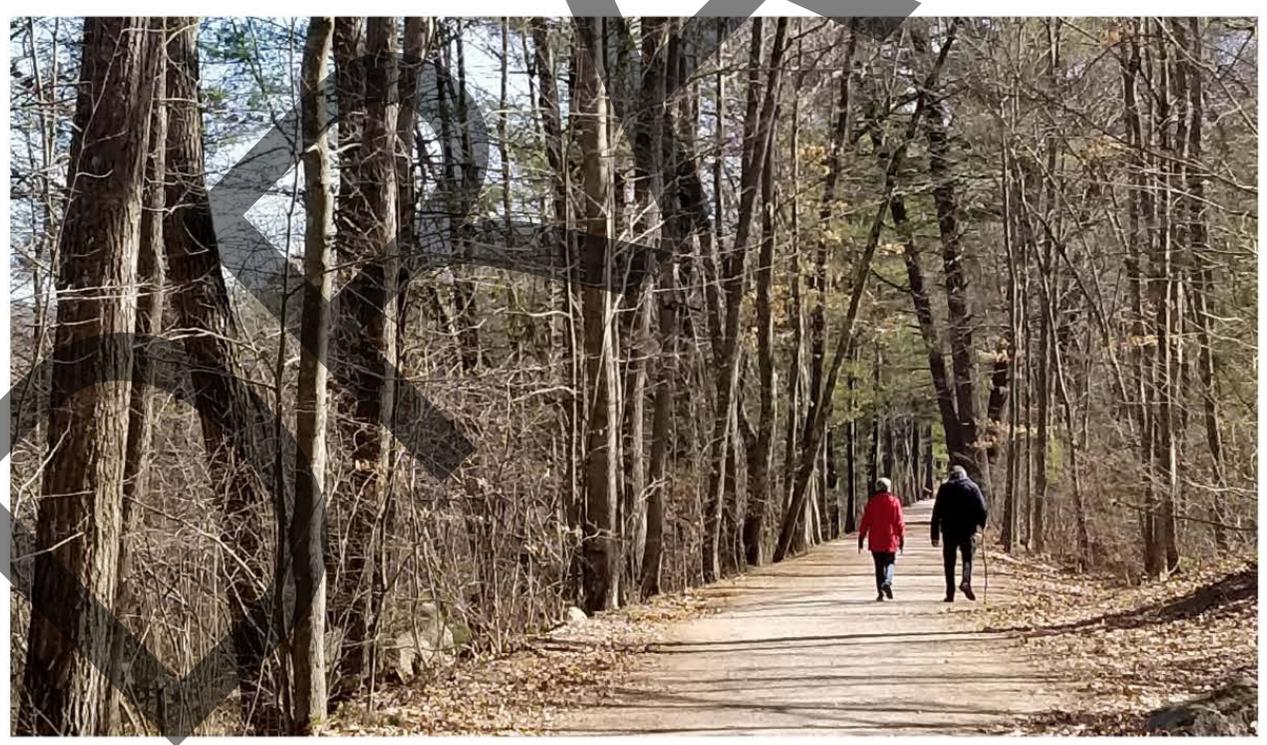


Salem ~ Manchester ~ Concord

REGIONAL TRAILS PLAN

2021



PREPARED BY



Southern NH Planning Commission
Central NH Regional Planning Commission

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List of Acronyms

ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle
B&M	Boston and Maine
CNHRPC	Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission
CSS	Context-Sensitive Solutions
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation Air Quality
DPW	Department of Public Works
FGRT	Friends of the Goffstown Rail Trail
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FMRGT	Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
M&L	Manchester and Lawrence
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21 st Century
NH DNCR	New Hampshire Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
NH DOT	New Hampshire Department of Transportation
QCBC	Queen City Bicycle Collective
RTCC	Regional Trails Coordinating Council
RTP	Recreational Trails Program
SNHPC	Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission
TAP	Transportation Alternatives Program
TE	Transportation Enhancements
TL	Town Line

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I. Introduction

1.1 Acknowledgements

This 2021 update to the [2012 Regional Trails Strategic Plan](#) was completed by staff at the Southern New Hampshire and Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commissions with assistance from local town staff and trail groups. The plan's authors wish to thank the many individuals from across the region who assisted with this plan update.

1.2 Purpose of Regional Trails Plan



1 Trail users enjoy a perfect fall day on the Londonderry Rail Trail

Improving and increasing active transportation opportunities such as bicycling and walking has been a common subject of discussion in New Hampshire and throughout the country. In NH, the establishment and maintenance of trails for recreational and non-motorized purposes have mostly been the result of volunteer efforts.

The [New Hampshire Rail Trails Coalition](#) is committed to promoting the development, maintenance, and active use of trails statewide. However, there is no entity to assist with coordination amongst the various stakeholder groups in the Salem to Concord corridor as of 2021.

The Region's trail network provides an array of benefits to residents, businesses, and the local environment. To strengthen the network, it is vital to plan for future trail connections, trail upgrades, and trail amenities. This document provides a framework for local and regional investments in the region's trails and highlights all the accomplishments and investments that created the network. The purpose of this Regional Trails Plan is to provide a common vision for a connected trail network that serves the transportation, economic, recreation, community health and environmental needs of the region.

1.3 Plan Vision

The Regional Trails Plan vision is for an interconnected network of trails that provides safe, equitable active transportation and recreation opportunities to residents and visitors of New Hampshire. An interconnected trail system throughout the state will provide a range of positive social, economic, environmental and health benefits and will enhance the quality of life for Granite State residents. Furthermore, such a trail network will attract tourists and promote economic development.

The plan also addresses the following:

- improving connectivity of the regional trail network
- improving safety and accessibility of existing corridors
- working with communities and local trail advocacy groups to secure funding and resources for trail building and maintenance
- identifying gaps in corridors and proposing strategies and solutions for trail implementation
- outlining a strategy that aims to strengthen and expand the regional trail network in New Hampshire, which will further encourage active transportation on the Granite State's trails
- providing a set of "Trail Profiles", one-page summaries of a trail's length, material, and some fast facts. This is a resource that can be used to size up the region's many disparate trails at-a-glance.

1.4 Local and Regional Partners

The Regional Trails Coordinating Council (RTCC) was made up of local trail groups, public and nonprofit agencies, and individuals who shared the common goal of developing an interconnected, regional trail network in New Hampshire. Historically, the RTCC acted as a forum for cooperation and collaboration among both governmental and non-governmental organizations such as Regional Planning Commissions, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, the Department of Resources and Economic Development's Trails Bureau, as well as local trail organizations. The Regional Trails Coordination Council assisted in the development and implementation of the 2012 Regional Trails Plan.

The RTCC was active from 2010-2016 and 2018 but meetings were discontinued due to declining membership. While some previous members of the Council were consulted about specific elements of the plan update, this plan update was prepared by staff at Southern NH Planning Commission (SNHPC) and Central NH Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC).

There are many active local trail groups whose efforts have been integral to connecting and improving the region's trail network. Groups in several towns continue their resilient work to find funding opportunities and leverage volunteer hours to the benefit of trail users. Summaries of their efforts can be found on p. 27.

1.5 Definition of a Regional Trail

For the purposes of this Plan, a regional trail is one that is separated from motor vehicle traffic and serves transportation, recreation, and health purposes for non-motorized transportation. Trails are regional in nature when they connect communities and serve the region. These trails are commonly called shared use paths, multi-use paths, or bike paths. Most are paved, while others have an improved gravel surface. Most trails are intended to be universally accessible, or as accessible as practical. Hiking and mountain biking trails are not considered regional trails in this Plan because they do not serve a

significant transportation purpose and are less accessible to people of varying ages and abilities. A regional trail could provide non-motorized access to hiking and mountain biking trails, serving as a backbone to a larger trail network. Regional trails also provide non-motorized access to community centers and other developed areas as well as open space and other trails.

1.6 The Benefits of a Regional Trail Network

The benefits to establishing an interconnected trail network are numerous. Providing residents with opportunities for active transportation and recreation through trails increases physical activity, provides balanced transportation options, and fosters economically vibrant communities with a high quality of life. (railstotrails.org).



2 Looking south on the Salem Bike-Ped Corridor

Numerous studies have documented the benefits of trails on the health and wellbeing of communities. In the past, the RTCC envisioned the following benefits to the region and state establishing an interconnected regional trail network:

1.6.1 Health and Safety

Well-maintained trails encourage safe, healthy recreational opportunities such as bicycling, walking, running, cross-county skiing etc. at little to no cost. Trails provide the means for residents of a community to increase physical activity because they are safe, accessible outlets for healthy transportation and recreation opportunities (Rails to Trails Conservancy). Additionally, trails can provide safe recreational alternatives in communities that have few sidewalks, bike lanes, or even wide shoulders. Trails offer a space to walk and bicycle without the risk of collision with a motor vehicle. By diverting pedestrians (including children) away from vehicular traffic, trails may contribute to fewer car/pedestrian conflicts and even crashes.

1.6.2 Environmental Benefits

Trails can act as a safe transportation route in many communities, decreasing dependence on automobiles. Trails can provide safe and convenient connections to schools, neighborhoods and downtowns including shops and stores, where parking may be in demand. Providing walking alternatives may reduce the frequency of single-occupant vehicle trips as well as idling cars and congestion in downtown settings while cars search for parking.

1.6.3 Economic Benefits



3 The Grind Rail Trail Café, Derry

Trails have a variety of economic benefits. First and foremost, trails can provide connections between towns, drawing tourists and residents from neighboring communities who contribute to the community's local economy by visiting restaurants, shops, and other stores. Businesses located near or on trails benefit from pedestrian traffic that utilize the trail. Often, these businesses become destinations along the trail. The Grind Rail Trail Café in Derry is an example of a business that thrives, partially due to marketing its rail trail location.

There are also a variety of cost savings and economic benefits to trails including lower health care costs, savings from reduced motor vehicle use, and even reduction in transit costs. For example, in promoting physical activity through recreation and active transportation, trails may lower costs associated with health care in a community. In reducing the number of trips made by automobile, costs are also saved in gasoline and on car maintenance. In communities served by trails connecting residents (some who may not drive) and jobs, the community may be justified in keeping transit costs low.

1.7 Plan Update Process

The update of the 2012 Regional Trails Plan began with a review of the existing trail network and associated changes since 2012. This included identifying and mapping newly constructed trails, reviewing local master plan updates, identifying Transportation Alternatives Program awardees, legislation and/or policy changes, as well as correspondence with local trail advocacy groups about the status of the trail networks in their regions.

A region-wide survey was conducted in the spring of 2020 to gather input on the current state of the region's trail network and a vision for the future; 238 individuals responded. Findings included the following:

- 73% of respondents were over the age of 45
- >50% of respondents hailed from the towns of Hooksett or Londonderry
- 83% of respondents use trails for walking, 68% for biking, and 24% for jogging/running
- The top 3 places respondents would like to see a new trail/shared use path were
 - Derry-Londonderry connection
 - Manchester-Concord connection
 - Connect existing trails in Manchester

(See Appendix 1 for more in-depth survey results)

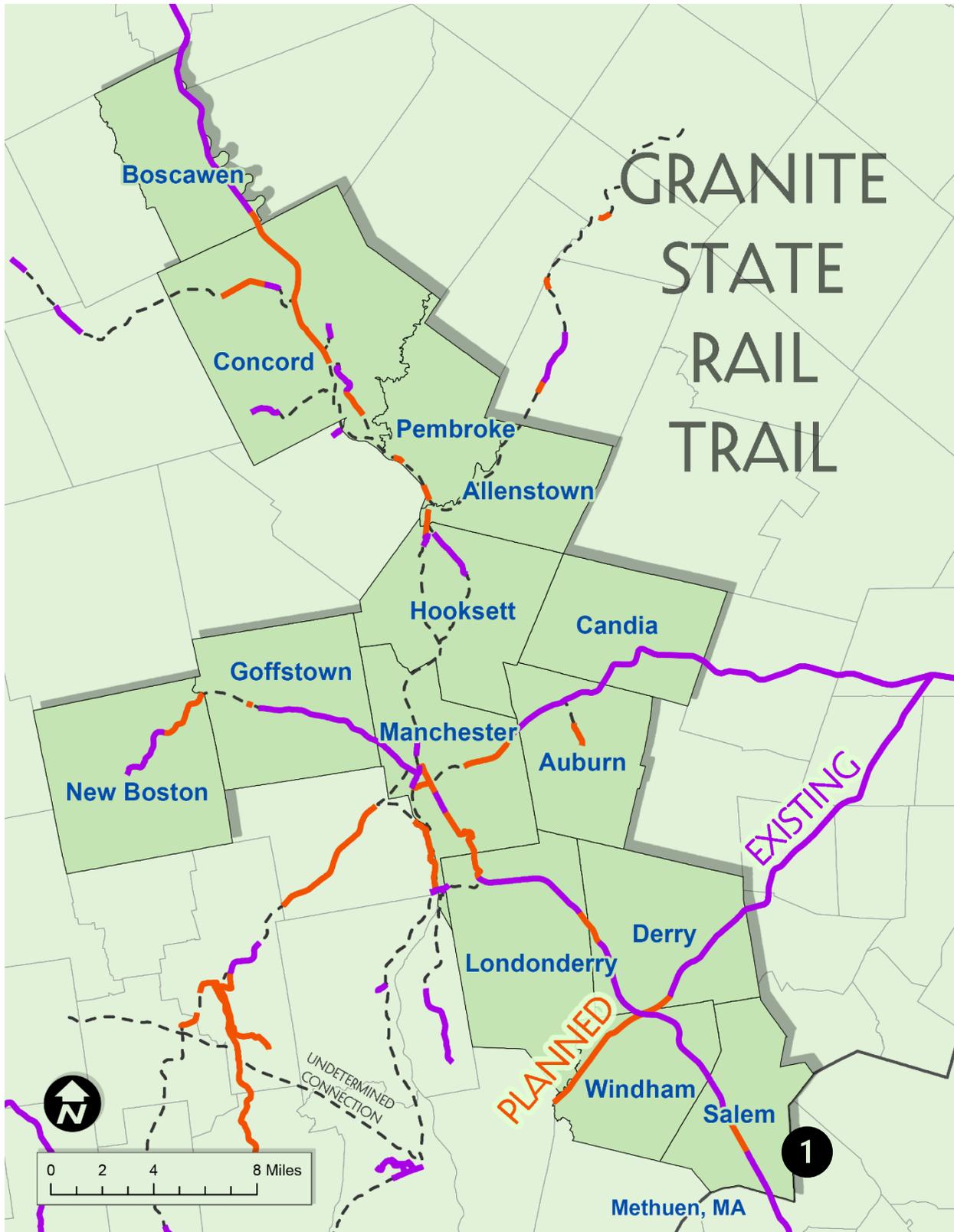
SNHPC staff followed up with telephone and email outreach to local trail organizations in the spring of 2021 to get more information on these groups' recent accomplishments and future goals.

