



## Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

**ANDREW M. CUOMO**  
Governor

**ROSE HARVEY**  
Commissioner

**MARK W. THOMAS**  
Director

November 9, 2016

Town of Grand Island  
2255 Baseline Rd.  
Grand Island, NY 14072

Dear Supervisor McMurray and Grand Island Town Board Members:

On behalf of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (State Parks), I present our revised plan for the Grand Island Connector Trail Project along the West River corridor. As you well know, there has been much discussion around this project and we thank you as well as the citizens of Grand Island for such an engaged conversation.

This letter includes the following updates: a) Overview of planning steps completed to date; b) Review of a fourth option proposed by several Board members; c) Revisions to the project design (Preferred Alternative – Option 3) to incorporate and respond to input from the Board and interested citizens; and d) Identification of next steps.

### **Overview of Planning Steps Completed To Date**

Prior to considering designs, State Parks established specific objectives to evaluate a range of alternatives for designing a bicycle and pedestrian trail at the West River Parkway. As a reminder, here are the objectives that were developed and provided to the public for this project:

- 1) Provide an alternative transportation connection between the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls that will be safer for non-motorized vehicles
- 2) Provide a critical missing link in the Niagara River Greenway Trail system
- 3) Enhance connectivity and improve pedestrian & bicycle safety
- 4) Improve air quality
- 5) Promote health through physical activity
- 6) Construct the entire connector trail

While not included in the formal list of objectives, another key factor is the project must stay within the \$2.5 million available funding, most of which is a federal grant.

By state law, projects of this nature only require State Parks to hold one public meeting. To recap the process employed to date by State Parks on this project is as follows:

- A public open house was held at Town Hall on **October 6, 2015** to introduce the West River Trail concept and solicit input from residents for ideas that could be incorporated into a multi-use path.
- Following that, on **November 10, 2015**, Parks met with various stakeholders including leadership from the West River Homeowners Association, the Grand Island Recreation & Conservation Boards, Buffalo Riverkeeper, Go Bike Buffalo, and the Niagara River Greenway Commission.
- After conducting detailed planning and considering a variety of possible designs in accordance with the stated objectives, on **July 20, 2016** State Parks presented our preferred alternative for this project during a public meeting at the high school. That alternative called for the repurposing of the current West River Parkway (Option 3), closing the parkway to vehicle traffic and converting it into a landscaped bicycle and pedestrian trail.

#### **Review of Option 4 Proposed by Several Board Members**

Following Parks' July presentation of the preferred alternative, a great deal of input was generated including a fourth option proposed by members of the Grand Island Town Board. State Parks has carefully reviewed this option through the lens of the stated objectives. While the agency appreciates the intent behind the proposal, we have concluded that Option 4 is not a feasible project alternative. Specifically, here are the findings of our work related to Option 4:

##### **Safety:**

- Option 4 would require frequent crossing of vehicular traffic intersections (total of nine crossings), increasing the potential for vehicular/cyclist/pedestrian collisions.
- Option 4 would require pedestrians and bicyclists to cross the 55 mph parkway on the north end of the trail (north of Long Road) and again on the south end of the trail. Crossing a 55 mph roadway is a very undesirable condition.
- This option is in close proximity to vehicular traffic on West River Road. Following the terrible tragedy at Delaware Park last year, it is highly probable that the installation of guiderails would be required in certain locations as a preventative measure. Installation of guiderails or similar physical barriers would run counter to the public's stated goal of avoiding access barriers to the trail and shoreline as well as raise the cost.
- Trail users would be closer to homes on West River Road.
- Path would only be 10' wide, which could cause congestion when being used by various stakeholders.

### **Affordability:**

- Option 4 requires the construction of 8 miles of new, 10' wide paved trail. In addition to the hard costs of building the trail, an archaeological study would be required. Our estimates for a total project cost came in at \$3.3 million, approximately \$800,000 higher than Option 3. This significantly exceeds the project budget.
- Building a 3<sup>rd</sup> ribbon of pavement will increase the need for additional maintenance dollars well into the future.

### **Environmental:**

- The environmental impact of adding a 3<sup>rd</sup> ribbon of pavement through this area would create more storm water runoff, a more impervious surface.
- This option would require more tree removal
- Installation of asphalt has a significant energy and carbon footprint and should not be used when other options exist.
- Would require a significant amount of ground disturbance with a potential to impact cultural resources.

