in Scenario 2.5, but ownership is a multiplicity. At Wygant Road, the bed is owned by the Holding Point company (Horseheads Real Property LLC), because it's used by NS to switch into the Holding Point. The Chemung County Federation of Sportsmen owns the Chemung Canal, and the trolley bed is sandwiched between that and the NS tracks. Unclear who owns the trolley bed (there is no separate parcel for it). The next parcel north is also the Sportsmen's. Towards the north end, the trolley bed clearly separates from the NS railbed and crosses the Chemung Canal on a now-missing bridge with decaying abutments.

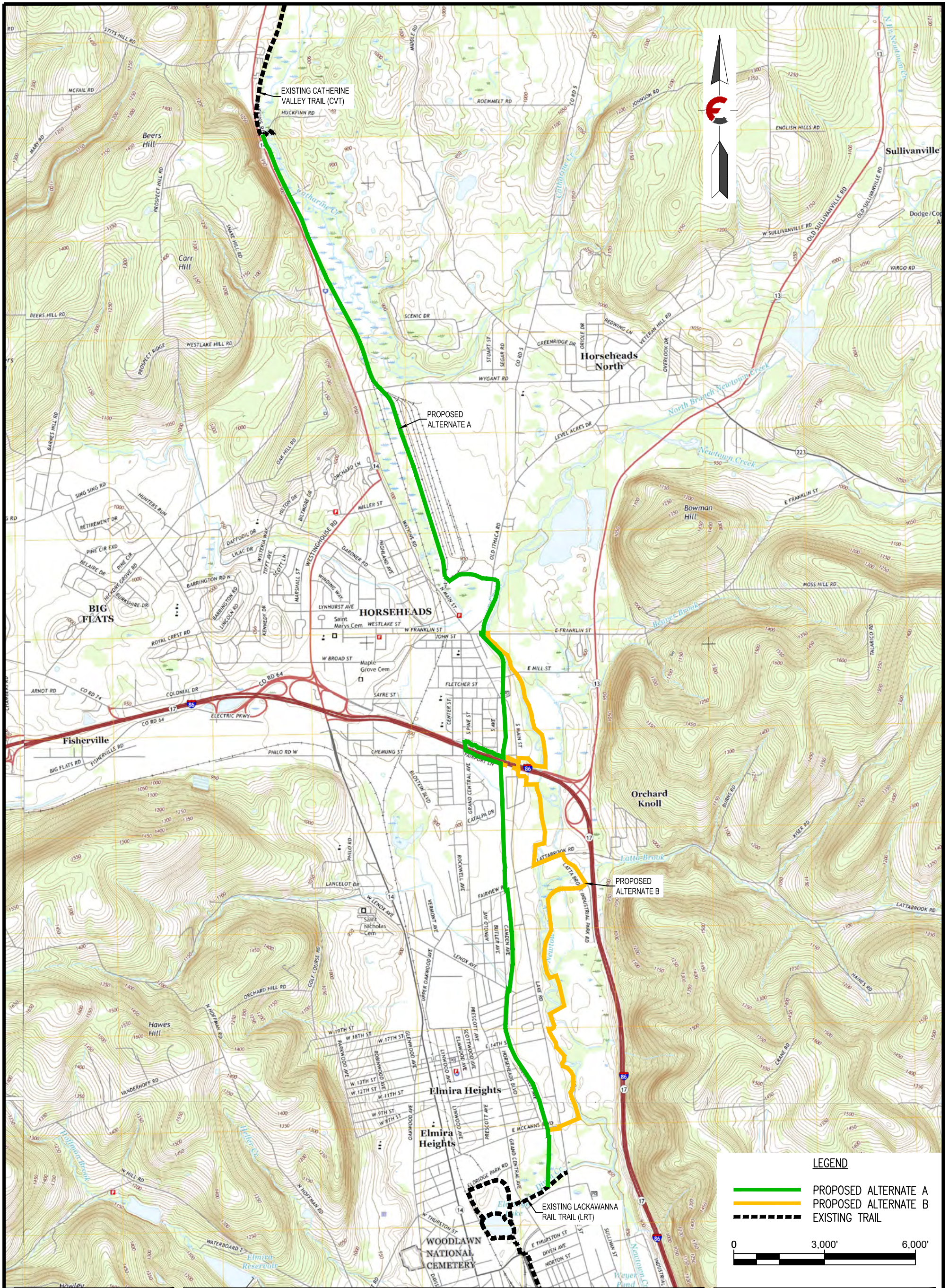
Then you have a section owned by Daniel Bury, who owns an adjacent property to the north, neither of which show any trace of development.

