



**Albany-Hudson Electric Trail
Emergency Response by EMS and Law Enforcement
September 12, 2019**

The Hudson River Valley Greenway is developing the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail (AHET), which will be a new 36-mile rail-trail located in Rensselaer and Columbia Counties. Detailed information about the trail, which is slated to be completed in November 2020, is available on the project website: www.AHETtrail.org.

This document describes how emergency responders – fire departments, ambulance companies, and law enforcement agencies – will locate and respond to emergencies that may occur on the AHET Trail.

County 911 Systems

Cell coverage is generally very good along the AHET Trail route. There are very few locations where a trail user would be unable to reach 911 on a cell phone.

The public is well educated to call 911 in the event of an emergency. Rensselaer and Columbia Counties operate the 911 system in their respective counties. Both 911 systems have the capability to instantly locate a cell phone, by pinging the GPS function on the mobile device, in the event a caller states “I’m on a trail, but don’t know where” (the mobile device must be turned on, but that will be the case given the person has called 911 from their mobile phone meaning it is on and has connectivity).¹

The ability of 911 systems to precisely locate a cell phone location can vary. In locations where there is a strong cell connection, the 911 system automatically generates a precise lat-long location for the cell phone. However, in areas where there is weak cell connection, the 911 system may only be able to identify the cellular tower that picked up the call. Usually that will be the tower located nearest the caller, although occasionally there could be instances where a 911 call is picked up by a tower that is not the nearest to the caller.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway plans to take several steps to assist the effectiveness of 911 systems:

- Prior to completion of the AHET Trail in November 2020, the Hudson Greenway will provide digital Geographic Information System (GIS) information to the Rensselaer and Columbia County 911 Centers, identifying a series of lat-long locations such as road

¹ The Columbia County and Rensselaer County 911 systems have the capability to receive “Phase II” wireless calls, which allows the system to identify the location of a cell phone within 50 to 300 meters. However, in instances where the cell phone signal is poor and is only being received by one cell tower antenna, the 911 system may only be able to identify the location of the cell tower receiving the call (but not the lat-long location of the cell phone).

crossings, trail bridges, and other features, that the dispatch centers will integrate into their 911 systems. This will allow 911 dispatchers to provide location guidance to local police and EMS responders. For example, the 911 dispatcher will be able to tell police/EMS responders that the location is “on the rail-trail between Nassau Lake and Rice Road, one-quarter mile southeast of Rice Road.”

- As part of the overall AHET construction project, street signs will be installed at locations where the trail crosses public roads. Road signage will assist trail users in identifying their location when calling 911, and in guiding EMS response when incidents occur.

AHET Trail EMS and Law Enforcement Access

The 36-mile AHET Trail route passes through a number of EMS and law enforcement jurisdictions. A full listing of involved agencies is attached to the end of this document. These agencies are responsible for responding to emergency situations on the AHET Trail in the same way they operate throughout their respective jurisdictions.

The AHET Trail is being designed to provide direct access to emergency vehicles:

- The trail surface will be 10 to 12 feet wide, surfaced with asphalt or stonedust, designed to support all types of emergency vehicles including ambulances and fire trucks (the trail will be built to support large National Grid bucket trucks and vehicles that need to periodically access electric lines and infrastructure).
- Six bridges will be installed along the AHET Trail route – all bridges will be designed to HS-25 rating, which accommodates all vehicles that are allowed to drive on public roads, including ambulances and full-size fire trucks.
- There are 70 public road and private driveway crossings along the 35-mile AHET route, providing quick access to emergency vehicles. Generally, there will not be gates or bollards at road crossings – emergency vehicles will be able to directly drive onto the trail (see pictures at the end of this document). In the few instances where gates or bollards are installed, keys will be provided to the appropriate emergency responders (and the locks could be cut with bolt cutters if necessary).

The Hudson River Valley Greenway has initiated conversations with many of the EMS responders that provide service to sections of the AHET Trail (a complete list of involved response agencies is attached). These conversations have not identified any major access concerns on the part of first responders.

The Hudson Greenway will continue to coordinate with emergency responders as the AHET Trail progress through construction and complete in 2020.