### **Traffic Impacts:**

- Would not significantly affect traffic on either the Parkway or West River Road.

### **Access:**

- Drivers could continue to enjoy the water while driving on a 55 mile per hour road.
- Pedestrians would still have to cross a 55 mph roadway to access the water's edge or park at overlooks and view the water.
- Would likely require installation of guiderails in various locations, creating visual and physical barrier to the water's edge.

### **Accommodating Other Uses:**

- The linear corridor between the parkway and West River Road has historically been utilized by snowmobiles and horses. If the trail were installed in this location, there is a high probability that snowmobiles and horses will continue to use the new trail, accelerating the deterioration and increasing the maintenance cost of the trail over its lifetime.

### **Maintenance:**

- Maintenance costs on West River Road will continue as normal
- Trail maintenance funding would also have to be allocated for
- Allocating state resources to maintain the low volume Parkway and a new trail is increasingly more difficult to justify.
- As the Parkway will remain a road, it will continue to be maintained by the State Department of Transportation.

### **Parking Lots**

- Not addressed in Option 4.

For the reasons above, State Parks has respectfully concluded that Option 4 is not a feasible or preferred alternative.

### **Revisions and Justifications to the Project Design (Preferred Alternative – Option 3) to Incorporate and Respond to Input from the Board and Interested Citizens**

Over the past four months, select members of the board and interested citizens have voiced a number of questions and issues regarding Option 3. State Parks has carefully reviewed **all** input and has made a number of modifications to the project, resulting in an improved trail design. Specifically, Parks has addressed the following concerns:

**Safety:** As confirmed through the traffic counts provided, Option 3 provides the safest of all options considered for the following reasons:

- It requires the fewest number of vehicular traffic crossings (total of 3).
- It completely eliminates 55 mph traffic from the west side of Grand Island and state parklands.
- It provides the greatest separation between vehicular traffic and pedestrian/bicycle use, while avoiding the need to install extensive guiderails that would create a visual and physical barrier between West River Road and the river.
- The existing parkway is much wider (24') than the proposed newly-constructed trail would be (10') allowing for greater separation of users higher-speed cyclists and slower trail users.
- State Parks is open to discussing with Grand Island officials traffic calming measures on West River Road as part of the project if so desired.
- Keeps trail users further from homes.
- Removes pedestrians/cyclists from West River Road and puts them on the path – further from residences (improved privacy) and closer to natural surroundings (improved parkland experience).

### **Affordability:**

- Is the most economical of the solutions (\$2.5 million) considered as it requires the least amount of new construction, and is the only alternative that can be completed within available funding.
- Allows for the resurfacing of the parkway/trail to improve its condition.
- Creates no increase in maintenance over the existing parkway and in fact there will be a decrease in maintenance costs due to the lower impact of pedestrian/bicycle traffic on pavement.



**Environmental:**

- Reuse of an existing low use asset has the least environmental impact.
- Fewest trees removed will result in the lowest habitat impact
- Minimal impact to stormwater runoff.
- Reuse will result in minimal demand for new materials, will use the lowest energy and leave a smaller carbon footprint.

**Traffic Impact:**

- Concerns have been raised that closure of the parkway would result in the transfer of the current traffic onto the residential West River Road, making that road less safe for residents. In response, State Parks analyzed vehicle traffic counts at several locations for West River Road and the West River Parkway. Specifically, current traffic counts were collected by C&S Engineers (West River Parkway only) using automatic traffic recording tubes in August 2016 and by Quality Counts via video methods in September 2016. The traffic information results were compared to similar data collected by NYSDOT in 2009 and 2013. The data from all sources is consistent and within normal margins of variation related to various factors (school in-session or not, etc.).

The data indicates there has only been a marginal increase in traffic from 2009 to the present. Moreover, the data clearly illustrates that traffic on both the West River Road and the West River Parkway is very light, particularly for the 55 mph Parkway. Traffic during peak periods averages 130 vehicles/hour on the parkway north of Staley, and only 50 vehicles/hour south of Staley. For context, according to the Transportation Research Board's Highway Capacity Manual, this level of current parkway vehicle traffic is well under 10% of the design capacity for this type of roadway.