Three parcels are owned by Douglas Snedecor which are cut off by the NS property from matching parcels that have an apartment building on each one.

At the same latitude (42.200N) where the NS property stops, is a parcel that continues north past Huck Finn Road, owned by Victory 415 LLC, but which the tax map tags as "CURRENT\_OWNER" is New York State Electric and Gas Corporation (NYSEG), and further tagged as "PARCEL\_LOCATION" is "Old Chemung Canal".

The advantage of this over Scenario 2.6.1 is greater separation from the highway. The disadvantage is a total of five property owners from whom to seek an easement versus only one for 2.6.1 (NS and the state DOT who are presumably on our side).

**APPENDIX B**  
**PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING DOCUMENTS**



**LEGEND**

- PROPOSED ALTERNATE A
- PROPOSED ALTERNATE B
- EXISTING TRAIL

0                      3,000'                      6,000'

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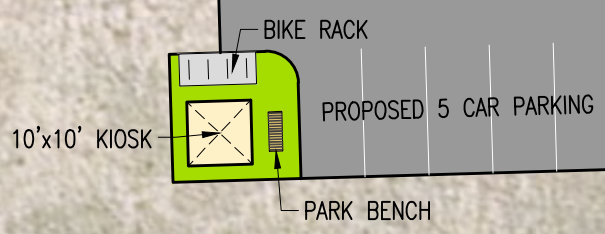
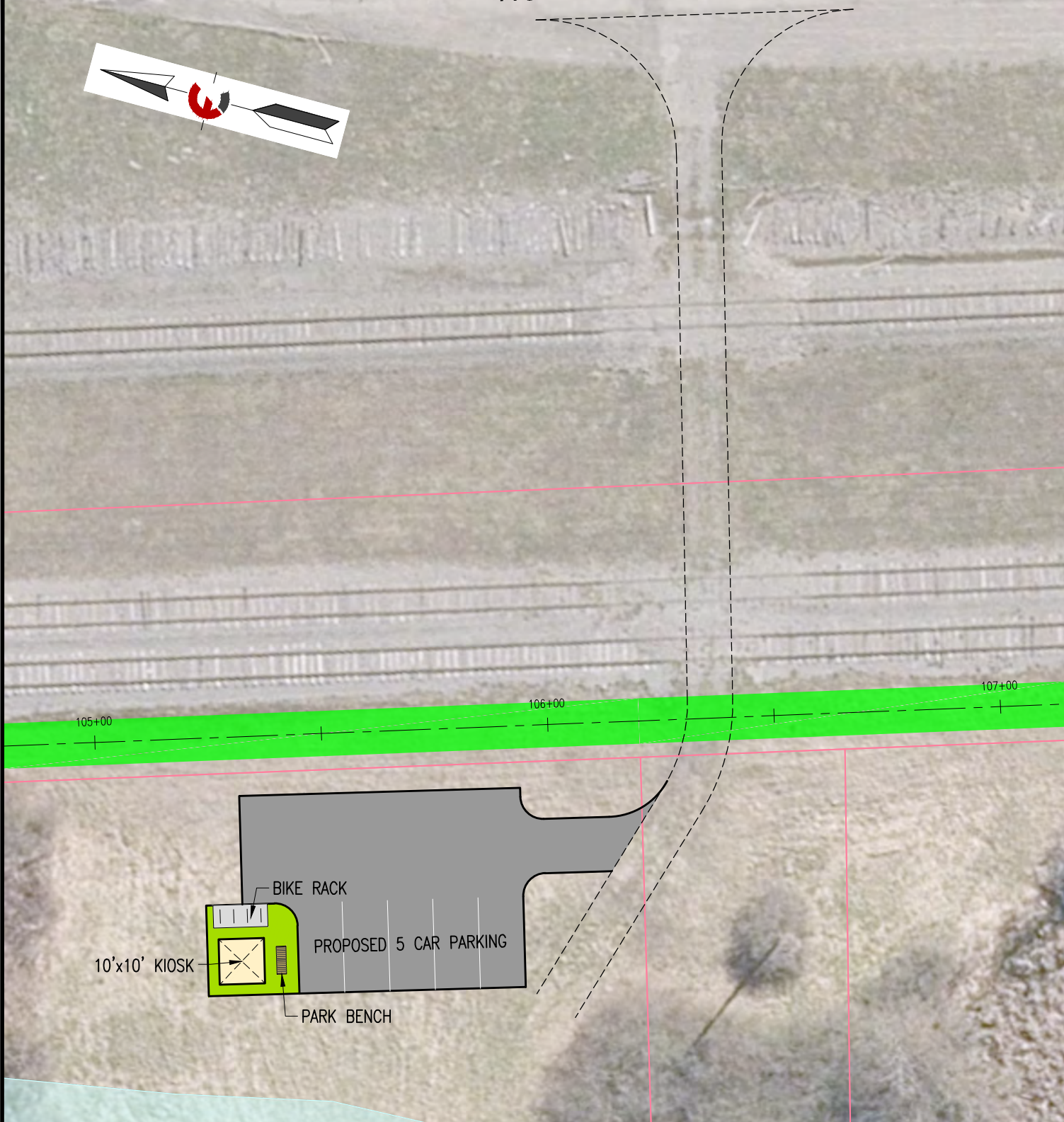
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Phone (607) 734-2165  
Fax (607) 734-2169  
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# CHEMUNG CANAL CONNECTOR TRAIL LOCATION MAP

