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Mark Witmer, Supervisor
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(607) 539-3395

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Dear Neighbor,

I am writing to update you on the proposal to extend the South Hill Recreation Way Trail in the towns of Ithaca, Danby, Dryden and Caroline. Tompkins County has received permission from NYSEG to pursue a License Agreement that would allow use of the NYSEG property encompassing the former railroad bed for this purpose. The County would, in turn, enter into an agreement with the four towns to develop and maintain the trail.

The area under consideration runs from Burns to Middaugh Roads, broken into three segments. The first two sections, Burns - German Cross Roads and German Cross - Banks Roads, are in pretty good shape and would require only modest improvements. The vision is to open this stretch within the next couple of years. The third section from Banks to Middaugh Roads would require significant planning, funding, and repair of washouts and, so, would require more time before implementation. The trail would be designated for non-motorized use and would not be paved. It would provide opportunities for recreation (running, biking, and skiing, for example), as well as a safe and direct corridor for travel to Ithaca. An important part of trail development would be engaging with neighbors to the trail for input and consideration of measures to mitigate worries or potential impacts.

In 2008 the Caroline Town Board articulated 11 issues to be considered before further work on the proposed trail extension. Subsequently, the Caroline Trails Committee researched these issues and presented their findings to the Town Board; that binder is available for inspection at the Caroline Town Hall and at: <https://southhillrecway.wordpress.com/project-details/>. As this document provides good information about many of the concerns that have been brought forward, I encourage you to review it. The Town Board is examining this information. I am including a summary of the findings with this letter.

We understand that there are differences of opinion about the value of the trail extension - and we appreciate the input received to date. We have responded in good faith to concerns that have been brought forward, and will continue to work to assess this project in an objective and open manner.

I will be providing more information as it becomes available at the town website www.townofcaroline.org and <https://southhillrecway.wordpress.com>. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Mark Witmer
Supervisor, Town of Caroline