Similarly, traffic on the West River Road is very low. Even if 100% of vehicles that currently utilize the Parkway traffic were to shift to the West River Road, that road would still be operating at roughly 10% of design capacity. We know through the observation of historic behavior during the seasonal closure of the Parkway that this scenario is highly unlikely to occur in any event.

And to emphasize, the numbers above reflect peak traffic periods, typically associated with morning and afternoon drive times. During the remainder of each day, vehicle traffic on the West River Parkway and West River Road is very low, often averaging only 2-3 cars per minute per peak period. During the rest of the day it is less than one car per minute.

In summary, the traffic counts support the premise that closing the Parkway to vehicle traffic and transforming it into a trail will not cause safety concerns on West River Road. The summary traffic data and raw traffic data counts are attached to this letter and State Parks is happy to respond to questions the Board may have on this information.

- The parkway has long been a seasonal use road that is not plowed in the winter. As a result, the local transportation network already absorbs displaced traffic during winter closures without significant negative impact. In fact, much of this traffic does not opt to use the West River Road, but rather chooses alternative routes like Staley Road to get to high traffic demand employer sites. This was noted by residents on Staley who have noticed increased traffic during winter months. There is no known record of increased traffic complaints along West River Road during parkway closure periods.

#### Access:

- The West River Parkway and corridor **is public parkland**. Parks are intended to provide access to residents and visitors for recreational, scenic, and natural exploration activities.
- The elimination of a 55 mph roadway and the creation of an 8-mile long pedestrian/bicycle path with places to sit and contemplate will facilitate greater enjoyment of this beautiful, shared asset.
- Offers the greatest access to all stakeholders/users of the park system including elderly and the physically challenged.

#### Accommodating Other Uses:

- State Parks has met with representatives of the hunting community, assuring them there will be no reduction in hunting and no change to existing access to duck blinds. State Parks will continue to work closely with hunters to ensure appropriate access to the duck blinds.
- Grassy median still available for snowmobile and other use.

#### Maintenance

- As the trail will no longer be a roadway, Parks will assume responsibility for maintenance from the Department of Transportation. Details will be addressed concurrent with final design of the project. Parks is committed to implementing a comprehensive maintenance plan to maintain the quality of the trail surface and adjacent landscaping.
- State will no longer have costs associated with maintaining a low volume roadway.

#### Parking Lots:

Initially, Option 3 included the construction of a number of small parking areas. Residents expressed concern that this would negatively impact their views and potentially create conflicts between homeowners and trail users. **In response, State Park has removed creation of any new parking lots from the project design.** Members of the public driving to access the new trail will park at other locations, including existing pull-offs and parking lots at Big Six Marina, the town's Nike Base as well as Buckhorn and Beaver Island State Parks.

Through the duration of the public discourse, additional issues were raised that we would like to address.

**Development of Parkland:** Parks has no intention to make the West River corridor available for development that is not consistent with our stated objectives for the trail. There are no plans to develop significant park amenities on this parkland beyond the trail and associated improvements (overlooks, etc.).

**A Shared Roadway:** Members of the public suggested keeping the parkway open to vehicles during the week, but operating the parkway as bicycle and pedestrian only on weekends. Parks reviewed this concept but determined it is not feasible, because it would require installation of extensive structures, bollards, striping, and signage to manage both uses. Moreover, the parkway would maintain the physical and aesthetic character of a high-speed road, greatly diminishing the experience of weekend trail users. Additionally, Parks anticipates significant weekday use of the trail, particularly during the summer when children are out of school. The potential that drivers would fail to understand weekend closures would create an unacceptable risk of vehicle collisions for trail users.

**Impact on Property Values:** The National Association of Realtors addresses this topic on their web page, [www.realtor.org](http://www.realtor.org), in an article posted entitled *Measuring Trails Benefits*. The article (attached) indicates that “trails, like good schools or low crime, create an amenity that commands a higher price for nearby homes.” <http://headwaterseconomics.org/wphw/wp-content/uploads/trails-library-property-value-overview.pdf>

### **Identification of Next Steps**

State Parks has concluded our design review and will begin developing detailed construction plans and specifications for Option 3, including the modifications outlined above. The project will be bid through the agency’s normal competitive procurement process. We anticipate construction will begin in the Fall of 2017 with the goal of opening the new West River Trail to the public in Summer of 2018.