**CHEMUNG COUNTY, NEW YORK**

Scale:	1" = 3,000'
Date:	DECEMBER 21, 2022
Design By:	IAP, CEL
Drawn By:	IAP, CEL
Checked By:	JBG
Project No.:	2023.001
Drawing Name:	2023-001_basemapping.dwg

HOLDING POINT STREET

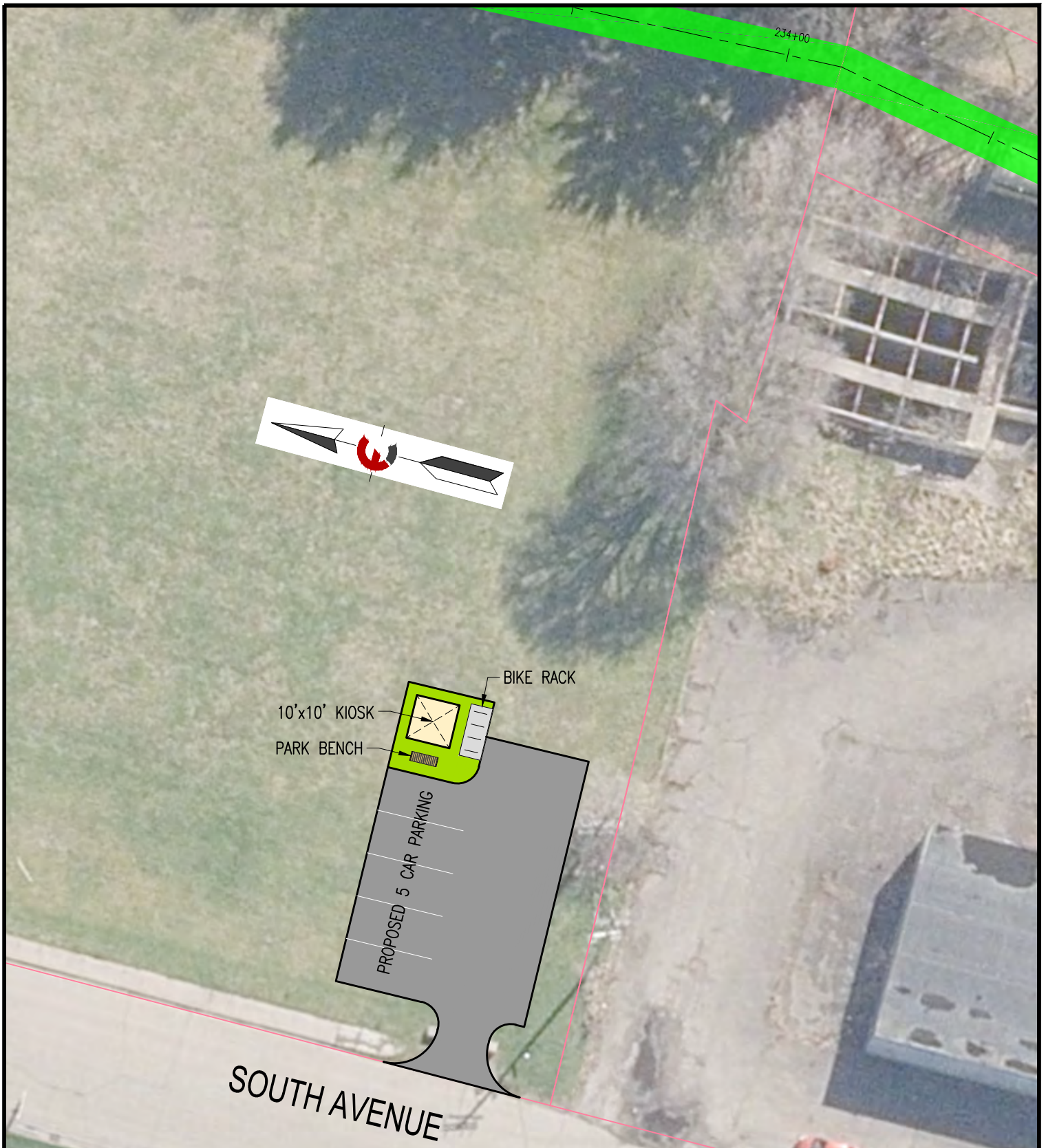