II. Existing Conditions

2.1 Study Area

The study area of this plan extends from Salem through Manchester to Concord, with spurs to the east and west. This region correlates with the study area outlined in the Salem to Concord Bikeway Feasibility Study from 2003.

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Map 1: Granite State Rail Trail

2.2 Trail Network: Existing, Planned, and Gaps

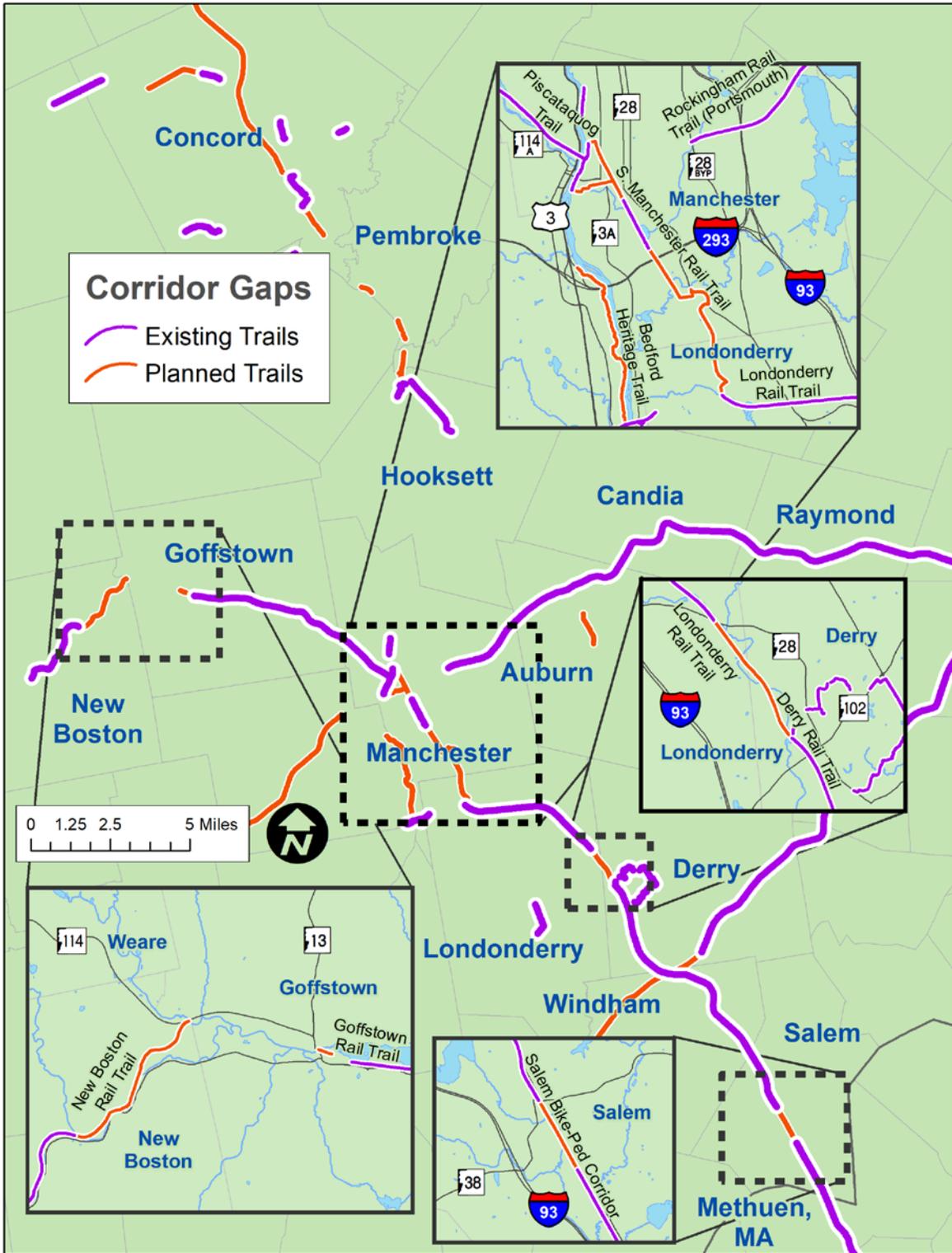
The southern New Hampshire rail trail network will connect to planned and existing trails as far south as Methuen, Massachusetts, and north to the Northern Rail Trail. This planned trail network is called the Granite State Rail Trail; much of it has been completed today, with several critical gaps yet to be filled.

Perhaps the most notable gap in the network is from Downtown Manchester northward to Hooksett. A "Rail with Trail" arrangement is currently being explored as a potential option. The SNHPC is willing to lend technical assistance and coordinate with the landowner, NH DOT, the City of Manchester, Manchester Moves, and any other interested stakeholders to evaluate the feasibility of this arrangement moving forward.

The longest sections of paved trail include the Derry Rail Trail, the Windham Rail Trail, and a portion of the Salem Bike-Ped Corridor. These combine for a continuous 9.3 miles of paved trail across the three towns.

Londonderry also has 3.5 miles of continuous paved trail, with a gap of only 1.4 miles separating it from the Derry-Windham stretch. Given current conditions and planned work, the bulk of the Salem-to-Manchester portion of trail is well on its way to completion.

The Community Profiles at the end of the Plan offer a detailed description of each trail by town. The following section briefly describes existing conditions, beginning with Salem in the south and extending northward to Concord.



Map 2: Corridor Gaps

From the Granite State Rail Trail, several trail branches will extend east and west, reaching into additional communities. The main gaps are listed below, in rough geographical order from south to north.

2.2.1 Salem to Manchester

For nearly two decades, trail groups have been working toward connecting the trails along the abandoned Manchester and Lawrence (M&L) railroad corridor. The M&L railroad corridor begins in Salem at the Massachusetts border and terminates in Downtown Manchester. Most of this corridor has been converted to trail as of 2020, but several gaps remain and are noted as gaps, planned paved, or planned unpaved stretches.



Map 3: Salem Trails

3-Mile Gap: Mass Border to Main Street in Salem

The first two miles from Methuen to Rockingham Park Boulevard has a recycled asphalt surface and is passable, but the trail lacks needed roadway crossings at streets and major driveways as the trail parallels NH Route 28. A Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) grant was awarded in 2019 to create a safe crossing at Rockingham Park Boulevard. North of Rockingham Park Boulevard is a one mile stretch of trail that will be completed as part of the Tuscan Village mixed-use development. This three-mile stretch would complete the southernmost section of the trail along the M&L corridor, adding to the 9.3 continuous miles to the north in Salem, Derry, and Windham.



Map 4: Derry Trails

1.4-Mile Gap: Derry-Londonderry Town Line/Exit 4A

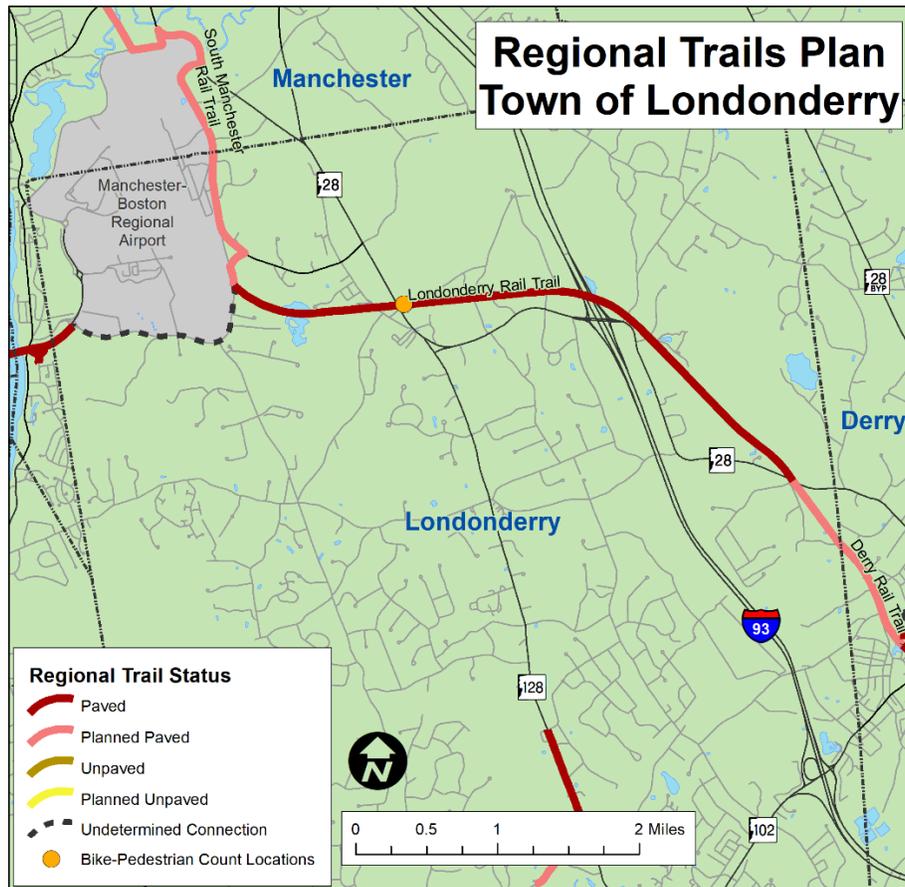


4 Site of future trail at Madden Road (April 2021)

Heading north, the 9.3-mile stretch ends just north of downtown Derry near Hood Park. A small portion of the rail bed is in private ownership here, creating a gap in the trail. Just to the north, the I-93 exit 4A project and subsequent road work are planned to cross the rail bed, which presents an opportunity to fill at least part of this gap. North of there, a controlled crossing of the busy Route 28 in Londonderry near Seasons Lane is needed. The 2.5-mile (as of 2020)

Londonderry Rail Trail's southern terminus is here on Route 28.

In March 2021, the Town of Derry submitted a TAP grant application that would fill the gap from Madden Road to the Londonderry Town Line, 1,900 linear feet.



Map 5: Londonderry Trails

4.4+/- Mile Gap: Mammoth Rd (Londonderry) to Gold St (Manchester)

One of the most significant gaps along the entire Granite State Rail Trail is the area around Manchester-Boston Regional Airport. In 2019, both Manchester and Londonderry were awarded Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grants to circumvent the airport; these projects will fill most of this gap. North of the airport, the historic Cohas Brook Railroad Trestle needs rehabilitation and retrofitting for trail use. The South Manchester Trail's southern terminus is at Gold Street, which continues .9 miles north to Beech Street.



5 The Londonderry Rail Trail's western terminus at Harvey Road (April 2021)

Manchester has three paved trails: The South Manchester Trail, the Piscataquog Trail, and the Riverwalk/Heritage Trail. These trails are no longer than two miles each in length and are not yet interconnected. Unpaved trails include the Goffstown Rail Trail, (connected to the Piscataquog Trail in Manchester via a pedestrian bridge, and the Rockingham Trail, which is managed by the New Hampshire Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) and stretches east to the New Hampshire seacoast.



Map 6: Manchester Trails

1.1-Mile Gap: Beech Street to Manchester Riverwalk

The City of Manchester received a Round 3 (2018) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant to fill this gap using the railroad bed from Beech Street to South Willow Street and use local roads and connections instead of crossing the wide, busy South Willow Street to get to the Riverwalk near Sundial Avenue. Later, it may be desirable to find a way to cross Queen City Avenue and continue the trail directly to Elm Street and Downtown Manchester where the City envisions a future multi-modal transportation center. In the 2021 TAP grant round, Manchester applied for a project that would construct a multiuse path in conjunction with a road diet on Canal Street from Granite Street north to the Amoskeag Bridge. It was not ranked as SNHPC’s top priority, but funding decisions had yet to be made by NH DOT at the time of this writing in May 2021.

The Manchester Riverwalk itself has a few gaps, one south of Northeast Delta Dental (Fisher Cats) Stadium, and another just south of the Eversource building.



Map 7: Downtown Manchester Trails

2.2.2 Manchester to Concord

A trail connection from Downtown Manchester to Concord is also planned; however, as of 2021 there is very little built to span the 17 +/- miles. Extensive planning and engineering work will be required to fill this large gap in the planned trail network. The Manchester Moves nonprofit organization has been very active recently in researching and planning to fill this gap.

In Hooksett, the Head's Pond Trail and Riverwalk Trail are both short trails with smooth, hard-packed surfaces. These trails may someday become part of a Manchester-to-Concord trail connection.



Map 8: Hooksett Trails

8+- Mile Gap: Downtown Manchester to District Court, Merrimack Street (Hooksett)

This stretch of planned trail appears to be the most challenging stretch of the GSRT route. It is unclear what the preferred route for this connection might take. It may be possible to route a trail or connection through a combination of safe, low-traffic local roads, easements through private developments, and bike lanes along local streets. Yet another option may include arcing out to the Head's Pond Trail in Hooksett. More planning and engineering work are required to determine a preferred feasible alignment. Because of multiple challenges, it is likely that significant progress here will not happen until neighboring gaps in the trail network are filled to the north and south.

Once at the District Court off Merrimack Street in Hooksett, the preferred trail route is easier to identify. The Hooksett Riverwalk Trail extends north for about .4 miles, partially using the former Suncook Valley Railroad bed which parallels the east bank of the Merrimack River from the courthouse through Allenstown and Pembroke into Concord. Extending the Riverwalk trail north would bring the trail to the Allenstown line.

4.5-Mile Gap: Hooksett Riverwalk Trail to Garvin's Falls Rd (Concord)

The historic Suncook Valley Railroad bed runs this entire route and is mostly intact but is currently broken into multiple public and private properties and Eversource utility easements. In order for the trail to be pieced together, trail easements would need to be secured from each property owner along the route. While this is an onerous task, similar challenges have been overcome elsewhere in New Hampshire, and early communications in Pembroke and Allenstown indicate the approach is feasible. In addition to securing easements and building the trail, two or three bridges will be needed. One may be needed to cross a historic canal in Allenstown, one to cross the Suncook River, and a third to cross the Soucook River. After crossing the Soucook, the rail bed passes within a short distance of Garvin's Falls Road in Concord. Hooksett, Pembroke and Allenstown have each endorsed the concept of a rail trail along this route through their communities.