We truly appreciate the Board’s thoughtful consideration of this project, and we will continue to communicate closely with the Board and provide updates to the public as the project advances.

Sincerely,



Mark W. Thomas, Director  
Western District, New York State Parks





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# Memorandum

## West River Greenway Connector Trail

Date: October 5, 2016  
 From: Kimberly M. Fabend, P.E., PTOE  
 To: Mark Mistretta, RLA, ASLA  
 RE: Traffic count data summary

Traffic data was recently collected along West River Road and West River Parkway on Grand Island in order to document the current peak hour and daily volumes on these roadways. Traffic data was collected by C&S Engineers, Inc. in August 2016 and by Quality Counts in September 2016. A summary of the efforts is provided below and a graphic showing approximate count locations is attached as Exhibit A:

- 24-hour counts were collected via automatic traffic recorder (ATR) tubes from Monday, August 22 through Friday August, 26, 2016 on West River Parkway at 3 locations by C&S Engineers, Inc. (schools were not in session)
- 24-hour counts were collected via video from Tuesday, September 20 through Saturday, September 24, 2016 on both West River Parkway and West River Road in 2 locations each by Quality Counts – a data collection specialty firm. This data includes a count of bicycle activity. (schools were in session)

For reference, according to the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual, the ideal capacity of a travel lane is 1,700 passenger cars per lane per hour or 3,200 passenger cars for two lanes per hour. While these are ideal conditions, it provides a reference when considering the volumes noted on West River Road and West River Parkway. The 2016 data is summarized below but detailed information is attached as Exhibit B (see Exhibit A for approximate count locations):

August Count Data, Conducted by C&S Engineers, Inc.  
 Dates: Monday, August 22 - Friday, August 26  
 Summary data below includes Tuesday-Thursday  
 No school at this time

All counts on W River Parkway	Location Number	Location Description	Average Daily	Average	Average	Notes
				Daily AM	Daily PM	
				Peak Hour	Peak Hour	
	1	300 Ft south of Fix Rd	320	21	29	Peak periods not as defined - AM (8-9am) & PM (4-5pm)
	2	80 Ft south of Whitehaven Rd	1482	115	127	Peak periods consistent - AM (7-8am) & PM (5-6pm)
	3	250 Ft south of Long Rd	1543	116	136	Peak periods consistent - AM (7-8am) & PM (5-6pm)



# West River Greenway Connector Trail – Traffic Data Summary

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September Count Data, Conducted by Quality Counts

Dates: Tuesday, September 20 - Saturday, September 24

Summary data below includes Tuesday-Thursday

	Location Description	Average Daily	Average Daily AM Peak Hour	Average Daily PM Peak Hour	Average Daily Bicycles	Notes
W River Rd	W River Rd - just south of Long Rd	570	32	43	42	volumes pretty consistent throughout the day; average daily peak is 3pm; 60 bicycles counted on Wed
	W River Rd - just north of Fix Rd	273	14	26	61	volumes pretty consistent throughout the day; average daily peak is 4pm; 80 bicycles counted on Wed
W River Pkwy	W River Pkwy - just south of Long Rd	1550	129	135	0	AM (7-8am); PM (3-4pm)
	W River Pkwy - just north of Fix Rd	448	26	45	1	AM (8-9am); PM (5-6pm)

The two sets of data, collected in different months, are comparable for the northern portion of the West River Parkway, but the average daily traffic on the southern portion in August 2016 is approximately 130 vehicles lower than in September 2016.

As a comparison, data was taken from the New York State Department of Transportation's Traffic Data Viewer (<http://gis3.dot.ny.gov/html5viewer/?viewer=tdv>) which includes count data on West River Road and West River Parkway from May 2009 and 2013. This data shows the May 2013 counts on the southern portion is comparable to the counts conducted in September 2016. One possible explanation is the fact that schools were not in session during the August 2016 count but were for both the May 2013 and September 2016 counts. The NYSDOT data is summarized below and included in Exhibit B.