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# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY TRAIL HEAD PARKING STA. 106+00

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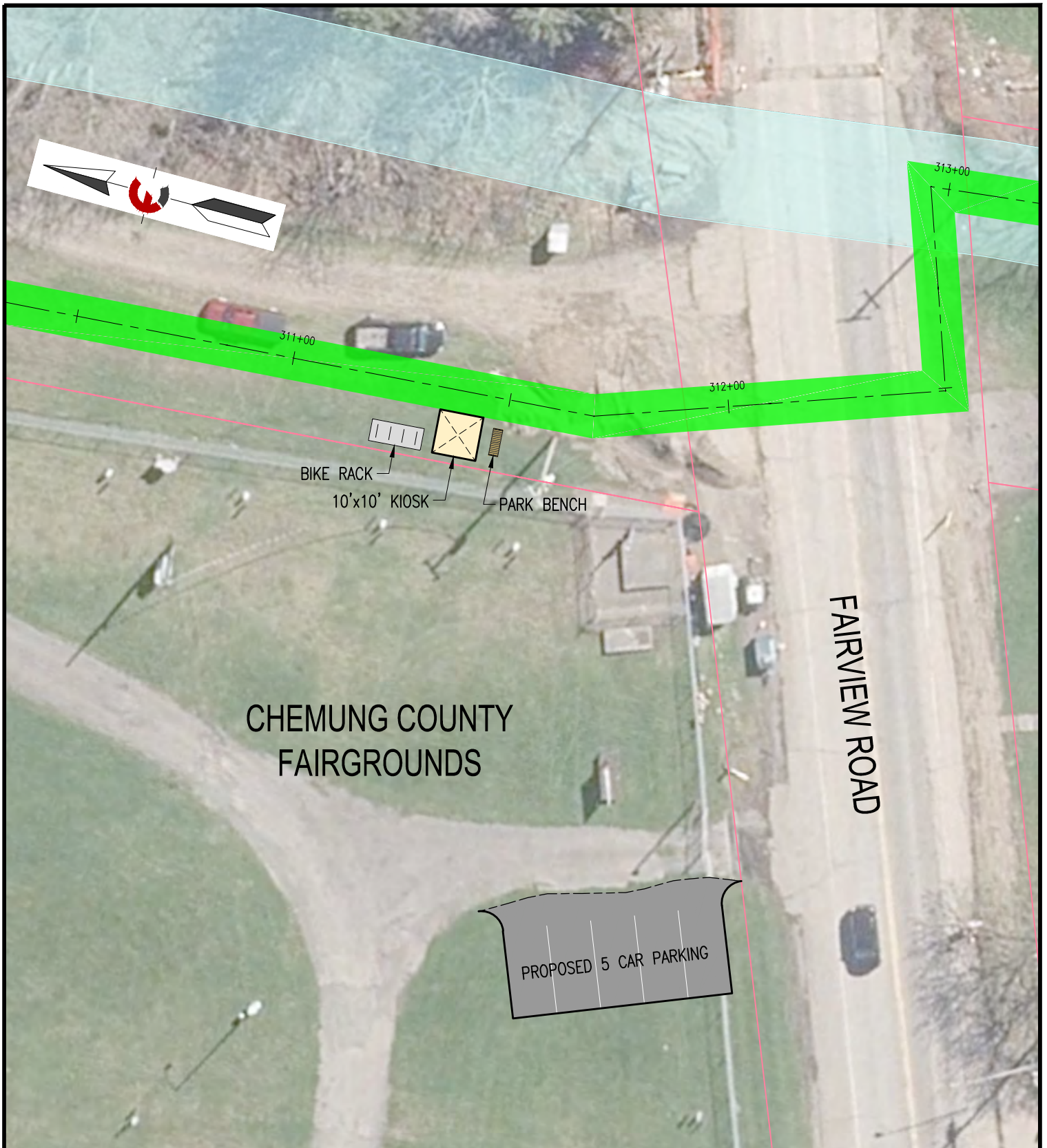