Map 9: Pembroke Trails

2.5+- Mile Gap: Garvin's Falls Road to Downtown Concord

There are a few options for routing a trail from Garvin's Falls Rd to Downtown Concord. One option is to use Garvin's Falls Road, or a new trail through the Garvin's Falls area of Concord, to a pathway along the Merrimack River to Manchester Street. The property along the river south of Manchester Street has been an area of interest for development for some time. As of 2020, a mixed-use development is envisioned. A riverfront trail would be a complementary addition to this project, and could be designed, constructed, and permitted as part of the development.



Map 10: Concord Trails

Another option is to continue to the Suncook Valley railroad through the Garvin's Falls area and cross over the Merrimack River to Hall Street in Bow, at the Concord line. Piers and abutments remain from the former railroad and electric streetcar that once passed there and may be re-purposed to support a pedestrian bridge.

2.2.3 Downtown Concord Northward (see map, p. 21)

A local trail group is working with the City in creating a new trail along the Merrimack River through Concord. There are two projects planned to connect the Downtown Concord area north to the current terminus of the Northern Rail Trail in Boscawen.

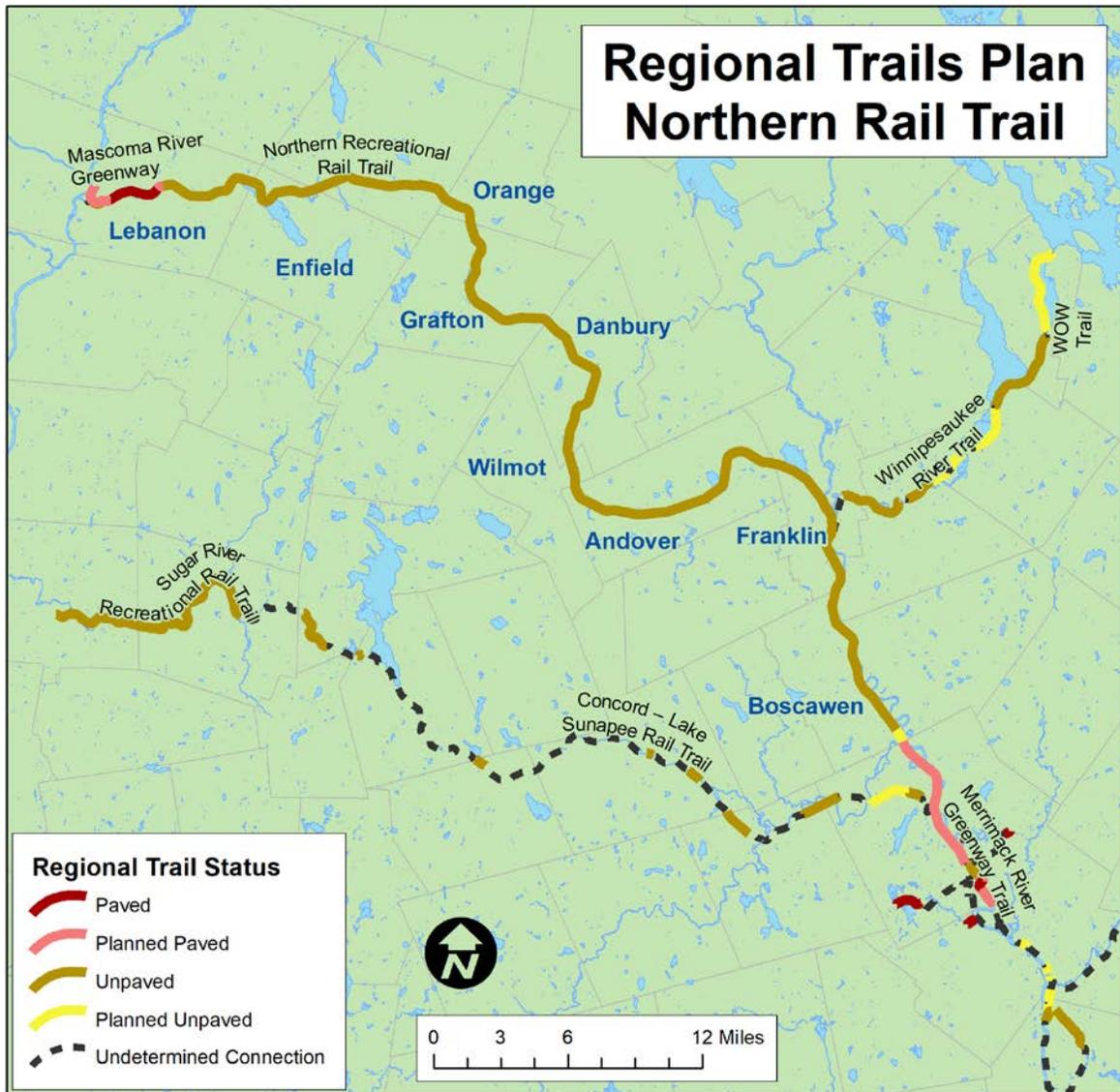
1.5 +- Mile Gap: Manchester Street to Loudon Road and Surrounding Vicinity

As of 2020, plans have been progressing to build trail between Manchester Street and Loudon Road. A boardwalk would be required to span wetlands. In addition, concepts for spanning the Merrimack River and I-93 have been conceptualized, along with ideas on how a crossing could be integrated into the I-93 Bow-Concord project. The City of Concord has a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant pending as of March 2021. The plan is to apply for LWCF again the next round to finish Manchester St to Loudon Rd.

6.5-Mile Gap: Downtown Concord to Northern Rail Trail

A privately held railroad line, owned by Pan Am Railways, extending from Downtown Concord north to the terminus of the Northern Rail Trail was abandoned in 2017. This railroad corridor is the obvious and preferred route for a regional trail connection between downtown Concord and the Northern Rail Trail in Boscawen. It is preferred by the Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail (FMRGT) non-profit, the City of Concord, and its Conservation Commission. Using this route would result in lower costs and environmental impacts vs cutting a new trail. A rail trail in this location would complete a continuous, off-street shared-use path from downtown Concord to Lebanon and possibly White River Junction, VT.

North of Concord, the Northern Rail Trail has been completed with 48 miles of smooth hard-packed surface from Lebanon to the southern end of Boscawen where public ownership of the corridor ends. This location is a logical meeting point for trails in the RTCC region and trails to the north and west.



Map 11: Northern Rail Trail

2.2.4 East-West Spurs

The Rockingham Trail is a planned spur heading east from Manchester to the Seacoast. The Rockingham Trail is currently over 40 miles long; however, this trail ends in the outskirts of Manchester and does not reach downtown Manchester or connect to other trails. The City of Manchester is advancing plans to bring this trail further into the city.



6 Bridge over Piscataquog River, Oct. 2015

The Piscataquog and Goffstown Rail Trails extend west from Manchester. A pedestrian bridge over the Piscataquog River was completed in 2015 (see photo). Additional improvements to the now unpaved Goffstown Rail Trail are ongoing. It may be possible to extend the Goffstown Rail Trail west of its current terminus near downtown and connect to the New Boston Rail Trail. The Friends of the Goffstown Rail Trail is a very active and motivated trail group that has made considerable improvements to the trail since

their formation in 2005. Please see p. 21 for more information on this and other local trail groups.

A connection from Bedford to Manchester may also be possible. Additional work and interest from the Town are needed to develop a vision for a connection, but bicycle and pedestrian connectivity are priorities, as evidenced in Bedford's 2014 Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity Master Plan and Draft 2020 Master Plan.

The abandoned Concord to Claremont railroad bed extends northwest from Downtown Concord. A non-profit organization "Friends of the Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail" has begun building trail in segments along this former railroad bed. This trail has the potential to connect multiple communities west of Concord to the Granite State Rail Trail.

More details on the existing and planned trail system can be found in the Community Trail Profiles in the Appendix.

Table 1: Summary of Existing Conditions/Trail Gaps (#s correspond to map on p. 12)

#	Town	Trail	Identified Gap	Status (Spring 2021)
1	Salem/ Methuen, MA	Salem Bike-Ped Corridor	Methuen border to Rockingham Park Boulevard, Salem (2-mile gap) and Rockingham Park Boulevard to Tuscan Village mixed-use development (1 mile)	Town of Salem received 2019 CMAQ funding to address roadway crossings at Rockingham Park Boulevard; last mile will be completed as part of the Tuscan Village development project
2	Derry/ Londonderry	Granite State Rail Trail	Hood Park in Derry to Londonderry town line (1.4-mile gap)	Part of gap would be covered by Derry's 2021 TAP application, which would address from Madden Road north to the Londonderry TL
3	Manchester/ Londonderry	Granite State Rail Trail	Mammoth Road (Londonderry) to Gold Street (Manchester) 4.4-mile gap	City of Manchester and Town of Londonderry received 2018 TAP funding to fill this gap. Construction date TBD; current complications associated with restoration or replacement of the historic Cohas brook railroad trestle bridge.
4	Manchester	South Manchester Rail Trail	Beech Street to Manchester Riverwalk Trail (1.1-mile gap)	City of Manchester was awarded TAP funding in 2018 to fill this gap. The path will continue along the old Lawrence Line Rail Bed and end at the new crossing of the active railroad like proposed for the area just south of Market Basket.
5	Goffstown/ New Boston	Piscataquog and Goffstown Rail Trails	2-mile gap between Parker Station Rd./NH 114 area and Goffstown Rail Trail	Conceptualized plans in place to connect New Boston and Goffstown rail trails through NH 114 and Parker Station Road.
6	Manchester/ Hooksett	Granite State Rail Trail (Ends at Harvey Road)	Downtown Manchester to Hooksett District Court on Merrimack Street (Hooksett Riverwalk) (8+ mile gap)	There is no designated route for this path, and street options are not suitable for pedestrians. Feasibility study is needed to identify alternative routes for this gap.
7	Hooksett, Allentown, Pembroke, Concord	Granite State Rail Trail	Hooksett Riverwalk to Garvin's Falls Rd Concord	Communication with Eversource ongoing; need to acquire use agreements or easements for trail
8	Concord	Merrimack River Greenway Trail	Garvin's Falls to Manchester St	Conceptual plans in place, currently tracking progress on possible private development.
9	Concord	Merrimack River Greenway Trail	Manchester Street to Loudon Road (1.5mi), River and I-93 Crossing	1700' of trail exists in Terrill Park; boardwalk pre-engineering plans in place; additional LWCF grant applications anticipated; ongoing coordination with I-93 Bow-Concord project.
10	Concord	Northern Rail Trail	Downtown Concord to Boscawen (6.3mi)	Discussions with current owners is being led by City of Concord to purchase property for existing gap, TAP application submitted in 2021.
11	Boscawen	Northern Rail Trail	.6-mile gap to Concord border	Privately-owned property is needed to complete current gap; funds have been raised for trail construction when property is acquired.

2.3 Local and Regional Trail Organizations

This section highlights the organizations, committees, and commissions responsible for the success and oversight of the region's trail network. Each group was asked to submit information about their organization, their role in the trail network, goals and accomplishments, and contact information. The groups highlighted in this section are vital to the success and growth of the region's trail network.

2.3.1 Derry Rail Trail Committee



Recent Accomplishments:

- Fall of 2020 saw the beginning of the long-awaited construction of the trail section North from Hood Park in downtown Derry to North High Street - the final section of town-owned railbed on the corridor.
- Working with the Town of Derry and the State of NH on the plan for the trail tunnel under the new Exit 4A access road to be built as part of the Exit 4A project.
- Worked with the Town to get the remaining half mile section of railbed (privately owned currently - and tied up in the Exit 4A project) onto the NH DOT Ten Year Plan.

- Working with the Town currently on TAP grant for the remaining half mile section (submitted spring 2021)

Goals for 2021 and Beyond:

- Major goal is completion of the trail in Derry - connecting north to Londonderry town line and linking with Londonderry Rail Trail
- Continue improvements - landscaping, art and other projects along the existing section of trail
- Improved connectivity to other town trail networks for example Hood Park and Derry's Bike Loop

Contact information: Mark Connors, President, DRTA - derryrailtrail@comcast.net

Website: <https://derryrailtrail.org/>

Meeting times/days: Monthly meetings of the Board of Directors - no set schedule

2.3.2 Friends of the Goffstown Rail Trail (FGRT)

FGRT is a 501c(3) organization whose role is to assist the town of Goffstown with trail design, funding, construction, and maintenance.

The Goffstown Rail Trail is a 5.54-mile-long public park owned by the Town of Goffstown and managed by the Goffstown Parks & Recreation Department. The trail runs from the center of Goffstown eastward to the town border with Manchester.

The Boston and Maine Railroad Company removed the track along this corridor in 1980. The town purchased the rail corridor in 2004, less four short sections which had been privately purchased years earlier. Fortunately, a recreational easement provides trail passage over three of these private sections



and the third section is bypassed by an abutting parallel public road. Trail specifications, approved in 2007 by the town, call for the trail to be 10-ft wide with a wearing surface of compacted stone dust (nitpac). From the town's border with Manchester the Piscataquog Rail Trail continues along the former B&M rail corridor for another 2.1 miles to the center of Manchester.

Recent Accomplishments:

The trail is being built in short sections as enabled by grants and donations. Between 2007 and 2020 the FGRT has had a role in 14 projects resulting in the improvement of 3.61 miles of trail at a cost of \$1,090,900 funded by \$838,500 in grants and \$252,400 in cash or service donations, or the allocation of recreation impact fees. The 1.93 miles of trail not yet improved are passable, but with caution, by pedestrians and bicyclists.

bicyclists.

Goals for the coming year(s)

The 1.93 miles of trail, not yet improved, are divided into eight trail projects.

Four uncompleted trail sections (totaling 0.89 miles) are considered "funded" for completion but with their start time not totally resolved. Three of these trail sections will be built by developers when they do their planned and approved projects on an abutting parcel. The fourth section, one-half mile long, abutting the Hillsborough County administrative complex, will be accomplished in late 2021 using funds from an approved 2021 Recreational Trails Program grant.

