

# **SUDBURY POLICE DEPARTMENT**

## **Police Chief's response to Rail Trail questions**

September 12, 2006

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### **Questions related to Public Safety Along Rail Trails in Sudbury**

7/14,/2006

1. The proposed rail trail is intended to be for non-motorized use, with the exception of public safety vehicles, maintenance vehicles, motorized wheel chairs and motor vehicles crossing at authorized points. What tools, legal and physical, will you likely need to enforce this prohibition and other rules for the rail trail?

[A town by-law would be needed that prohibited certain vehicles from the rail trail and authorized a fine to be issued for a violation.](#)

2. The proposed rail trail is likely to have bollards or gates at each road crossing to prevent motorized vehicles from entering the rail trail. The bollards or gates will have keys so that the bollards can be removed for access by authorized vehicles. In addition to the Police Department, Fire Department and Public Works Department, who should have keys? [I do not feel that anyone else needs to be issued keys beyond the departments listed above. As for the use of bollards or gates; I feel that some type of gate would be better for gaining entrance for an emergency during winter months, and that bollards could be difficult to remove when covered by snow or ice.](#)

3. If the Town wishes to exclude unauthorized motor vehicles from entry points other than road crossings, what kind of barriers would you recommend? [A chain link fence or wooden guard rails.](#)

4. The bed of the rail trail and the bridges will be designed to accommodate authorized motorized vehicles. For what size and weight of vehicles should the trail be designed? [I would think that the largest/ heaviest vehicle that would have to go onto the rail trail would be the Fire Departments ambulance.](#)

5. The rail trail would be too narrow for turning around. Do you think turnarounds would be needed? On certain areas of the trail where there is a long distance to travel to access another roadway entrance it might be advisable to have a turnaround large enough to turn an ambulance around in an emergency situation

6. The Sudbury Police Department already does some patrolling with bicycles and has recently purchased an ATV. Presumably, the rail trail could be patrolled by bicycle or ATV. Would you consider patrolling the rail trail with cruisers, motorcycles, snowmobiles or other motorized vehicles? What other resources (assets, equipment, staff, etc.) may be required for Town safety officials to effectively monitor the trail? The Sudbury Police Department does not presently patrol using bicycles and the ATV was purchased with a grant by the Fire Department, although we do have access to it. I would consider patrolling the rail trail using the department motorcycle, but would not recommend a cruiser unless it was responding to an emergency. I would also tend not to agree with officers using snowmobiles to patrol the rail trail. The department does own two Mountain Bikes that would require some reconditioning before being used. Funds would also be needed to train and outfit officers for a Bicycle Patrol Unit, as well as funding to schedule these patrols.

7. In responding to the location of emergencies along the rail trail, would something like mile markers, identification of road crossings or stream crossings be useful? Do you recommend emergency aid call boxes be installed at trail entry points or at intervals along a trail? Mile markers would be useful in the event of an emergency so that the person reporting it could give it to the dispatcher and responding personnel would know exactly where they are needed. Call boxes at the entrances might not be needed but I do feel that a few would be useful at more remote locations along the trail.

8. The trail would cross Route 117, Pantry Rd., Haynes Rd., Morse Rd., Hudson Rd./27, Old Lancaster Rd and a private road, Codjer Lane. Do you have any recommendations concerning the engineering of the road crossings? Would you recommend the installation of traffic and/or pedestrian crossing lights at any of the road crossings? I have safety concerns at several of the locations mentioned above:

1) Route 117- where the trail crosses it appears that the sight distance is good; my concern in this area is with volume and the speed of vehicles coming from the west.

2) Pantry Road- Traveling east on the rail trail your view is obstructed for vehicles traveling south on Pantry Road, the pedestrian/ biker is also obstructed from the vision of an operator of a motor vehicle traveling south .

3) Hudson Rd/ Peakham Rd – Traveling south at the rail crossing on Hudson Road the view is almost totally obstructed for a biker/ pedestrian wishing to cross from the north side to the south side of Hudson Rd. The view is obstructed by the curve in the roadway and telephone poles as one looks east for vehicles traveling in the westbound lane, these same obstructions apply to the operator of a motor vehicle traveling west as well. These

obstructions and the speed of vehicles coming down the hill from the center make this crossing, in my opinion, one of the most dangerous.

I do not feel that traffic control lights are feasible in these locations, and going under the roadway would be very expensive. I would like to see the proposed design and how these issues are dealt with in the plan before commenting further.

9. Should the rail trail have a dusk-to-dawn curfew? How would a curfew be enforced and with what type of patrol vehicles? Yes, I feel that there should be a dusk to dawn curfew. It would be difficult to enforce, but, again have it spelled out in the by-law with a fixed punishment. The rail trail would not be patrolled at night unless a complaint was received from someone about activity, or a patrolling officer observed something on the rail trail and investigated.

10. From what you have learned about rail trails, do you have any special concerns? Is there any other information that the RTCAC can help provide"? From what I have learned about rail trails from talking to other chiefs I do not have any special concerns. I have been advised by these chiefs that most of the major issues involving crime that were raised before the rail trails were built in their communities have not occurred. They have told me that they have encountered only a very few minor problems connected to the use of the rail trail in their communities.