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# CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY TRAIL HEAD PARKING STA. 234+00

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CHEMUNG COUNTY  
FAIRGROUNDS

FAIRVIEW ROAD

PROPOSED 5 CAR PARKING

BIKE RACK  
10'x10' KIOSK  
PARK BENCH

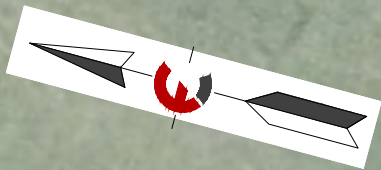
**CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY  
TRAIL HEAD PARKING STA. 312+00**

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VENDING COMPANY



CAMDEN AVENUE

LENOX AVENUE

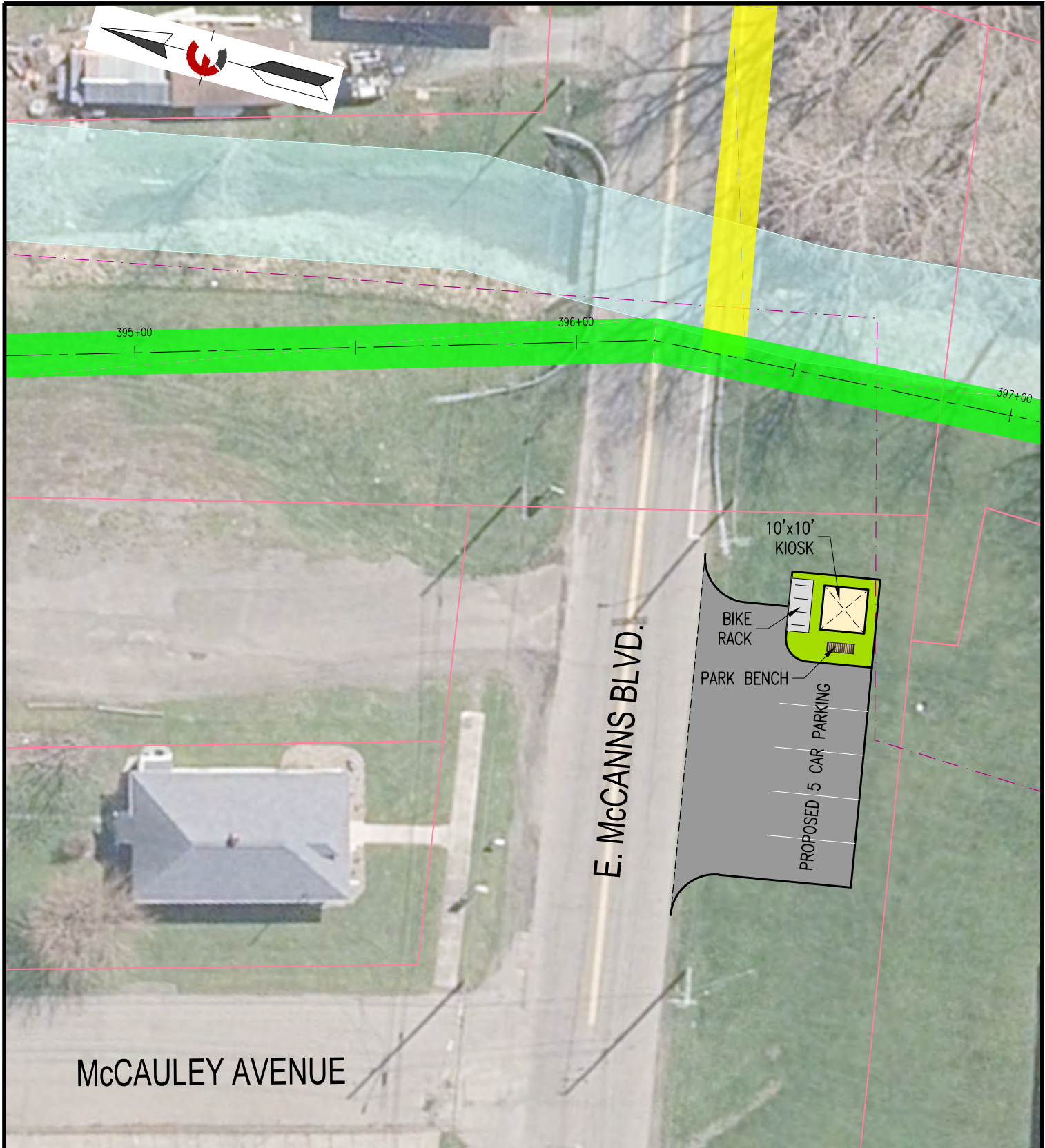
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**TRAIL HEAD PARKING STA. 346+00**