One uncompleted trail section (totaling 0.68 miles) will be the subject of a 2022 RTP grant application assuming this grant will allow projects worth up to \$100,000. As of February 2021, the application window for submission of the 2022 RTP grants has not been announced by the NH Bureau of Trails.

Of remaining uncompleted three trail sections (totaling 0.36 miles), two could potentially be done by an abutting developer, assuming the Planning Board and the developer are so inclined. The last section, privately held but benefiting from a trail easement, is potentially a partnership project between the town and FGRT.

Contact information:

FGRT President: Warren Denby (wkdenby@goffstownrailtrail.org)

FGRT Project Manager: David Pierce (davepierce@myfairpoint.net)

Goffstown Parks & Recreation Director, Rick Wilhelmi, (rick.wilhelmi@goffstownnh.gov)

Website: <https://goffstownrailtrail.org/>

Meeting times/days: Monthly meetings, open to the public, are held on the 4th Tuesday, 7 pm, at the Goffstown Parks and Rec Building. Notifications are published through the FGRT website.

2.3.3 Hooksett Trail Committee

Recent Accomplishments:



- Completed half of the Brick Kiln Historic Trail Loop on the Hooksett Riverwalk Trail (Fall 2019).
- Awarded an \$80,000 RTP grant to complete the loop in 2021, pending approval of a town warrant article to be voted on in March.
- Completed a Stewardship Plan draft for the Head's Pond Conservation Area. Held a public meeting to receive input. The plan includes trails, forestry management, wildlife preservation, use, and oversight.
- Contracted with the Student Conservation Association to build out a trail loop at the Clay Pond Headwaters Conservation Area (Summer 2019).
- Updated trail signage and kiosks at Hooksett Riverwalk Trail and Clay Pond.
- Worked with Boy Scouts to build a bridge over a wetland area (Eagle Scout project)

Goals for the coming year(s):

- Pass warrant article (in March) and complete the Brick Kiln Historic Trail Loop (Phase III of Hooksett Riverwalk Trail).
- Publish the Stewardship Plan for Head's Pond and initiate first steps.
- Contract with Student Conservation Association to build out trails at Pinnacle Park and Hooksett Riverwalk Trail.
- Arrange for mowing at the Hooksett Riverwalk Trail for maximum protection of the Monarch butterfly habitat on the milkweed. Apply for this site to be a Monarch Butterfly Waystation.
- Arrange for invasive species removal at Quimby Mountain Conservation Area.
- Plan for Hooksett Riverwalk Trail completion to Allenstown (Phase IV). This will fulfill a phase of the Regional Trails Plan.
- Partner with the Heritage Commission to erect signage regarding history of the Hooksett Riverwalk Trail.

- Publish regular updates to our blog to educate residents on conservation activities and concerns. (<https://hooksettconservationcommissionblog.wordpress.com/>)

Contact information:

Conservation Commission Chair: Cindy Robertson (cindyrob79@gmail.com)

Conservation Commission Representative: JoCarol Woodburn (jocarolg@gmail.com)

Town Engineer: Bruce Thomas, (bthomas@hooksett.org)

Staff Assistant: Leann Fuller, (lfuller@hooksett.org)

Website: <https://www.hooksett.org/conservation-commission>

Meetings: A monthly meeting is held at Town Hall, 35 Main Street, Hooksett, NH, second Monday of every month at 4:30 pm. The meeting schedule is posted on the Conservation Commission website (see above). Special meetings are held as needed.

2.3.4 Manchester

Over the years, the City has had several different groups with interest in biking, walking, and trails. Funding, level of interest, stakeholder partnering, the Covid-19 pandemic, and other factors have either raised levels of interest or seen interest wane. For this plan, we will include the feedback we received from Queen City Bikes (QC Bikes), Manchester Moves, and Bike Manchester.

Manchester Moves

Recent accomplishments:

- 2021: New Board of Directors, Research & Fundraising: Secured a private grant for \$20,000 to assist with planning efforts and elected eight new directors from various neighborhoods and businesses in the city of Manchester. Efforts are underway for updated branding and website. Developed a comprehensive inventory of trails and mapping for the city.
- Heritage Trail- 2020: Rehabilitated 1.5 miles of trail on the northernmost section of the Manchester Heritage Trail. This is the land that is adjacent to Stark Park on the State of NH property behind SYDC. We used a private grant of \$75,000 to rehab this section, which is now fully accessible and open to the public. Manchester Parks & Recreation is planning to further improve the trail in the spring with hardpack. In April, plans are to plant 100 trees along this trail to celebrate Earth Day.
- Londonderry Trailways- 2020: Donated \$7,500 to Londonderry Trailways to assist with their trail efforts.

- Bernice & Irving Singer Pedestrian Bridge- 2015: Assisted the City of Manchester and the Department of Transportation by securing the match funding for the construction of the bridge that links Manchester to Goffstown via the Piscataquog Trail at mile 2.0.

Goals for the coming year(s):

To further the mission of the organization through private/public partnerships including public awareness and fundraising. Our goal is to link the core of the city to the "almost there but not quite" multi-use trail segments to the North, East, and South of the city.

Contact Information: Jason Soukup, Manchester Moves Secretary, Jason.soukup@gmail.com

Website: <http://manchestermoves.org>

Meeting Times: The 2nd. Tuesday of each month @ 7 pm. via Zoom.

How can SNHPC assist us?

- Access to analytic tools such as ArcGIS.
- Help coordinating public meetings to educate citizens of the opportunity a complete trail system offers a modern city.

Bike Manchester¹:

Recent accomplishments - In participation with Queen City (QC) Bike Collective--was successfully awarded grant funds in Summer 2020 to install a Bike Fix-It station in Bronstein Park. The City of Manchester debuted the fix-it station last Fall. Bike Manchester members also participated in public comment and coordination with Manchester Planning staff on the update of the City's Master Plan

Goals for the coming year(s):

- QC Bike Collective recently hosted a SWOT analysis for stakeholders in the Greater Manchester bike community, which Bike Manchester participated in. Our immediate goals are to perform recommendations from that analysis, including strengthening relationships with existing bike stakeholders and further coordinating with municipal officials on bike work--especially on realizing goals outlined in the city's master plan. Another goal is to bring back bike share and/or expand shared micro-mobility options throughout Greater Manchester.

¹ On May 14, 2021, Bike Manchester announced a merger with Queen City Bike Collective. The information here was collected prior to May, and has been left in the document in its original form.

- Bike Manchester hopes the City and potentially other communities in the region would jointly apply for up to \$800,000 dollars of CMAQ funding (+ \$200k local match) for the capital purchase of 25 docked bike share facilities and 200+ bikes as permitted by FHWA and consistent with NHDOT's own CMAQ project criteria.

Contact information – Derek Shooster, shoosterd@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bikemht/>

Meeting times/days - no meetings scheduled currently.

Feedback on how SNHPC might assist your group -

- Support our goal(s) to bring bike share back to the Manchester region and all regions of NH
- Work with NHDOT to determine how bikeshare programs can become a reality for the Southern NH region.
- Continued assistance with bike/ped trip counting, mapping bike travel data, and identification of locations for future safe bicycle infrastructure.
- Continue reviewing high crash locations involving people on bikes and stressing the importance to communities of performing road safety audits and--when possible--leveraging HSIP funding to make safer facilities for people on bikes.
- Strategically prioritize data collection before and during any trail, bike facility, or tactical urbanism demonstrations; as local decision makers are more inclined to commit to funding safe bike and pedestrian facilities when sufficient data is available.
- Work with NHDOT and GACIT to identify any opportunities to leverage other funding sources to more prudently build out our regional trail network--especially trail segments that make up the Granite State Rail Trail. Work with municipalities and all appropriate stakeholders to get more bike transportation projects reflected on the 10-Year Plan... at the very least, more equitable funding.
- Identify any small scale bike needs in any of your communities that Bike Manchester can assist with (procuring bike racks, fix-it stations, bike rodeos, etc.).

Queen City (QC) Bicycle Collective:

Recent Accomplishments – Recently awarded grant funds to install FIXIT stations in partnership with Manchester Parks & Recreation. One station has been installed in Bronstein park, and eight more stations with bicycle pumps are planned throughout the city and along the Goffstown/Westside Rail Trail. Additionally, four pump-only stations will be installed at Gossler Park Elementary, Beech St. Elementary, City Hall, and in the Millyard. Additionally, QC Bike Collective has secured funding to support new staff positions to expand efforts into the community and develop plans and funding to create a sustainable position in these new areas as well as assist administrative duties.

Goals for the coming year(s):

- Support City departments efforts for infrastructure improvements
- Continue to develop ways to share information (Bike Community SWOT analysis)
- Organize events for Bike Month
- Host an Open Streets Event
- Work towards Vision Zero
- Have the City of Manchester adopt a Complete Streets policy
- Establish a wayfinding project for trails and FIXIT stations
- Safe routes to School
- Safe routes to parks
- City of Manchester Bike Master Plan

Meeting Times:

QC Bike Collective is actively looking to empanel a committee to consider and direct our planning and advocacy group. In the meantime, folks looking to get engaged should come into the shop. QC's hours are Tuesdays and Thursday evenings, from 4-8 PM, and Saturdays from 1-4 PM.

How SNHPC Can Help

This year, QC Bike has begun to explore a greater role in advocacy & planning. We see bicycles as a viable transportation alternative and are excited at the prospect of increasing bike ridership across our city, beyond the walls of our shop. We understand the knowledge and technical assistance that SNHPC can provide and are looking forward to strengthening our partnership.

2.3.5 New Boston Rail Trail

Goals for the coming year(s): Construction on the final 1.5 mile section from Lang Station trailhead to Parker Road trailhead will begin in Spring 2021 thanks to donations. This section of trail contains protruding tree roots and trip-laden terrain. 0.25 miles were completed in December 2018.

Contact Information:

Email: nbrailtrail@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.nbrailtrail.com/>

2.3.6 Windham Rail Trail

There are three groups in Windham responsible for overseeing various functions of the Windham Rail Trail. They are:

- Windham Rail Trail Alliance (WRTA) – oversee the N-S trail,
- The Windham Trails Committee responsible for the East-West Greenway section (owned by the Town), and
- Windham Depot Advisory Committee oversee buildings at the trailhead.



Recent Accomplishments:

Windham Rail Trail

- An Eco Counter installed by Southern NH Planning for the month of May recorded an astounding 31,454 trips heading south from the Depot, exceeding our previous high of 12,418 in a similar period 2 years ago.
- Major rebuild of 1400 ft of the "Rainforest" portion of the rail trail.
- Regraded many of the rail trail pavement shoulders.
- Record rail trail usage numbers (Thanks to SNHPC for monitoring)
- Eagle Project completed, frame off rebuild of a former B&M freight wagon.

Windham Trails Committee/Conservation Committee

- Ongoing maintenance of all the heavily used trail networks in town.
- Clyde Pond conservation area trail construction with impressive new mountain bike trails.
- Exciting trail map/signs being created by SNHPC for many town areas.
- Planning started for Campbell Farm trail system.
- Dam installation coordinated through town volunteers restored Moeckel Pond!
- Eagle and Gold scout projects continue to help maintain and improve trails and recreational areas.

Goals for the coming year(s):

Windham Rail Trail/Windham Depot Advisory Committee

- Co- host of for an April 9 Marathon/Half-Marathon race.
- Host of our 13th annual Flat n Fast 5k in the fall. (Date moved from our June date).
- Working with Historic Committee to electrify the Windham Depot historic buildings.

Windham Trails Committee/Conservation Committee

- The Trails Committee continues working with housing developers on trail links and access.
- Partial "Greenway" rail trail improvement funding is on the town ballot this year. Eventually will connect as a pedestrian/bicycle corridor connecting to the Windham Rail Trail/Depot area.
- Working with Historic Committee to Windham Depot historic buildings.
- Complete the first phase of SNHPC trail mapping.

Feedback for SNHPC assistance:

- Awareness of Road crossing safety funding for the rail trail crossings of North Lowell Rd. (State owned road)
- Serious marketing by State Tourism to promote state rail trails
- Engage businesses working to attract employees to New Hampshire to assist in funding the Rail Trail network as our existence is promoted in their recruiting efforts.

III. Funding Considerations

A variety of funding sources exist at the local, regional, state, and federal levels. Most trail projects described in this plan will require significant funds from a variety of sources. Most existing trails were built with Federal Transportation dollars with local matching funds, and this trend appears likely to continue. Federal and State programs have taken the form of Transportation Enhancements (TE), Transportation Alternative Program (TAP, replacing TE), Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) or Recreational Trails Program (RTP), all of which require a 20% local match.

New trail can also be built as part of larger transportation projects. This has been done in the past, as is the case with the pedestrian tunnel under I-93 in Windham being built as part of the I-93 widening. Future possibilities include building trail as part of the I-93 Exit 4A project in Derry, and the I-93 Bow-Concord project in Concord and Bow. This strategy of adding multi-modal components to large highway projects may be more cost effective than constructing a trail after the fact. It is also consistent with "complete streets" principles that several New Hampshire communities have adopted.

3.1 Federal Transportation Funding

3.1.1 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) passed in 2012 and consolidated several bicycle and pedestrian transportation funding programs that were previously available under SAFETEA-LU into a broader program called [Transportation Alternatives](#). This singular program is the largest federal source for trail funding.² In New Hampshire, these federal funds, are administered by the NHDOT, and are intended to foster non-motorized transportation infrastructure that is safe, in good

² <https://www.railstotrails.org/build-trails/trail-building-toolbox/funding/acquisition-funding/>

physical condition, and accessible. Eligible activities include construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other users of non-motorized forms.

TAP is currently authorized under the FAST (Fixing America's Surface Transportation System) Act, signed into law in December 2015. New Hampshire's annual allocation for TAP was approximately \$5.7M (\$4.56M Federal) in 2018. Funding is awarded in highly competitive application rounds every two years. Eligible entities to receive funds under the Transportation Alternatives program include local governments; regional transportation authorities; transit agencies; natural resource or public land agencies; schools, school districts and local education agencies; tribal governments; and any other local or regional governmental entity that is responsible for transportation oversight and is deemed eligible by the state DOT (Rails to Trails Conservancy.org).

The FAST Act is due to expire in December 2021 and a new authorization bill may result in changes to funding for trail facilities.

