

Hello Bryant and Trini,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft LVRT management plan. I present the comments below as an individual based on my knowledge as former Executive Director of the VT Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition, and as a founding board member of the Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail.

I appreciate the change in the committee structure to have the non-motorized groups participatory in selecting their representatives to the committee. That is a considerable improvement. Thank you.

I am concerned that the management plan is much stronger in setting out the committee structure, and a bit weak on the management itself. I am not sure that a strong committee, going forward, will be the solution to all concerns.

I think your vision for the trail, although wonderful, is not thinking big enough of what this trail could be with regard to non-motorized uses. This trail could and should draw tourists from around the world. Your user base description should have another category added -- it's not just users from within the region that will come here repeatedly (thereby giving us a chance to educate them as to proper use of the trail.) There will be many people who will come to bike, walk, horse-back ride, etc. on the LVRT once in their entire lives, perhaps as part of a visit from the west coast, or from Europe or Asia. The trail management needs to make the experience good for that type of user, who isn't going to have learned from repeated visits about how things work around here.

This is also a huge opportunity. Do you know that this will by far be the longest rail trail in all of New England!? When tourists from far-off places are looking for the place to ride their bicycles in New England to take in the fall foliage, Vermont's LVRT should be the place.

The non-motorized users, especially tourists, will need more support services (or good signage to existing services) such as restrooms, bicycle racks, and good surfacing. These seem to be neglected or left for later. These details will be what makes the difference between having a trail that is a dirt rut in the woods, or having a trail that brings its full economic engine to the towns along the corridor. The multi-use aspect of this trail that was touted in obtaining the corridor ROW, and the federal funding must clearly echo throughout the management plan. The way the management plan currently reads, it is not clear what surfacing could be read as a "special surface" and the summer users made responsible?

Good surfacing, such as would meet common expectations for rail trail crushed stone, will be absolutely key. I would define this by saying: Suitable for hybrid-type of bicycles ridden by senior citizens. Here's your design user: My mom. She just turned 70, is an avid bicyclist, looks for places around the country to ride, and on the day after her 70th birthday we went for a nice bike ride on the roads and rail trails in Pittsburgh, PA. She is not an anomaly. AARP is among the strongest supporters of the Transportation Enhancements program, because senior citizens ride bikes (especially on trails) to stay healthy. But, my mom with a touch of osteoporosis at age 70 is very concerned about falling, so she cares about a good surface -- and so do the other seniors, in their retirement travels. Attached is a photo of my Mom and her partner Jim riding on the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, which they generally found to be quite rideable, although they walked their bikes at a few washouts or areas with soft gravel. I hope this image will help as you plan for the trail's surface quality!

Enforcement, as you know, is a significant concern for many landowners, communities, and user groups.



<http://www.goinggreenvt.com>

Photo: Good surfacing for seniors on hybrid bikes on the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail.  
(Joan Roof, my mom, and her partner Jim Kern).