**CHEMUNG COUNTY, NEW YORK**



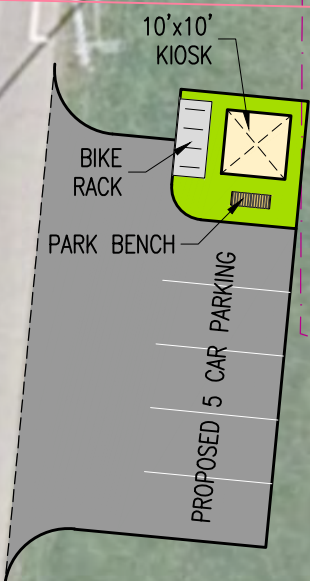
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McCAULEY AVENUE

E. McCANN'S BLVD.



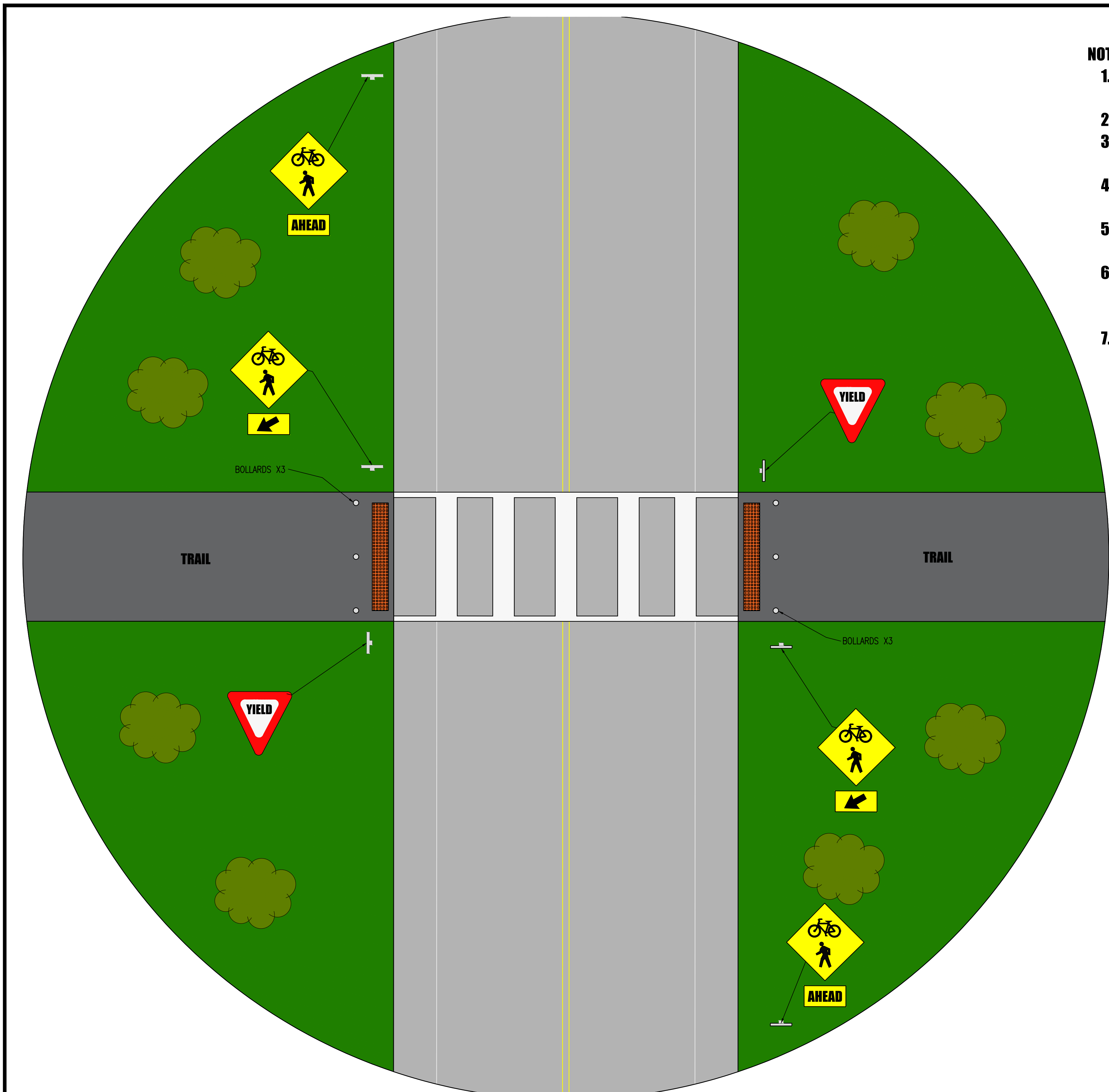
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**CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY**  
**TRAIL HEAD PARKING STA. 396+00**