A new round of TAP funding was opened in January 2021. New Hampshire's annual allocation for TAP is approximately \$3.2M (\$2.6M Federal, \$0.6M local match) . Two years of funding will be awarded in this round.

There were six applications from projects in this corridor:

- Concord
- Derry
- Manchester
- New Boston
- Salem
- Windham

At the time of this writing, applications were being reviewed at the RPC level before forwarding to NHDOT for potential awards.

3.1.2 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)

Administered by FHWA, the [CMAQ program](#) has been reauthorized under every successive Transportation Bill up to and including the FAST Act in 2015. Through the close of the MAP-21 period in 2015, the CMAQ program has provided more than \$30 billion to fund over 30,000 transportation related environmental projects for State DOTs, metropolitan planning organizations, and other sponsors throughout the US. As with its predecessor legislation, the FAST Act provides funding to areas in nonattainment or maintenance for ozone, carbon monoxide, and/or particulate matter. In addition, those States that have no nonattainment or maintenance areas still receive a minimum apportionment of CMAQ funding for either air quality projects or other elements of flexible federal aid highway spending.

3.1.3 Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

The RTP is a reliable source of funds for smaller trail work and has been known to be easier to administer than TAP or CMAQ grants. Due to its relatively small size and focus on recreation, it is generally not suitable for larger projects, and in New Hampshire, it has been the practice that paved trails are ineligible. While the maximum award has varied over time, it is currently capped at \$80,000, with a required 20% match for a \$100,000 project. RTP is administered by the NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR). Competitive grant rounds are held annually. More information on this funding source can be found at

- <https://www.nhstateparks.org/about-us/trails-bureau/grants/recreational-trails-program>
- https://www.nhstateparks.org/getmedia/e2f80356-1835-4f87-a880-91e5c0087bef/RTP_Information-Presentation.pdf.

The Goffstown Rail Trail has received several RTP grants, including in 2018 and 2019:

- The 2018 New Hampshire Recreational Trail Program (RTP) Grant 18 – 25 (East Union St. to Shirley Park) project improved 1,800 feet of trail to meet town specifications and an additional 17 feet of split rail fence were added by volunteers. Funds from the RTP award, FGRT donations (including those from the Manchester Marathon Association), membership fees and donations from trail users were used to complete this project.
- In July 2019 work commenced on the NH Recreational Trails Program (RTP) 19-021 awarded to the Friends of the Goffstown Rail Trail to improve 2,255 feet of the trail between PRO Landscaping Supply and the Shell gas station. An award of \$45,300 from the NH Bureau of Trails includes \$9,100 of cash and labor from the Friends of the Goffstown Rail Trail to satisfy a 20% match requirement. The project involved tree and root removal, culvert restoration, grass seed planting, fence installation and tree planting and nit-pack gravel compacting on 2,255 feet of the trail.

3.2 State and Local Government Funding



7 Derry Rail Trail at Merchants Row, July 2020

While Federal programs are commonly sought sources of funding for trail development, there can also be opportunities for funding at the local and state level. Local governments have at times supported trail building, through outright financing of construction, to utilizing municipal labor and equipment, and frequently providing matching funds for Federal grants. Municipal governments are often critical partners in trail development for a range of reasons, including that they are the most likely fiscal agent applying for and managing Federal grants.

3.3 Private Funding and Local Support

There are several funding and fundraising options outside of federal funding. For most projects in the RTCC region, significant amounts of fundraising are required simply to provide match money for federal projects. In-kind match and volunteer service can be used depending on the town and its particular trail situation.

In many New Hampshire communities, local trail groups are the driving force behind securing funding and successful trail development. For example, the Windham Rail Trail was started by the Windham Rail Trail Alliance - a local non-profit with a vision to develop an active transportation and recreation corridor over the former Manchester and Lawrence railroad. Over 85% of the funding for the trail development was provided by private donors, and 98% of maintenance is provided by the Windham Rail Trail Alliance. The Friends of the Goffstown Rail Trail in Goffstown, NH is another well-established trail advocacy group that has been instrumental in the development and maintenance of the Goffstown Rail Trail - securing funding from a variety of grants, federal, state and municipal programs to provide a safe, accessible rail trail for residents in Goffstown and surrounding communities.

A range of public-private partnerships have been leveraged to support trails. Private developers may recognize the added value trails bring to their properties and have in the past contributed to or constructed trail associated with their projects. Local governments and trail advocates can seek out such opportunities for both trail building and economic development purposes.

3.4 CSS and Complete Streets Approach

Trail development may also occur as part of highway and other transportation projects. The NH Department of Transportation (DOT) currently implements a [Context-Sensitive Solutions \(CSS\)](#)

approach in its transportation projects. This means that the DOT will work with communities to ensure that transportation projects meet the needs of the community in which they are working. Another approach adopted by many states and municipalities is the Complete Streets approach. This approach is to plan, design, construct, maintain, and operate our transportation system for all users, including automobiles, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. Under either the CSS approach, the Complete Streets approach or both, there is significant room for including trail development alongside traditional roadway projects. In fact, including trails and other associated non-motorized transportation elements will result in well-rounded transportation projects that meet a wider range of needs.

In the RTCC area, the I-93 exit 4A project, and the I-93 Bow-Concord projects are examples of highway projects that are candidates for incorporating trail development. The Exit 4A project will construct a roadway that will pass over the Manchester and Lawrence (M&L) corridor rail bed that the Derry and Londonderry rail trails use and hope to soon connect. By making improvements/connections during the Exit 4A project, cost efficiencies will be realized as will the goal of addressing another critical gap in the link between Manchester and Salem.

In Concord, I-93 is a barrier to east-west bicycle and pedestrian travel. The City also has a well-documented and long-standing desire to connect to the Merrimack River and build a trail north-south along the river. Ensuring the I-93 widening project includes these enhancements will result in a project that better meets the needs of the community and will reduce the need to make future changes or consider additional infrastructure later.

IV. Challenges

4.1 Trail Maintenance

Maintenance can be a challenge for trails of any size. After construction of the path, maintenance is an ongoing task that requires significant resources, including volunteers, staff and funding. Maintenance and restoration of existing trails is one eligible activity under the federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP). In 2015, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy published a guide entitled [*Maintenance Practices and Costs of Rail Trails*](#) that can serve as a useful guide to New Hampshire's many local trail groups.

In New Hampshire, most trails are supported in part through assistance from local non-profit organizations. These groups have helped support maintenance activities through fundraising efforts, a volunteer organization.



8 Trash on an undeveloped portion of the South Manchester Rail Trail (2018)

Fundraising Events: Despite difficulties in gathering donations for trail maintenance, events can be a great way to raise money and earn community support for a trail.

Volunteerism: Many minor maintenance tasks are completed through the dedication and assistance of volunteers. Non-profit advocacy groups can use their networks and lists of local trail advocates to search for volunteers. Making the best use of willing volunteers takes coordination and thorough planning.

Leveraging Local Business: Many businesses in NH have supported trails in several ways, but trail groups can directly reach out to businesses that have the tools and expertise needed for specific maintenance activities. Business may donate material or labor or provide it at reduced cost. Advocacy groups can help by letting their followers know their local business is supporting their trail.

Most trails in the study region are municipally owned and maintained with assistance from local trail advocacy groups. State-owned trails are maintained by the NH Department of Natural and Cultural and Resources (DNCR), sometimes with assistance from local trail groups.

Generally, volunteer trail groups create a formal agreement with state, municipal, or other owner of the trail. The agreement typically outlines who is responsible for each task and allows volunteer groups to work on the trails. Often, smaller work items such as removal of trash, fallen brush, and graffiti is done by the local trail group. More involved repairs such as mowing, fallen tree removal, repaving, and fixing washouts are usually done by the town's Public Works Department (DPW), coordinated through the Town's Conservation Commission, or if owned by the State, the DNCR. In some cases, trail groups can

help secure donated or reduced-cost materials and labor from local businesses. Local DPWs can also be a source of trail-related work, depending on the town.

The Rockingham Recreational Trail and the Northern Rail Trail are both owned and maintained by the State through DNCR and local groups, such as snowmobile clubs assist with maintenance. Additional amenities such as signage are often maintained by local groups.

Water drainage is perhaps one of the most important design elements to consider for trails. Insufficient drainage can lead to erosion, washouts, and other costly regular maintenance issues. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials has a guide that can be referenced for best practices:

<https://www.fs.fed.us/eng/pubs/pdfpubs/pdf00232839/pdf00232839dpi72pt02.pdf>

Fallen trees and brush is a common maintenance issue. During storm events brush and tree limbs may fall into the trail. Regular trimming and tree care along a trail can help reduce the amount of debris or more severe fallen tree occurrences a trail group experiences. On paved trails, sweeping of dirt and gravel that trail users can slip on is important for trail safety.

4.2 All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Enforcement

ATVs and snowmobiles may only operate on trails that are clearly marked for the type of vehicle that is being used or on land where the rider has received written landowner permission to ride.³ ATV trail maps can be found on NH Fish and Game's website as well as the website of NH State Parks. As of 2020, the only shared-use trail in the RTCC region that is approved for ATV use is the Rockingham Rail Trail Fremont Branch, starting in Derry heading east to Fremont. Any ATV use on trails that are unmarked is illegal.

Generally, greater trail use by the public will prevent non-permitted trail use and other nefarious activity. Well-used trails are often relatively self-policing.

4.3 E-Bikes

Electric bicycles or electric-assist bicycles, commonly called e-bikes, are like standard bikes in appearance and operation but feature a small electric motor. The motor assists the rider by adding power to the wheels. Broadly speaking, e-bikes are either pedal-assist, meaning the motor is engaged by pedaling and cuts off at a designated top speed, or throttle-on-demand, with which the motor can propel the bike even if the rider is not pedaling.⁴ E-bikes are organized in to three distinct classifications:

³ <http://www.eregulations.com/newhampshire/ohrv/where-can-i-ride/>

⁴ <https://www.railstotrails.org/build-trails/trail-building-toolbox/management-and-maintenance/e-bikes/>

Class I e-bikes are those in which the motor provides a boost only when a rider is pedaling. The boost cuts out at 20 miles per hour (mph), and the rider must rely on their own muscle power to go any faster than that.

Class II e-bikes are those in which the throttle can be switched to provide a boost up to a maximum assisted speed of 20 mph, without any pedaling required. The boost cuts out at 20 mph, and the rider must rely on their own muscle power to go any faster than that.

Class III e-bikes are pedal-assist like Class I's, except they have a maximum assisted speed of 28 mph. They are also equipped with a speedometer (Rails to Trails Conservancy.org).

In 2019, House Bill 148 clarified laws surrounding E-bikes in New Hampshire, consistent with other legislation in many US states. E-bikes are defined as "electric assisted bicycles," so long as the e-bike's motor is under 750 watts, has a maximum speed of 20 miles per hour, and has fully operable pedals. The same rules of the road apply to both e-bikes and human-powered bicycles. As of 2020, the New Hampshire Bureau of Trails does not have a law or policy specifically addressing e-bikes, but they are generally defined as motor vehicles.⁵



A city, town or state agency that has jurisdiction may restrict or prohibit the use of E-bikes on trails to protect natural resources and ensure safety for all users. Currently, there has been little to no enforcement on New Hampshire trails regarding E-bike use. It has been a general trend to welcome class I and II E-bikes, particularly because the E-bike allows people of varying ages and abilities to participate in bicycling on trails.⁶

⁵ https://peopleforbikes.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/E-Bike-Law-Handouts_NH_Revision_compressed.pdf

⁶ Bike-Walk Alliance of NH: <http://www.bwanh.org> (photo also from BWANH)

V. Data Collection

5.1 Bicycle and Pedestrian Data Collection

Bicycle/pedestrian data can be used for a variety of purposes such as justifying investments in trails and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, capturing seasonal trends, capturing the growth in trail network usage, and for overall promotion of a town or region's trail network.

Collecting bicycle and pedestrian counts on trails can be accomplished by manually counting trail users or through automated counting technology. Although manual counting may be beneficial in collecting supplemental information about trail users e.g. age, gender, types of trail use (walking, running, bicycling etc.), automated counters provide a more convenient solution to gathering pedestrian data over extended periods of time in a variety of environments.

There are several types of automated bicycle and pedestrian counters of varying capabilities. In several areas of New Hampshire, pedestrian counters called Pyro Boxes, created by the French company EcoCounter, are used to gather data on trails and sidewalks throughout the region. The Pyro-box is an automated infrared counter that detects peoples' body heat as they pass by. The counter can be used in both urban and rural environments in all weather conditions and has been used to collect data on trail networks throughout the region. Tube counters can count bicycles and pairing them with a device like the Pyro-box can distinguish between bicycles and pedestrians.



9 Pyro Box automated counter (winter 2020)

5.1.1 Data collection trends

It comes as no surprise that bicycle and pedestrian traffic volumes vary widely across seasons, with the weather, and from day to day, more so than automobile traffic. Trends between seasons can be similar. For example, data from the Londonderry Rail Trail in the Winter versus the Summer shows a decrease in the overall daily average but the hourly average profile is similar for both seasons (Figure_).

Collecting data for as long a period as possible is best, preferably for 2 weeks or more. Prior to 2017, the SNHPC had been collecting data on the region's trails on a very limited basis, as all nine Regional Planning Commissions shared one bike/ped counter. Since 2017, the Commission has purchased two of its own counters and has been fulfilling bike/ped counting service requests to its 14 communities since then.

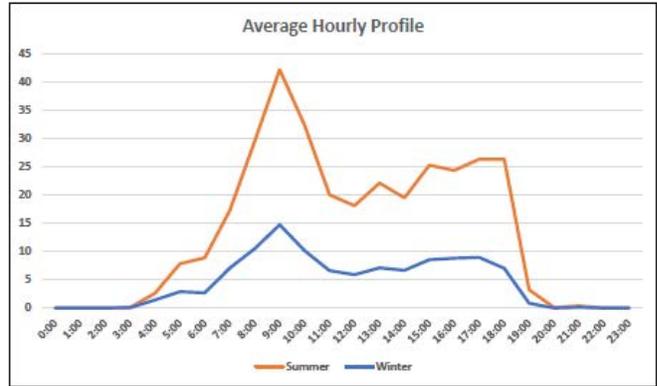
Permanent bicycle and pedestrian counters are the best way to understand annual bicycle and pedestrian traffic and variation. As of 2020, the only permanent counter in New Hampshire is installed on the Nashua River Rail Trail. This level of data provides answers to a broad range of questions such as seasonal and year-to-year usage.



