

Commissioners of Ridgely
2 Central Avenue PO Box 710
Ridgely, MD 21660
(410) 634-2177

October 21, 2009

Dear Residents and Business Owners,

The town of Ridgely has entered into a lease with the Md. Transportation Authority(MTA) and Department of Natural Resources(DNR) to construct a Rails-to-Trails project between the east and west town boundary lines. Phase I will include the area from the Maple Ave. parking lot to Cowbarn Road. This will provide a bike/walking trail for our Ridgely residents as well as visitors. The Commissioners are in support of this project, grant funds have been secured, an architect has been hired, a public hearing was held, bids have gone out, the negotiations with the contractor are finished, and work will begin Monday, October 26th.

MTA owns the 66 foot wide Railroad track corridor right-of way and most of the land in Memorial Park. We have a long term lease through DNR and MTA for the 66 foot right -of-way. The crossings at Central Ave., Park Ave., and Cowbarn Road will basically remain the same with some modifications to the trail for the safety of bikers/walkers entering these crossings. The town and contractor will do all they can to keep any disturbances to the neighbors to a minimum. However, you should probably expect some additional noise. MTA does not permit parking on the park property at any time and we ask that there be no parking on the south side of Belle Street (the area between Bell Street and the railroad tracks) during the construction period. We will address the parking situation more at a later date.

The Memorial / Railroad Park has been underutilized for many years. We have plans for a number of projects in the park. Off course it will take years to complete all the projects as we are depending completely on grants to fund these projects. Town taxes are NOT being applied to this work. Our goal is to provide additional recreation and to tell the story of Ridgely's unique history. We are planning renovations on the Train Station and the addition of new park benches, picnic tables, town clock, interpretive signage, landscaping, and more. It is hoped that some day the trail will extend to Tuckahoe Park and Adkins Arboretum. Our most recent park project, the Historic Telephone Exchange building, is almost complete and is open to the public on a daily bases until sundown. Please take a few minutes to visit the building. Inside are exhibits of Ridgely history and of the building itself. There are also brochures on attractions in our local area. We trust the improvements in the park will be enjoyed not only by our residents, but also visitors who will visit our businesses as well which in turn will boost our economic development.

The Ridgely Rails to Trails Committee will be having a meeting on Mon., Oct.26, 7:00p.m. at Town Hall. Please try to attend the meeting if you have any questions or concerns regarding the Rails to Trails project. We will be having an update on the project and reviewing the plans. For more information you may call the Town Office at 410-634-2177 or log onto our town website at www.ridgelymd.org.

Sincerely,

The Ridgely Rails to Trails Committee