EMS Response Demand

In those instances where emergencies occur on the AHET Trail, local EMS agencies will respond in the same way they provide services throughout their jurisdictions. The cost of emergency services will be managed by local responders, consistent with their regular practices.

No data is available to quantify or estimate the frequency of incidents that will occur annually on the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail that will require EMS response. However, off-road trails, by their nature, provide a safer condition for bicyclists and pedestrians than the alternative, which is people riding bicycles or walking on the shoulders of roadways.

The Hudson Greenway has communicated with New York State Parks, which operates more than 100 miles of rail-trails and canalway trails in NYS. The State Park Police have indicated that the number of EMS response incidents on these types of trails is low, especially on trails that allow non-motorized use only (this is the case with AHET Trail, where snowmobiles and ATVs will be prohibited). Based on State Parks’ experience, the Hudson Greenway anticipates that the AHET Trail will not generate a significant number of annual emergency incidents requiring EMS response.

Albany-Hudson Electric Trail: Involved Emergency Response Agencies

Rensselaer County

Table 1: Rensselaer County Emergency Services Providers

Municipality	Fire	Ambulance	Police
City of Rensselaer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rensselaer Fire Department Station Number 2 ▪ Rensselaer Fire Department North Station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mohawk Ambulance Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City of Rensselaer Police Department
Town East Greenbush	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clinton Heights Fire Department Community Hose Company Station 2 ▪ Clinton Heights Fire Department Bruen Hose Company Station 1 ▪ East Greenbush Fire Department Main Station ▪ East Greenbush Fire Department Station 2 ▪ East Greenbush Fire Department North Station 3 ▪ Best Luther Volunteer Fire Company Station 2 ▪ Best Luther Volunteer Fire Company Station 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WF Buren Rescue Squad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ East Greenbush Police
Town of Schodack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Schodack Landing Fire Company ▪ East Schodack Volunteer Fire Company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Castleton Volunteer Ambulance Service Inc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Schodack Police Department

Municipality	Fire	Ambulance	Police
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Castleton Fire Department ▪ South Schodack Volunteer Fire Company 		
Village of Nassau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nassau Hose Company 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nassau Ambulance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Village of Nassau Police Department
Town of Nassau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nassau Hose Company 1 ▪ Hoags Corners Volunteer Fire Company ▪ Tsatsawass Fire Company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nassau Ambulance ▪ Hoags Corners Ambulance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New York State Police ▪ Rensselaer County Sheriff's Department

Columbia County

Table 2: Columbia County Emergency Services Providers

Municipality	Fire	Ambulance	Police
Town of Chatham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ North Chatham Fire Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Valatie Rescue Squad, Inc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New York State Police ▪ Columbia County Sheriff's Office
Town of Kinderhook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Niverville Volunteer Fire Department Station 1 ▪ Niverville Volunteer Fire Department Station 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Valatie Rescue Squad, Inc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New York State Police ▪ Columbia County Sheriff's Office
Village of Valatie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Valatie Volunteer Fire Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Valatie Rescue Squad, Inc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New York State Police ▪ Columbia County Sheriff's Office
Village of Kinderhook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kinderhook Fire Department Palmer Engineer and Hose Company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Valatie Rescue Squad, Inc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New York State Police ▪ Columbia County Sheriff's Office
Town of Stuyvesant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stuyvesant Fire Company 1 ▪ Stuyvesant Falls Fire Company 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Valatie Rescue Squad, Inc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New York State Police ▪ Columbia County Sheriff's Office
Town of Stockport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stockport Volunteer Fire Company 1 ▪ Stottville Fire Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greenport Rescue Squad, Inc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town of Stockport Police ▪ New York State Police ▪ Columbia County Sheriff's Office
Town of Greenport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greenport Fire Department Pumper Company 1 ▪ Greenport Fire Department Pumper Company 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greenport Rescue Squad, Inc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greenport Police Department

**Bollards or gates generally will not be installed at AHET trail/road crossings.
This will allow direct trail access for EMS and law enforcement vehicles.**



*Above: Typical road crossing on the newly constructed Albany-Helderberg Rail-Trail in Albany County.
Below: Emergency vehicles can drive over the low island at this Erie Canalway Trail road crossing.*