August 2018
Daily Average: 327



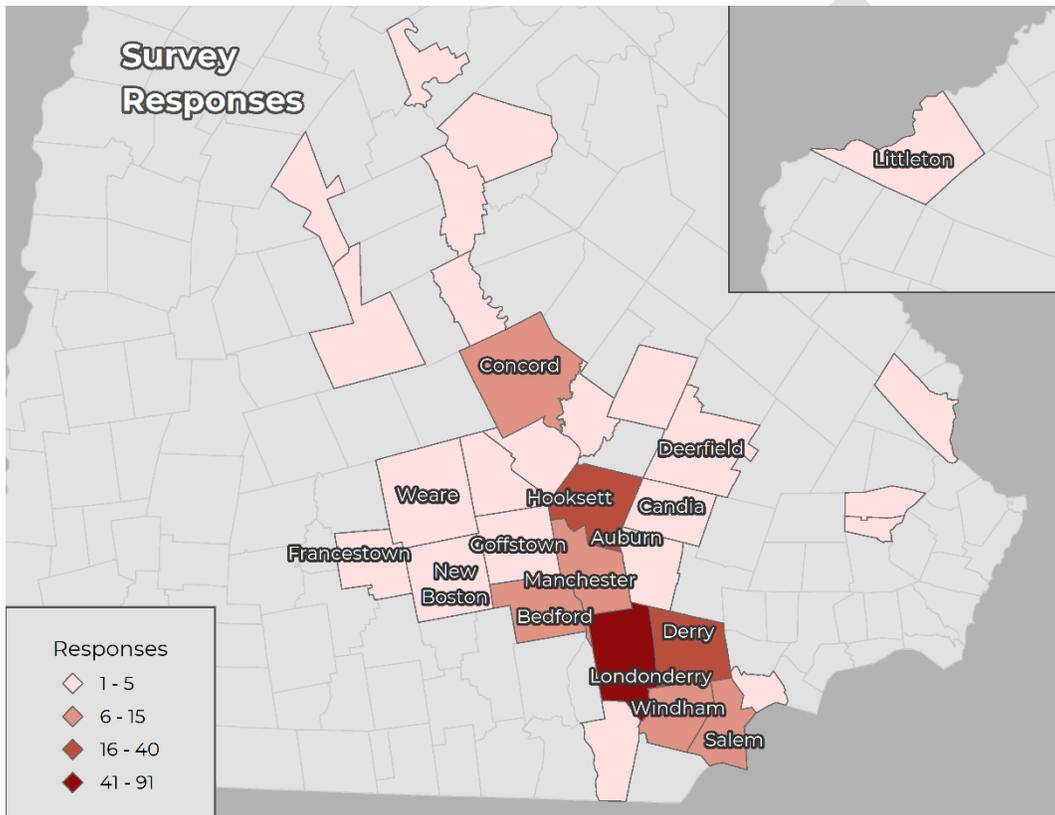
February 2019
Daily Average: 43



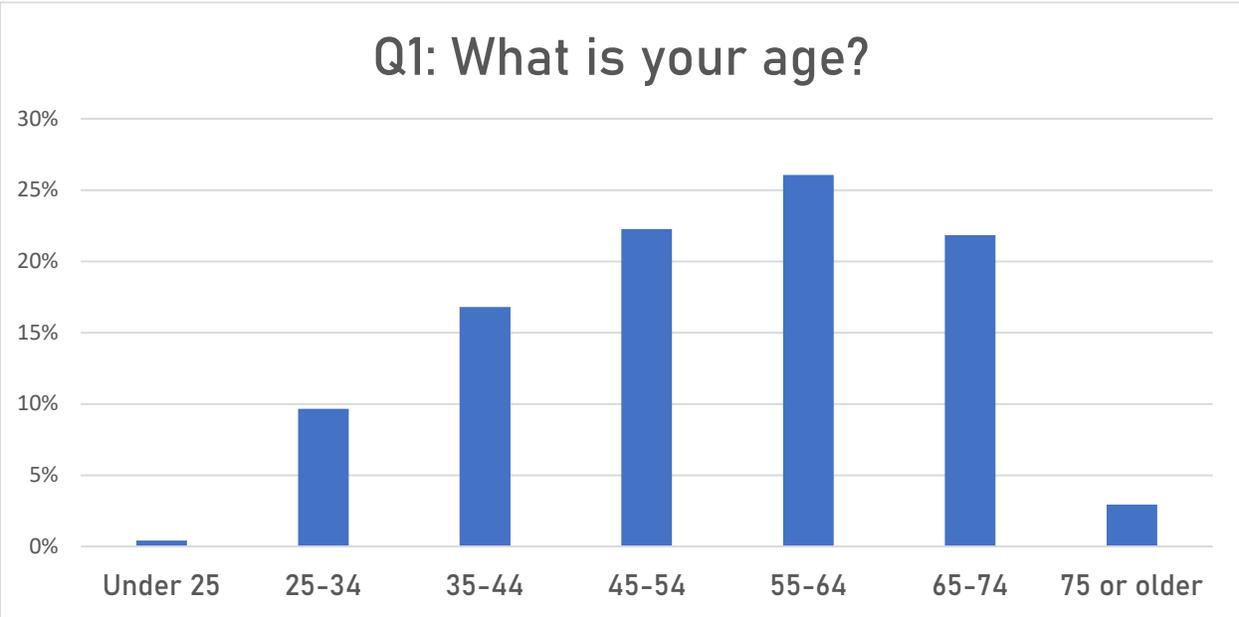
DRAFT

Appendix A: 2020 Survey Results

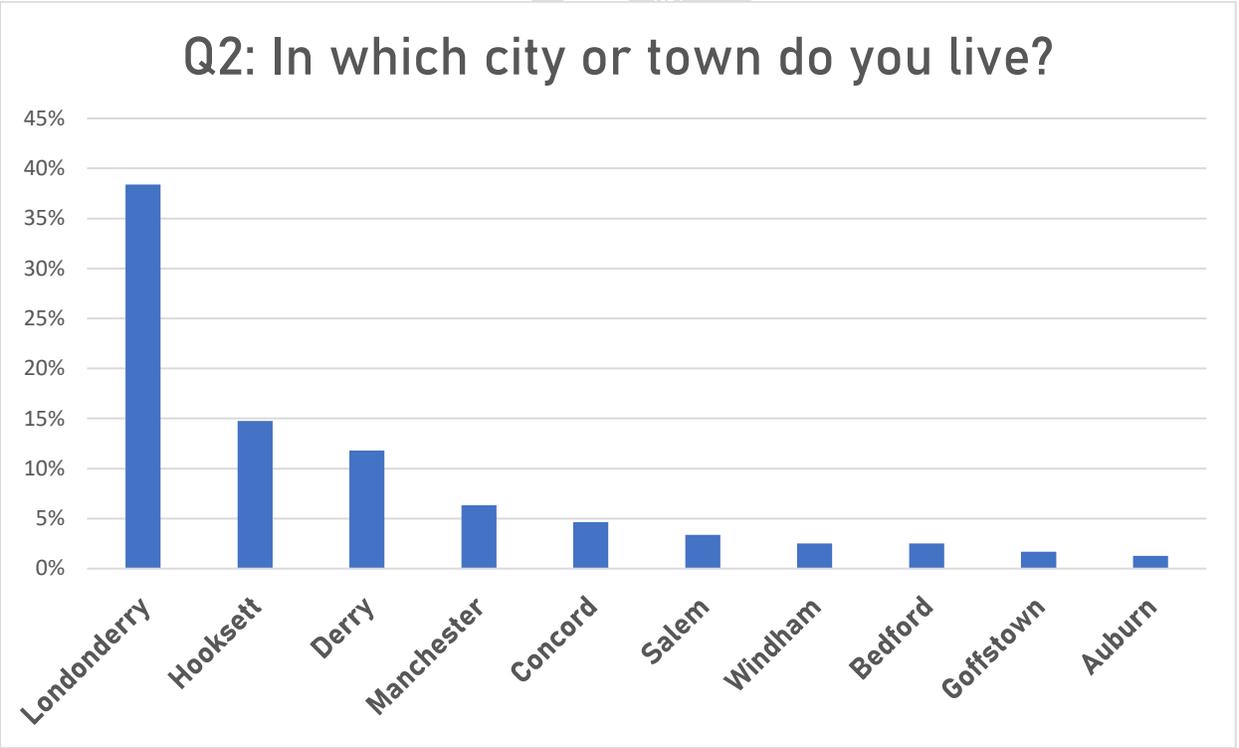
In March of 2020, the Central NH Regional Planning Commission launched a survey to gather public input on the trails discussed in this plan. Questions asked participants which trails they used and how often as well as where there might be challenges and opportunities for improvement. From March 26-April 29 the survey garnered 238 responses, the majority of which from towns within the study area (Figure_).



Map 12: Survey Responses

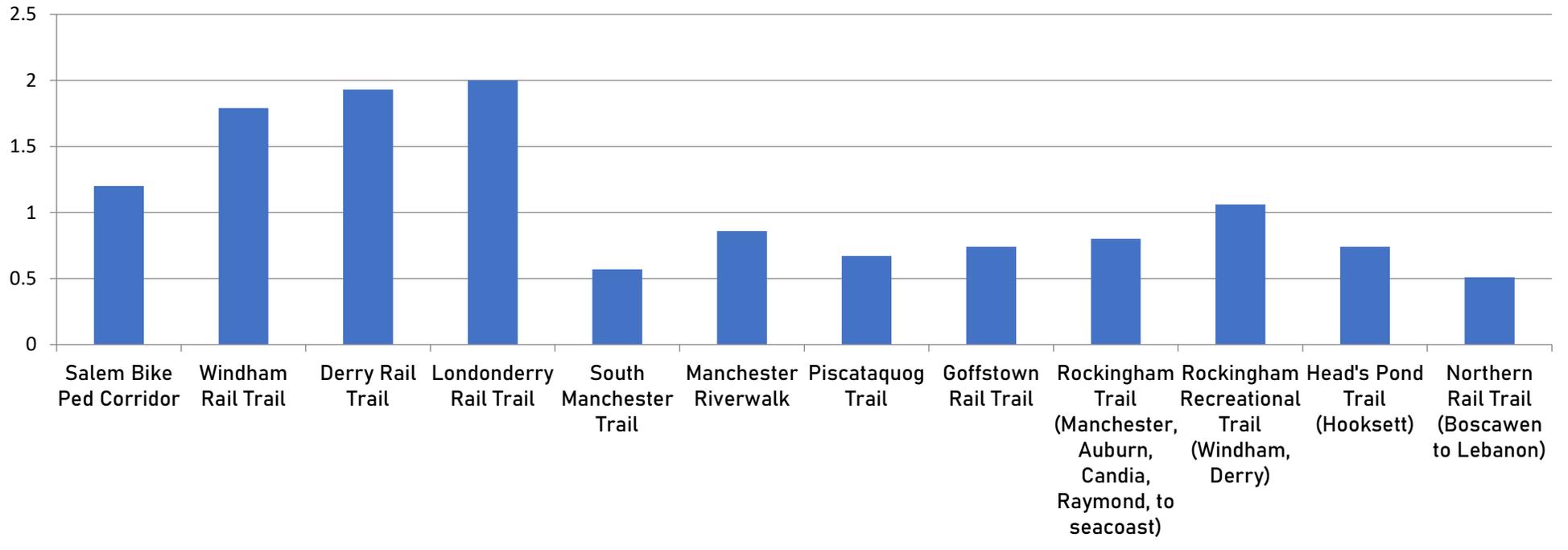


A full 73% of respondents were over the age of 45. While a more age-diverse group of respondents would have been ideal, this also largely mirrors the demographics found in NH.



Over 50% of total respondents were from Londonderry and Hooksett. When reviewing the data, it should be taken into consideration that both of these towns have some level of trail network but are not yet fully plugged in to the Granite State Rail Trail system.

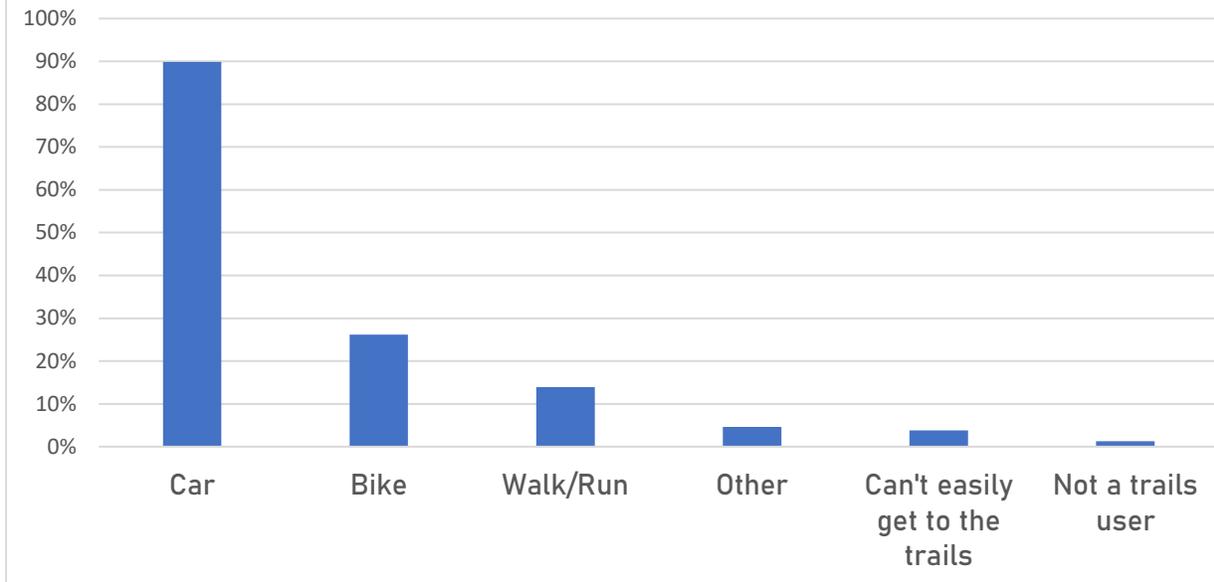
Q3. Which trails have you used, and how often? (weighted average)



The Windham, Derry and Londonderry rail trails are the most used trails among survey respondents. Other comments included the New Boston rail trail, Bow and Dunbarton town trails, Musquash Conservation Area, Livingston Park, Pinnacle Pond, Clay Pond, Hooksett Riverwalk, and out of state trails.

