

**THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**



**JEFF BRILLHART, P.E.**  
**ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER**

August 11, 2011

Ms. Jan Edick  
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Edick:

Thank you for your interest in the future use of the Berlin Branch Railroad in the Littleton area. Executive Councilor Ray Burton has referred your inquiry to the Department of Transportation since it falls under our jurisdiction to manage the active and inactive sections of State-owned railroad corridors.

While there have been discussions of some of the proposed uses of the rail corridors between Littleton and Bethlehem, the Department has not yet been formally contacted by the Town of Littleton with an official request to consider a specific proposal.

The section of the Berlin Branch Railroad Corridor you referenced is currently included in an operating agreement with the New Hampshire Central Railroad. The portion of the railroad corridor between Littleton and Whitefield is designated as an active railroad, but is considered out of service subject to inspection, identification, and remedy of defects prior to train operation. West of Littleton, the railroad corridor has been designated as inactive and the track materials have been removed.

Snowmobile use during the winter season is permitted in a railroad corridor under a Cooperative Agreement between the Department of Transportation and the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED). The policies for snowmobile use on railroad corridors are determined by DRED as it falls under their jurisdiction. ATV use on active rail lines is prohibited per state statute (RSA 215-6, IV, VI, VII). ATV use on the inactive section of the railroad corridor (west of Littleton) may be possible. This would be subject to DRED policies as is the surface issues on that section of the railroad corridor.

In the event a railroad operator develops business to justify operation to Littleton and Bethlehem, the track does not necessarily have to be removed for the restoration of rail service. Although some tie replacement may be needed, the rail is in good condition and there was a major tie replacement project prior to the line's acquisition by the State. The needed repairs to return the line to operation include brush/vegetation management, ballast restoration, and surfacing. Alternatively, the existing track could furnish a platform for railroad equipment to replace track components.

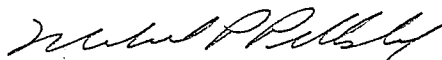
If a trail concept were to be pursued, the Department would require the town, agency, or organization improving the corridor to dismantle the track structure to the Department's specification and deliver the rail, salvageable cross ties, and other track materials to an approved location on State-owned railroad property at their expense. Any trail proposal will be reviewed with the consideration of impacts to current and potential future railroad operations.

On a related issue, the Department has been contacted by the Littleton Chamber of Commerce about their concept of a riverwalk and we look forward to working with the Town of Littleton, the surrounding

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communities, and all interested parties as the issues and proposals for the future use of these railroad corridors are evaluated. If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Michael P. Pillsbury, P.E.  
Deputy Commissioner

cc: Executive Councilor Raymond Burton  
Christopher Gamache, DRED, Bureau of Trails