## May 2009 Counts (NYSDOT)

	Location Description	Average Daily	Average Daily AM Peak Hour	Average Daily PM Peak Hour	Notes
NYSDOT Station 531303	W River Rd - 0.5 miles south of Whitehaven	254	18	20	2-4pm was peak for whole day (each hour averaged 20 vehicles)
NYSDOT Station 530939	W River Pkwy - 0.3 miles south of RT I-190	1398	99	121	AM (6-7am) & PM (5-6pm)

## May 2013 Counts (NYSDOT)

	Location Description	Average Daily	Average Daily AM Peak Hour	Average Daily PM Peak Hour	Notes
NYSDOT Station 531303	W River Rd - 0.3 miles north of Staley	214	11	23	3-4pm was peak for whole day (averaged 23 vehicles)
NYSDOT Station 530939	W River Pkwy - 0.7 miles south of RT I-190	1435	99	116	AM (7-8am) & PM (4-5pm)
NYSDOT Station 530907	W River Pkwy - 0.2 miles north of Fix Rd	401	26	38	AM (8-9am) & PM (5-6pm)

The northern portion of the West River Parkway currently, and in the recent past, experiences approximately 1,500 vehicles per day with a peak period volume between 120-140 vehicles an hour. The southern portion of the parkway experiences a much lower daily volume, less than 500 vehicles per day and less than 50 vehicles during the peak hour.

Recent counts on West River Road indicate an average daily volume of approximately 570 vehicles per day and a peak hour of approximately 40 vehicles. There was also an average of approximately 40 bicycles a day, with 60 bicycles counted on the Wednesday observed. The volumes are lower on the southern portion with an average daily vehicle count of less than 300 vehicles per day and less than 30 vehicles during the peak hour. There was an average of 61 bicycles a day and a high of 80 bicycles observed on Wednesday at this location.

Since the volumes currently observed throughout a 24-hour period on West River Parkway and West River Road are less than what a typical 2-lane road can accommodate in an hour, there are expected to be no capacity issues if the volumes on these roadways are combined. An estimate of the worst-case scenario daily and peak hour combined volumes are shown in the following table. The worst-case scenario assumes that the peak hour traffic from each roadway would occur at the same hour when the data indicates they may not actually coincide. It also assumes that all traffic on West River Parkway would redistribute only to West River Road. This is a conservative assumption used for this evaluation since other north-south roadways are available with access from Interstate 190 such as Grand Island Boulevard and Baseline Road.

	<b>Average Daily</b>	<b>Average Daily AM Peak Hour</b>	<b>Average Daily PM Peak Hour</b>
W River Rd - just south of Long Rd - with volumes from W River Pkwy	2120	161	178
W River Rd - just north of Fix Rd - with volumes from W River Pkwy	721	40	71

Again, the ideal peak hour capacity of a two-lane roadway is 3,200 vehicles per hour and the estimated peak hour volume on the combined West River Road and West River Parkway would be less than 180 vehicles per hour with no redirected traffic to other island roadways. It is assumed that the closure of West River Parkway and the consolidation of vehicular traffic onto West River Road would not result in poor operations on West River Road. It is also assumed that with up to 20 bicycles observed on West River Road in an hour and an average of up to 60 bicycles a day on some portions, the opportunity to move that traffic onto an off-road trail would improve safety and eliminate conflicts with vehicles along West River Road.

# Measuring Trails Benefits: Property Value

## How are trails related to property value?

Trails can be associated with higher property value, especially when a trail is designed to provide neighborhood access and maintain residents' privacy. Trails, like good schools or low crime, create an amenity that commands a higher price for nearby homes. Trails are valued by those who live nearby as places to recreate, convenient opportunities for physical activity and improving health, and safe corridors for walking or cycling to work or school.

Price is not property owners' only concern. Legal, well-marked access eliminates problems with trail users trespassing. Research also shows that those who opposed a trail prior to construction generally find a trail to be a much better neighbor than they anticipated.

When trails increase property value, local governments receive more property tax revenue. Depending on the trail, this revenue boost can help to partially offset the trail's construction and maintenance costs.

Additional details on each of these topics, as well as other relevant research, are available at <http://headwaterseconomics.org/trail>.