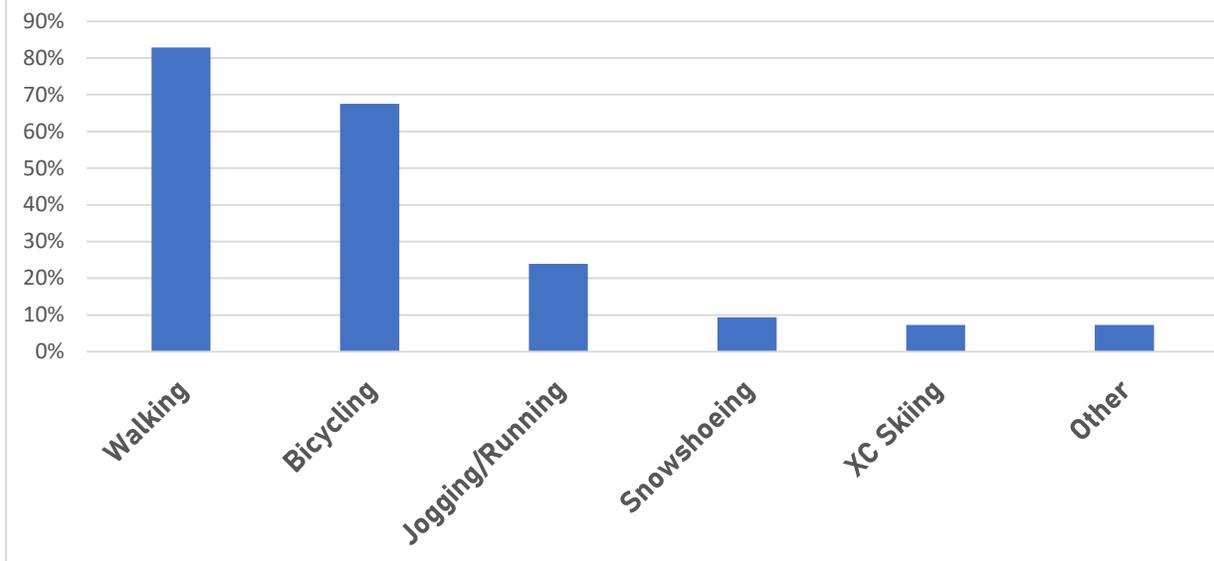
***Note the New Boston Rail Trail was mistakenly left out of the survey choices but is part of the Regional Trails Plan study area.*

Q4: How do you get to the trails?



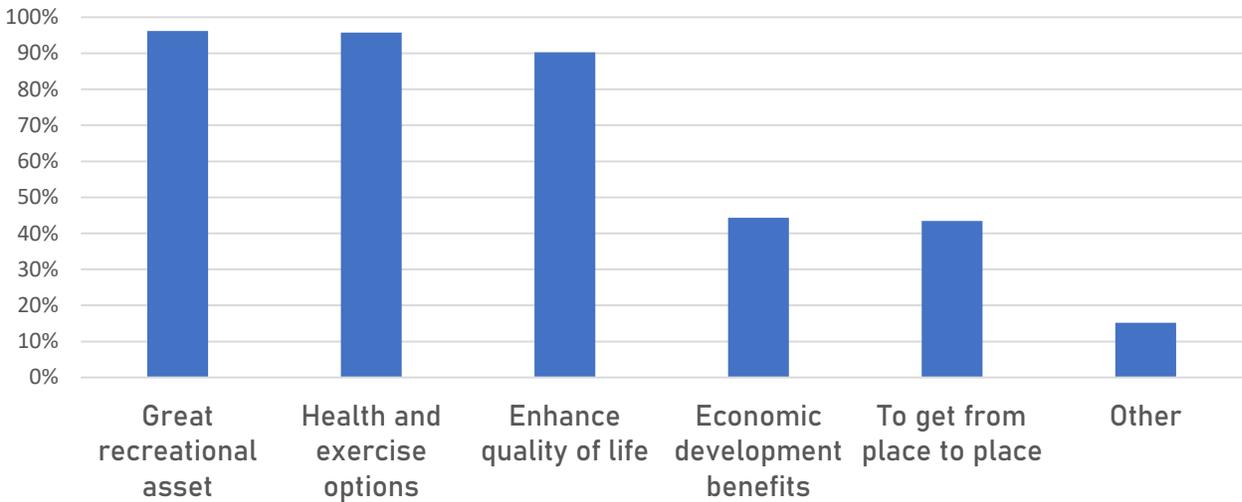
Unsurprisingly, 90% of respondents drive to trails. The fact that only 26% bike and 14% walk/run could suggest that trailheads are not positioned closely enough to residential areas or that bike/ped infrastructure leading up to trails is inadequate.

Q5: How do you use the trails?



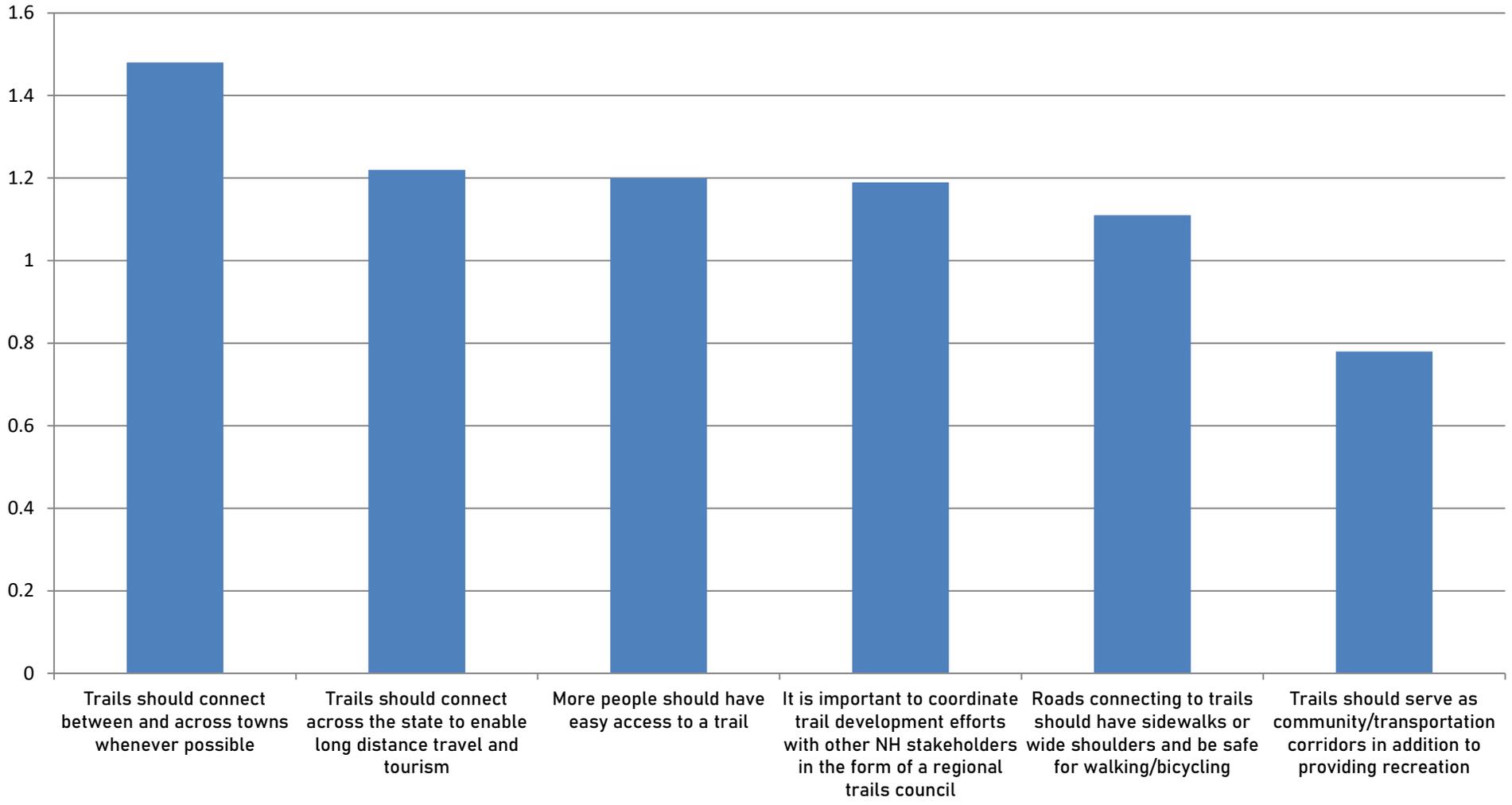
Walking was the most popular way to use trails (83%), followed by bicycling (68%) and jogging/running (24%). No other use was mentioned by more than 10% of respondents.

Q6: Why do you think trails are important? (Choose all that apply)



Trails were seen as a great recreational asset by 96% of respondents; the fact that 'getting from place to place' was only seen as important by 44% could imply that trails are not seen as viable transportation corridors beyond recreation, or it could simply mean that trails as they are currently located do not connect desirable destinations/neighborhoods/employment centers.

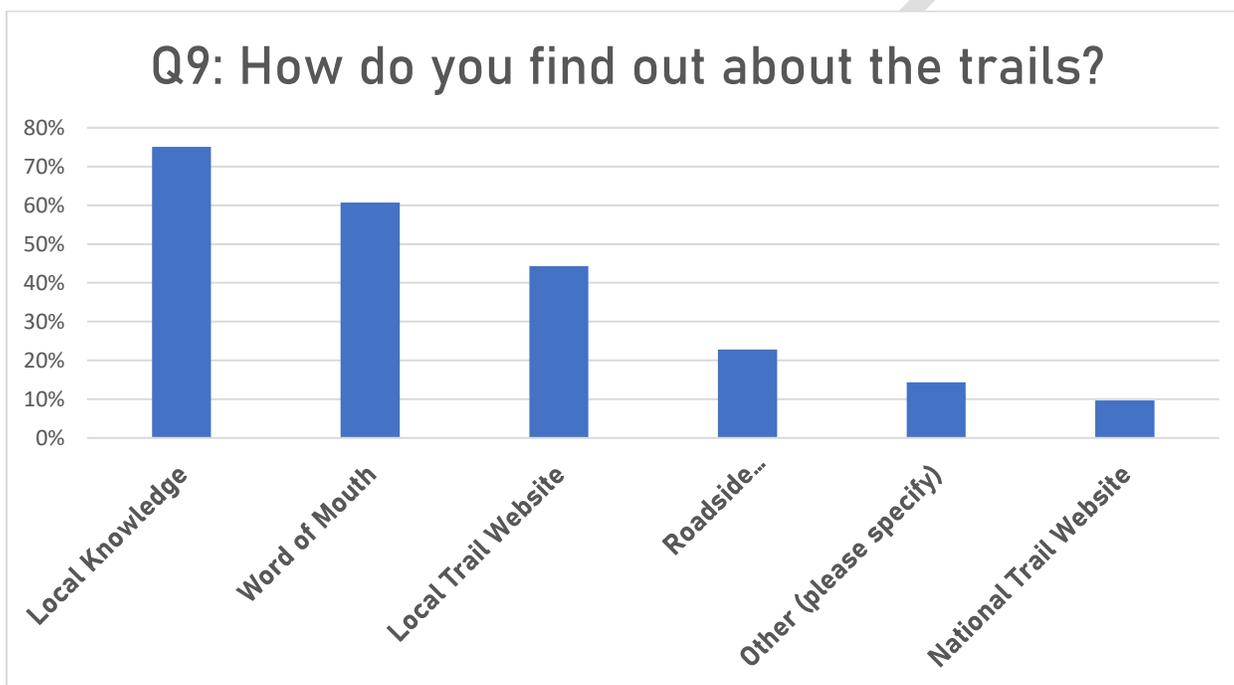
Q7: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



The majority of survey respondents indicated they strongly agree that trails should connect between and across towns whenever possible.

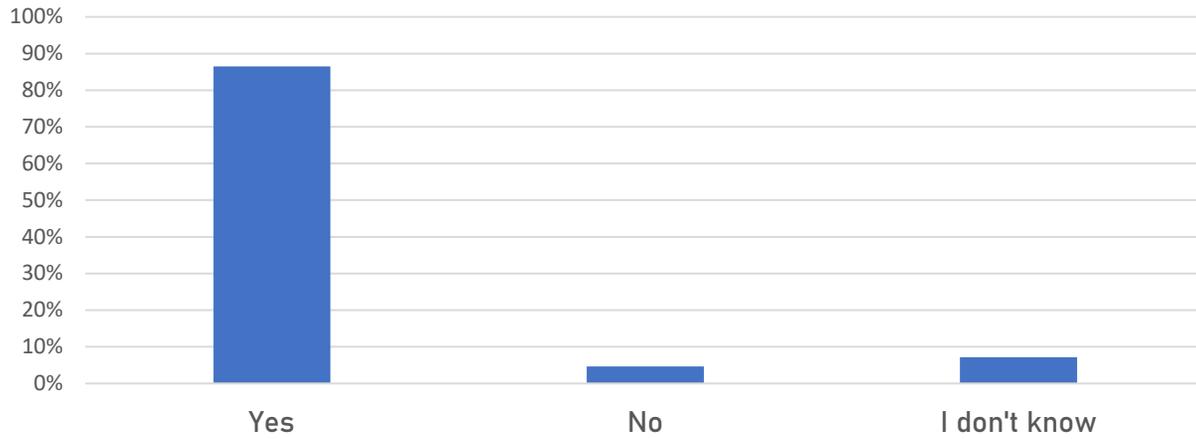
Question 8: Where would you like to see a new rail trail or shared-use path?