**CHEMUNG COUNTY, NEW YORK**

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Project No.:	2023.001
Drawing Name:	2023-001_basemapping.dwg



**NOTES:**

1. **TRAILS THAT INTERSECT ROADWAYS SHOULD ALWAYS HAVE APPROPRIATE SIGNED CROSSWALKS.**
2. **CROSSWALKS SHOULD HAVE BRIGHT LINES SHOWING THE WALKWAY.**
3. **CROSSWALKS SHOULD HAVE 1 SIGN STATING TO TRAFFIC CROSSWALK "AHEAD", AND 1 SIGN AT THE CROSSWALK ITSELF BOTH DIRECTIONS.**
4. **BOLLARDS SHOULD BE USED TO DETER/PREVENT TRAFFIC FROM ENTERING TRAIL.**
5. **YIELD SIGNS SHOULD BE USED FOR THOSE ON THE TRAIL, STATING THEY MUST YIELD TO TRAFFIC.**
6. **TRUNCATED DOMES MATS SHOULD BE USED IF THERE IS AN ELEVATION CHANGE BETWEEN THE TRAIL AND THE ROADWAY THAT MAY LEAD TO SLIPPERY WALKING SURFACE.**
7. **TREES/SHRUBBERY SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM THE WALKWAY AREA ENOUGH THAT IT DOES NOT IMPEDE VISUAL OBSTRUCTION BETWEEN VEHICLE DRIVERS AND THOSE WHO ARE USING THE TRAIL.**

Rev. No.	Date	Description
1.		

It is a Violation Of The New York Education Law, Article 145 Section 7209, For Any Person, Unless He Is Acting Under The Direction Of A Licensed Professional Engineer Or Land Surveyor To Alter An Item In Any Way, If An Item Bearing The Seal Of An Engineer Or Land Surveyor Is Altered, The Altering Engineer Or Land Surveyor Shall Affix To The Item His Seal And The Notation "Altered By" Followed By His Signature And The Date Of Such Alteration, And A Specific Description Of The Alteration.

SEAL

**CVT TO LRT TRAIL CONNECTION STUDY**  
CHEMUNG COUNTY, NEW YORK

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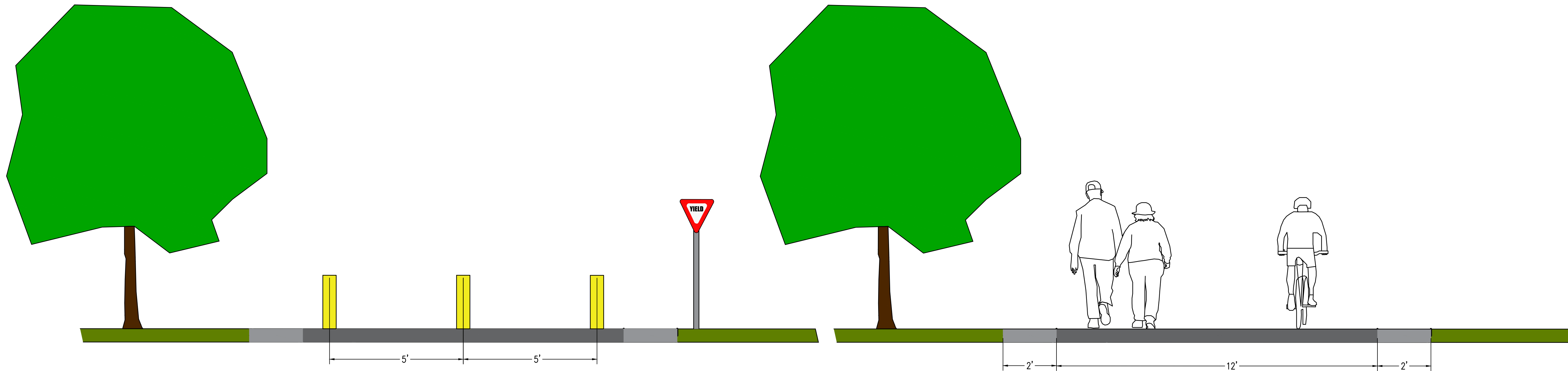
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Checked By:	-
Project No.:	2023.001
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**Note:**  
Utility information has been plotted from available sources and their locations and size should be considered approximate only. The contractor is responsible for determining exact utility locations, sizes, and elevations prior to commencing construction. If uncharted or misplotted utilities are encountered, the contractor is required to notify the owner immediately.

