TOWN OF WOODSTOCK ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

45 Comeau Drive, Woodstock, NY 12498

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To: Woodstock Town Board
Trails Advisory Committee, Ulster County Legislature

January 21, 2026

In Support of Trail-Only Designation for U&D Corridor Undesignated Section

In April 2024 the Woodstock Town Board approved a resolution (see attachment) supporting trail connectivity between the City of Kingston and the Ashokan Rail Trail, and requesting that Ulster County fulfill its mandate to work towards accomplishing connectivity along the U&D Corridor. One stumbling block in the way of achieving this is the controversy over the undesignated section of the U&D Corridor between mileposts 8.33 and 10. We write to urge you to support a trail-only policy along this section as the only environmentally sound way to achieve the benefits of trail connectivity.

The health and environmental benefits of the Ashokan Rail Trail have been demonstrated, and the multiplier effect on these benefits of connecting with the wider network of pedestrian and bike trails, in Ulster County and beyond, are widely accepted. The undesignated section is a crucial and irreplaceable missing link in connecting the ART with Kingston and with New York State's growing trail system, and hopefully in the future with Woodstock: the Towns of Woodstock and Hurley are already cooperating in a feasibility evaluation for the proposed Woodstock-West Hurley (WooHu) trail to connect Woodstock with the ART.

An alternative proposal for the undesignated section comes from Catskill Mountain Railroad and envisages a dual-use rail-with-trail corridor. This would come at a high environmental price. Much of this section simply has no room for both railroad and shared-use walking/cycling trail. Approximately half a mile of it is on a narrow high-fill track with wetlands on both sides. Another segment is in a narrow and deep rock cut. Both these segments would need considerable widening to achieve rail-with-trail standards, involving blasting, massive mounts of fill, and destruction of wetlands, and incurring millions of dollars of additional cost.

A trail-only designation for this publicly owned property would provide more benefits for the public, and the project can be designed so that Catskill Mountain Railroad also gets an

extension of its tracks and the benefit of a terminus connecting with the ART and local businesses.

We support a trail-only designation as the only feasible way to give Ulster County residents the benefits of a connected trail system.

Sincerely,

Woodstock Environmental Commission