- | |
|---|
| 1. Derry/Londonderry connection |
| 2. Manchester to Concord connection |
| 3. Connect existing trails in Manchester |
| 4. Hooksett/Concord connection |
| 5. Goffstown/New Boston connection |
| 6. Improve Portsmouth branch of Rockingham Rail Trail |
| 7. Northern rail trail extension to Concord |
| 8. Bedford/Manchester connection |



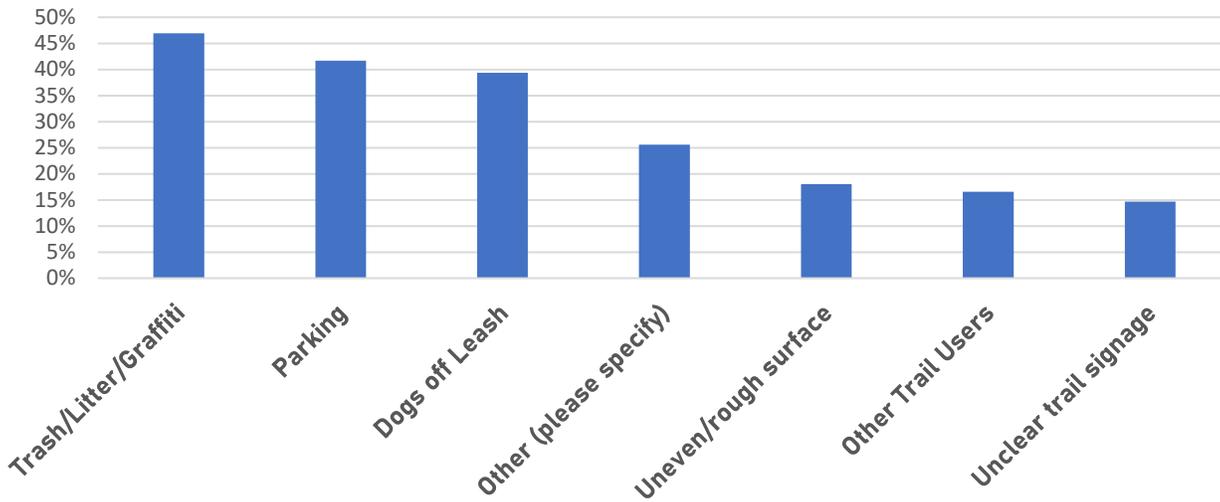
The prevalence of local knowledge (75%) and word-of-mouth (61%) are greater than marketing tactics of websites (44%) or signage (23%). It is worth considering again the average age of the respondents. More individuals under the age of 45 might have led to greater percentages of online information sharing.

Q10: Do you think existing trails are well-maintained?



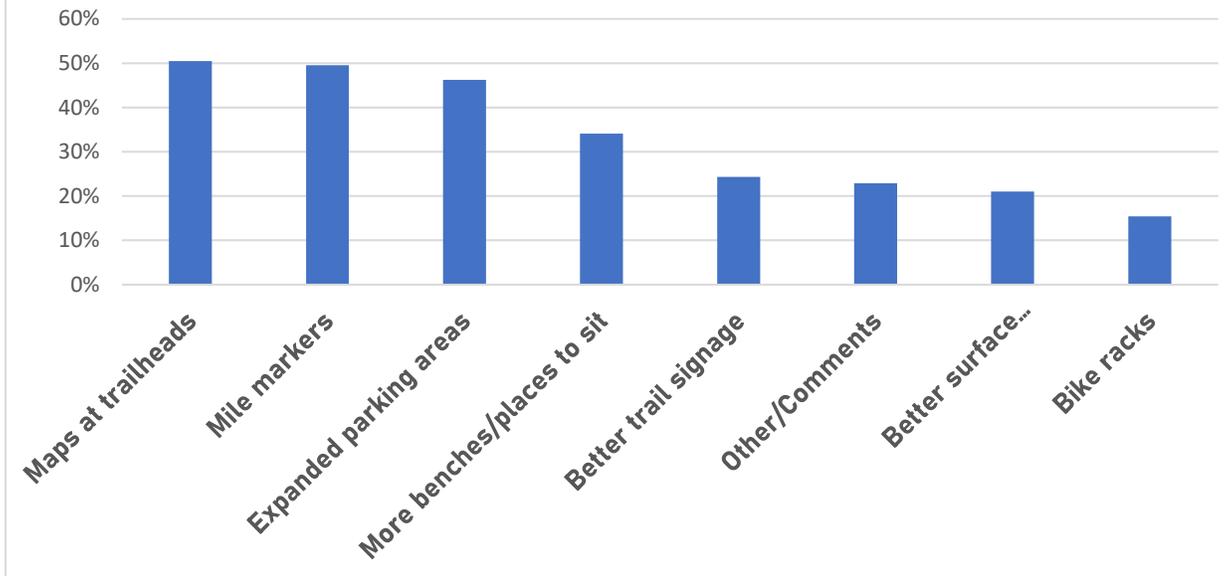
Over 86% of respondents thought existing trails are well-maintained. Several comments mentioned dog waste as a deterrent.

Q11: What safety or maintenance concerns do you have for existing trails?



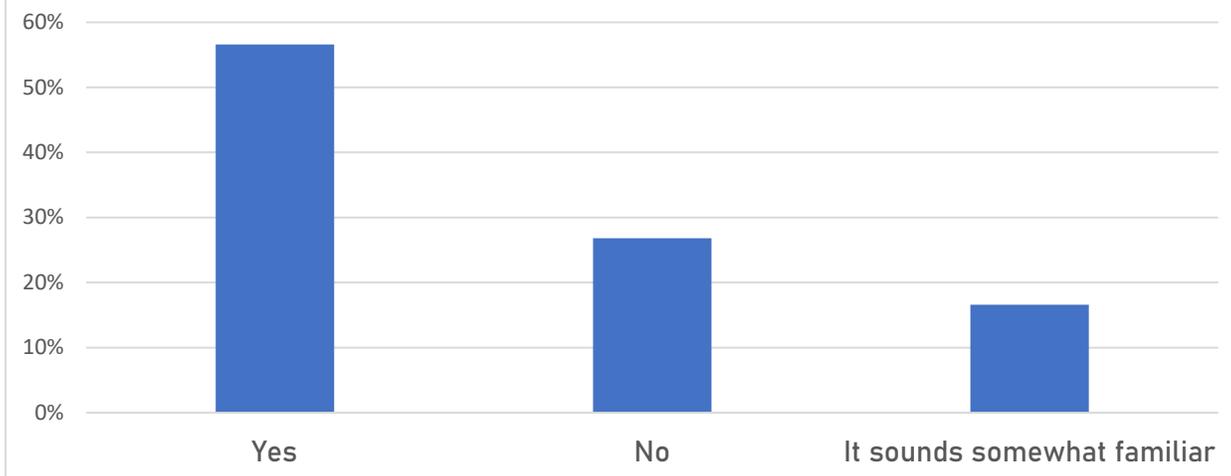
Trash/litter/graffiti was mentioned most among maintenance concerns, followed by parking issues and loose dogs.

Q12: What improvements could be made to existing trails?



Maps and mile markers were the two improvements most often mentioned, followed by expanded parking areas and more benches/places to sit. Fifth place was better trail signage, which could be grouped with answers #1 and #2 as generally information-related.

Q13: Have you heard of the Granite State Rail Trail?



Just over half of respondents had heard of the Granite State Rail Trail; only 27% had not.

Appendix B: Trail Profiles



10: Piscataquog Rail Trail, Oct. 2020

Derry Rail Trail

Length: 4 miles

Surface: Paved

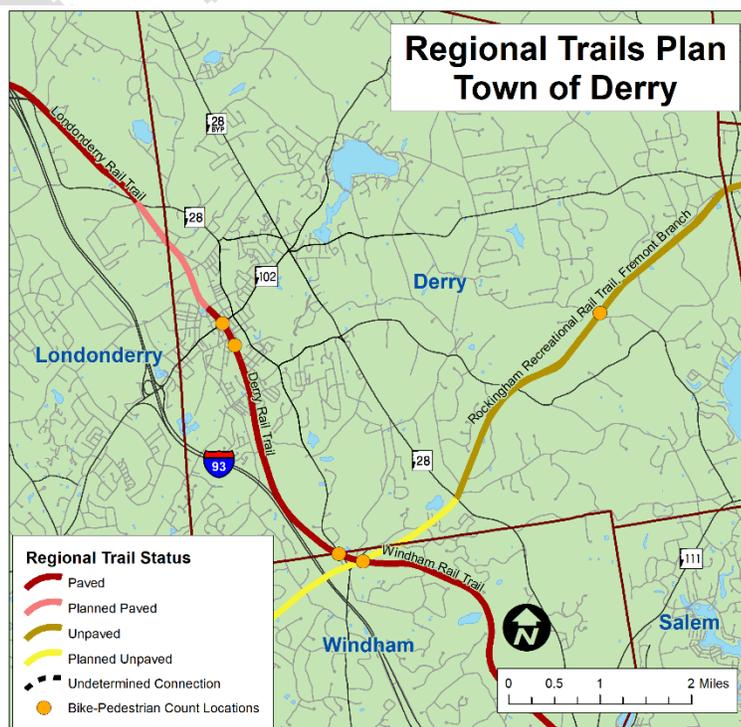
Status: Open. The Derry Rail Trail is four miles of continuous paved path, which connects to the Windham Rail Trail at the southern end and ends in Derry's town center to the north. You can also access the 18.3-mile Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail (Fremont Branch), by heading southwest for 0.2 mile on the Windham Rail Trail and turning left onto the new trail just after Depot Road (traillink.com).

Description: As part of the future 125-mile Granite State Rail Trail, which one day will stretch from Massachusetts to the Vermont border, the Derry Rail Trail currently connects 4 miles of uninterrupted paved path with the 4.3-mile paved Windham rail trail. Eventually, the Derry rail trail will connect to the Londonderry rail trail, which stretches 3.3 miles into the City of Manchester – providing nearly 12 miles of uninterrupted trail through three towns in suburban Southern New Hampshire.

The Derry Rail Trail is part of the former Boston and Maine railroad. The Derry Depot, which bustled in the 1800's with people and goods traveling throughout New England, still stands on the trail and is home to a restaurant on West Broadway in Derry (derryrailtrail.org).

The Derry Rail Trail is managed in part by the Derry Rail Trail Alliance – a nonprofit organization dedicated to completing the rail trail on the former Manchester and Lawrence branch line of the Boston and Maine rail bed through Derry.

For more information: Visit derryrailtrail.org to stay up to date on rail trail news and events.



Pedestrian Data

Derry Rail Trail

Data Collected:

Sunday March 9 – Wednesday March 27, 2019

Summary:

- Total Counted: 2,571
- Daily Average: 135
- Total Hourly Average: 6
- Hourly average between 6am and 6pm: 10.6

Busiest Days of the Period Analyzed:

1. Sunday, March 24, 2019 (461)
2. Saturday, March 16, 2019 (199)
3. Sunday, March 17, 2019 (197)

Minimum Day:

1. Sunday, March 10, 2019 (28)



Entrance to Rail Trail off South Avenue

Data Collected:

Friday, May 22nd – Tuesday, June 9th 2015

Summary:

- Total Counted: 6,109
- Daily Average: 322
- Total Hourly Average: 13
- Hourly average between 6am and 6pm: 26

Busiest Days of the Period Analyzed:

4. Sunday, June 7th, 2015 (837)
5. Monday, May 25th, 2015 (708)
6. Sunday, May 24th, 2015 (569)

Minimum Day:

2. Monday, June 1st, 2015 (4)



Derry Rail Trail at Windham T/L

Goffstown Rail Trail

Length: 5.5 miles

Surface: Hard-packed gravel/sand, some paved sections

Status: Open. The Goffstown Rail Trail follows the former Boston and Maine railroad corridor that once spanned northern New England. The trail parallels the Piscataquog River for 5.5 miles from the Goffstown-Manchester boundary line to the center of Goffstown village.

Description: Though the Goffstown Rail Trail is mostly hard-packed gravel, the three street crossings—two over Mast Road and one over Henry Bridge Road—are paved and have plenty of signage to help residents easily connect to the trail (trailink.com). At the Goffstown-Manchester border, the trail seamlessly connects to the Piscataquog Trail, which travels over the Merrimack River and into the City of Manchester.

Conceptually, the Goffstown Rail Trail could connect to the New Boston Rail Trail using bicycle lanes marked on 2.1 miles of town and state highways. It is recommended that this bike lane concept be defined during the 2018 revision of the Goffstown Master Plan so that efforts to make it a reality may have a formal basis.

The Goffstown Rail Trail is managed in part by the Friends of the Goffstown Rail Trail – a nonprofit organization that seeks funding sources, manages improvement projects, and provides trail maintenance and advocacy for the trail.

Between 2007 and 2017, approximately \$1,001,000 was dedicated to trail surface and drainage construction projects - with \$776,000 having come from grants such as the New Hampshire Recreational Trails Program and the Transportation Alternatives Program - and \$225,000 through match contributions.

In July of 2019, work began on improving 2,255 feet of the trail between PRO Landscaping Supply and the Shell gas station with funds from the New Hampshire Recreational Trails Program awarded to the Friends of the Goffstown Rail Trail.

For more information: Visit goffstownrailtrail.org to stay up to date on rail trail news and events.



Pedestrian Data

Goffstown Rail Trail

Data Collected:
Saturday June 23 – Thursday July 12, 2018

Summary

- Total Counted: 5,956
- Daily Average: 298
- Total Hourly Average: 12
- Hourly average between 6am and 6pm: 22.1

Busiest Days of the Period Analyzed:

7. Saturday, July 7, 2018 (593)
8. Sunday, July 8, 2018 (550)
9. Tuesday, June 26, 2018 (386)

Minimum Day:

3. Thursday, June 28, 2018 (52)



Moose Club Park Rd.

Data Collected:
Saturday January 5 – Thursday January 24, 2019

Summary

- Total Counted: 815
- Daily Average: 43
- Total Hourly Average: 3
- Hourly average between 6am & 6pm 3.5

Busiest Days of the Period Analyzed:

1. Monday, January 07, 2019 (130)
2. Wednesday, January 09, 2019 (101)
3. Tuesday, January 08, 2019 (79)

Minimum Day:

1. Thursday, October 17th, (2)



Data Collected:

Thursday December 12, 2019 – Thursday January 2, 2020

Summary

- Total Counted: 138
- Daily Average: 6
- Total Hourly Average: 0
- Hourly average between 6am & 6pm .5

Busiest Days of the Period Analyzed:

2. Monday December 23, 2019 (15)
3. Sunday December 15, 2019 (7)
4. Monday December 23, 2019 (8)

Minimum Day:

4. Thursday December 19, 2019 (0)



Mast Road, Goffstown

DRAFT