New York State law requires excavators to contact the one-call notification system prior to digging to prevent damage to buried facilities.  
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**DETAILS-1**  
**C9**

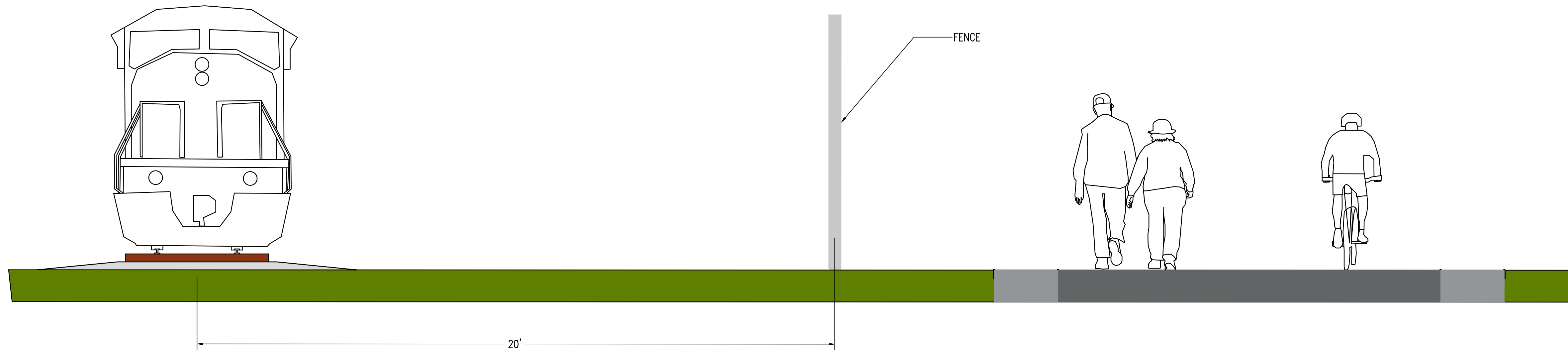


**NOTES:**

1. **BOLLARDS SHOULD BE EQUALLY SPACED (5' MIN) ALONG TRAILS THAT CROSS VEHICLE TRAFFIC LANES**
2. **BOLLARDS NEED TO BE REMOVABLE/FOLDABLE IF EMERGENCY ACCESS IS NEEDED TO TRAIL.**
3. **KNOCKED DOWN OR DAMAGED BOLLARDS SHOULD BE FIXED/REPLACED IMMEDIATELY FOR SAFETY.**

**NOTES:**

1. **HEAVY TO MODERATE USE TRAILS TO BE 10-12 FT WIDE WITH 2+ FT SHOULDERS.**
2. **2+ FT SHOULDERS SHOULD BE FREE OF OBSTACLES**



**NOTES:**

1. **SHARED CORRIDORS WITH SEGMENTS OF THE TRAILS SHOULD ABIDE BY ANY EXISTING SETBACKS.**
2. **FENCES ARE OPTIONAL BUT SHOULD BE USED IN AREAS THAT MAY BE DEEMED UNSAFE.**
3. **FENCES TYP HAVE 20' SETBACK FROM THE CENTER LINE OF THE TRACK, BUT MAY CHANGE DEPENDING ON EXISTING SETBACKS**
4. **IF REQUIRED, FENCING SHOULD HAVE A 5 FT MIN HEIGHT BUT USE HIGHER FENCES IN MORE SENSITIVE AREAS LIKE SWITCHING YARDS.**



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CHEMUNG COUNTY, NEW YORK

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**DETAILS-2**  
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