

Brewer Rail Trail Project

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The Brewer Land Trust is excited to initiate the creation of a Rail Trail through the City of Brewer! There is an inactive, overgrown portion of railroad (part of the Calais Branch Rail Line) from Wilson Street to approximately 1,000 feet easterly of Green Point Road which is approximately 2.12 miles in length. This rail bed directly abuts a 196-space City-owned parking lot, Maple Street Park, the City's Public Safety building, an outdoor ice rink, and valuable wetland and wildlife habitats. Within a very short walk to the rail corridor, is the Brewer High School, an indoor ice arena, Brewer Auditorium, Brewer Library, and the City's Riverwalk trail along the Penobscot River.

This potential rail trail could be used by many for both recreational purposes as well as a transportation connection to other locations. Brewer has seen many more walkers and bicyclists as has the region. The Brewer High School students currently use the roads to run, which is not always the safest. This rail trail could create a loop using Dirigo Drive and Green Point Road from the school. Both the Brewer School Department and the City of Brewer would like to see this project constructed. This potential rail trail could also be a great addition to the East Coast Greenway, which is currently on-road through this portion of Brewer. There is a large wetland owned by the State next to the rail bed on Green Point Road where a variety of animals can be seen on almost any given day creating a great location for birdwatchers. I have also talked with the Holden Land Trust and the Town of Holden, both of which are in support of this trail and would like to see it extend through Holden. In addition, HOP Trails (regional trail organization) and the Bangor Land Trust are also in favor. At this time, the Brewer Rail Trail is expected to be designed for multi-modal, non-motorized use.

A group of four University of Maine engineering students, calling themselves Marsh Island Student Engineering, chose the proposed Brewer Rail Trail for their Capstone project. During the fall semester of 2015, the students prepared a feasibility study. Then, during spring semester 2016, they prepared a trail design including structure repairs, safety improvements, cost estimates, and permitting list.

The proposed Brewer Rail Trail would run from Wilson Street to approximately 1,000 feet easterly of Green Point Road and is 11,395 lineal feet (2.12 miles). With an average right-of-way of 66 feet, this parcel calculates to 17.3 acres. The owner of this segment, Pan Am Systems, Inc., is willing to sell. The Brewer Land Trust contacted them in August 2015 and it was discussed that the State of Maine has first refusal on the rail

corridor. Negotiations then began between Pan Am and MDOT and concluded in August 2016 with MDOT deciding not to pursue ownership. Pan Am has now offered the Brewer Land Trust to make them an offer for ownership.

The Calais Branch railroad corridor extends easterly from the proposed Brewer Rail Trail into the Town of Holden and eventually connects with the very successful 85-mile rail trail Down East Sunrise Trail. This portion of this rail corridor through Brewer is owned by the State of Maine and is included in the lease between the Maine DOT and the Downeast Scenic Railroad for their use. With a right-of-way of 66 feet, it may be possible to construct a trail next to the rail bed as noted for Ellsworth in the lease.

Please see attached photos and sketches showing the locations of the phases and other important locations. The Brewer Rail Trail is shown as Phase A and the potential future rail-with-trail section is shown as Phase B.



Inactive Pan Am rail bed near Wilson Street



Pan Am rail bed near Acme Road



Granite culvert under Pan Am rail bed



Washout of Pan Am rail bed near Acme Road



Pan Am rail bed over Interstate 395



Pan Am rail bed near Parkway South



State-owned wetlands abutting Pan Am rail bed near Green Point Road



State-owned rail bed near Green Point Road



State-owned rail bed at intersection of Route 1A and I-395 near Holden town line