## Select Research Highlights

- In San Antonio, Texas, neighborhood trails were associated with a two percent house price premium. Trails that were surrounded by greenbelts were associated with a five percent house price premium.<sup>1</sup>
- In southwestern Ohio, the Little Miami Scenic Trail is associated with higher property value in urban, suburban, and rural settings. Up to a mile away from the trail, for every foot closer to the trail, property value increase by about \$7. A home a half mile from the trail would sell for approximately nine percent less than a home adjacent to the trail.<sup>2</sup>
- In suburban New Castle County, Delaware, homes within 50 meters of bike paths commanded a four percent price premium.<sup>3</sup>
- In rural Methow Valley, Washington, homes within one-quarter mile of trails benefited from a 10 percent price premium.<sup>4</sup>
- Along a popular trail in Austin, Texas, the price premium ranged from 6 to 20 percent, depending on whether the neighborhood had views of the greenbelt surrounding the trail and whether it had direct neighborhood access to the trail.<sup>5</sup> This price premium translated to roughly \$59,000 per year in additional tax revenue or five percent of the annual cost of trail construction and maintenance.<sup>6</sup>



### How to use this information:

This research is of interest to property owners adjacent to a proposed trail, residential developers who are considering incorporating trails in new subdivisions, and local government staff who want to understand trails' fiscal impacts.

This summary is one of five handouts describing the state of research related to the benefits of trails. The four other summaries address:

- Public health
- Business impacts
- Quality of life
- Overall benefits

This series offers a succinct review of common benefits identified in the 100+ studies in Headwaters Economics' free, online, searchable [Trails Benefits Library](#).



- In Indianapolis, researchers found that a high-profile, destination trail was associated with an 11 percent price premium for homes within a half mile of the trail. Other trails had no price premium.<sup>7</sup>
- In Seattle, Washington<sup>8</sup> and upstate New York,<sup>9</sup> adjacent property owners were concerned about trail-related crime before the trail was built. Researchers found no change in crime rate after the trail was built.

## Methods

To measure the price premium attributable to proximity to trails, researchers use statistical models that compare the price of homes identical in all ways (e.g., size, age, number of bedrooms) except their distance from a trail. When this price difference is calculated over thousands of homes, researchers are able to estimate the average price premium for homes near trails.

Some research uses surveys to ask homeowners whether they believe the trail increases their property value and by how much. Due to the subjective and likely biased nature of these questions, conclusions from these surveys are unreliable. Careful statistical modeling provides more objective estimates.

Original studies and additional details on methods can be found in the Trails Benefits Library at <http://headwaterseconomics.org/trail>.

## Contact

Megan Lawson, Ph.D. [megan@headwaterseconomics.org](mailto:megan@headwaterseconomics.org), 406.570.7475.

*Research shows  
that homes near  
trails often have  
higher property  
value, with a  
price premium  
ranging from five  
to ten percent in  
most studies.*

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## Footnotes

- 1 Asabere, P. and F. Huffman. 2009. "The relative impacts of trails and greenbelts on home price." *The Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics* 38(4): 408-419.
- 2 Karadeniz, D. 2008. *The Impact of the Little Miami Scenic Trail on Single Family Residential Property Values* (Unpublished Master's Thesis). University of Cincinnati School of Planning.
- 3 Racca, D. and A. Dhanju. 2006. *Property Value/Desirability Effects of Bike Paths Adjacent to Residential Areas*. University of Delaware, Delaware Center for Transportation Working Paper 188.
- 4 Resource Dimensions. 2005. *Economic Impacts of MVSTA Trails and Land Resources in the Methow Valley*. Methow Valley Sport Trails Association.
- 5 Nicholls, S., and J. Crompton. 2005. "The Impact of Greenways on Property Values: Evidence from Austin, Texas." *Journal of Leisure Research* 37(3): 321-341.
- 6 Crompton, J., and S. Nicholls. 2006. "An Assessment of Tax Revenues Generated by Homes Proximate to a Greenway." *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration* 24(3): 103-108.
- 7 Lindsey, G., Man, J., Payton, S., and K. Dickson. 2004. "Property values, recreation values, and urban greenways." *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 22 (3): 69-90.
- 8 Zarker, G., J. Bourey, B. Puncoschar, P. Lagerwey. 1987. *Evaluation of the Burke-Gilman Trail's Effect on Property Values and Crime*. Seattle Engineering Department Office of Planning.
- 9 Feeney, S. 1997. *The Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail & Its Impact on Adjoining Residential Properties*. Schenectady County Department of Planning, Schenectady, NY.

	OPTION 3	OPTION 4
<b>Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Intersections to cross</li> <li>• Eliminates 55 mph traffic from the west side of Grand Island and state parklands</li> <li>• Provides the greatest separation between vehicular traffic and pedestrian/bicycle use, while avoiding the need to install extensive guiderails that would create a visual and physical barrier between West River Road and the river.</li> <li>• The existing parkway is much wider (24') than the proposed newly-constructed trail would be (10') allowing for greater separation of users higher-speed cyclists and slower trail users.</li> <li>• Keeps trail users further from homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 intersections to cross</li> <li>• Would require trail users to cross the Parkway on the north end of the trail as well as the south end</li> <li>• Places pedestrians and bicyclists in close proximity to 55 mph traffic, which may warrant the installation of guiderails</li> <li>• Trail users would be closer to homes along West River Rd</li> <li>• Path would be 10 feet wide</li> </ul>
<b>Affordability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$2.5 million</li> <li>• (Combination of a federal grant supplemented with matching state money)</li> <li>• Reuse of an existing low use asset</li> <li>• Will require less number of trees to be removed</li> <li>• Minimal impact to storm water runoff</li> <li>• Minimal demand for new materials, lowest energy and carbon footprint</li> <li>• Less ground disturbance and potential to impact cultural resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$3.3 million</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Causes no significant impact to vehicular traffic on West River Road as indicated by numerous traffic counts and video as well as existing behavioral accommodation during seasonal closure of the parkway. Summary report and raw traffic data will be presented.</li> <li>• State Parks would work with Town to find ways to calm traffic on West River Rd to increase safety.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The environmental impact of adding a 3rd ribbon of pavement through this area would create more storm water runoff and more impervious surface.</li> <li>• This option would require more tree removal</li> <li>• Installation of asphalt has a significant energy and carbon footprint and should not be used when other options exist</li> <li>• Significantly greater ground disturbance and potential to impact cultural resources.</li> </ul>
<b>Traffic Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Causes no significant impact to vehicular traffic on West River Road as indicated by numerous traffic counts and video as well as existing behavioral accommodation during seasonal closure of the parkway. Summary report and raw traffic data will be presented.</li> <li>• State Parks would work with Town to find ways to calm traffic on West River Rd to increase safety.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would not affect traffic on either West River Road or the Parkway as Parkway would remain open.</li> </ul>
<b>Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The elimination of a 55 mph roadway and the creation of an 8-mile long pedestrian/bicycle path with places to sit and contemplate will facilitate greater enjoyment of this beautiful, shared asset. Parking and overlooks will be enhanced which will add to accessibility.</li> <li>• Offers the greatest access to all stakeholders/users of the park system including elderly and the physically challenged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would still require trail users to cross a 55 mph roadway to reach the water's edge</li> <li>• Would allow people to continue to enjoy the water from a vehicle on a 55 mph road</li> <li>• Would likely require installation of guiderails in various locations, creating visual and physical barriers negatively impacting access to the shoreline</li> </ul>
<b>Accommodating Other Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duck hunters will continue to have access</li> <li>• The median between the new trail and West River Rd will continue to be available for snowmobiling and other uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a high probability that snowmobiles will ride on the trail, accelerating the deterioration and increasing the maintenance cost of the trail over its lifetime</li> </ul>
<b>Maintenance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once no longer a road, park will be maintained as parkland with increased mowing and pruning of vegetation</li> <li>• State will no longer have costs associated with maintaining a low volume roadway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to minimal traffic impacts on West River Road, it is not anticipated that maintenance costs for the road way will grow</li> <li>• Maintenance costs to the trail will need to be budgeted especially if used by snowmobiles</li> <li>• Allocating state money to maintain the low volume Parkway and a new trail will be challenging</li> <li>• DOT will continue to maintain the Parkway as it will remain a roadway</li> </ul>
<b>Parking Lots</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No additional lots added as requested in public comment</li> <li>• Re-use and enhancement of existing parking at overlooks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not addressed</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be NO commercial development along this 8-mile lineal Park. That is NOT consistent with Parks mission.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not addressed</li> </ul>
<b>Impact on Property Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Association of Realtors addresses this topic in on their web page, <a href="http://www.realtor.org">www.realtor.org</a>. In an article posted entitled Measuring Trails Benefits. The article indicates that "trails, like good schools or low crime, create an amenity that commands a higher price for nearby homes."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar arguments can be made as in Option 3 but privacy becomes a concern</li> </ul>