



**DATE:**            June 28, 2019

**TO:**                Plan for Ashuelot Rail Trail Project Advisory Committee

**FROM:**            SWRPC Staff

**RE:**                Existing Conditions Assessment – Literature Review

SWRPC staff compiled and reviewed planning documents and policies relevant to the Ashuelot Rail Trail. Reviewed materials included *The New Hampshire State Trails Plan*, *Southwest Connects: Southwest Region Transportation Plan*, municipal master plans, safe routes to school plans, complete streets policies, and trail maintenance guides, State statutes related to landowner liability for recreational user safety, and cooperative agreements between the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) (title owner of rail trail property) and managing entities (e.g. other state agencies and municipalities). No plan currently exists for the Ashuelot Rail Trail specifically. A full list of collected materials can be found attached to this memo.

### **Findings**

- All four municipalities along the trail's route (Keene, Swanzey, Winchester and Hinsdale) articulate strong support for bicycle and pedestrian transportation in official planning documents, including master plans and complete streets policies.
- In 1998, NHDOT entered into a cooperative agreement with the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) that granted DRED the authority to use and maintain the state's rail trail system. In 2017, DRED merged with the NH Department of Cultural Resources to become the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR), which continues to manage the majority of the state's rail trails, including the Ashuelot Rail Trail. Only a 0.2-mile trail segment in Keene is managed under a cooperative agreement between NHDOT and the City of Keene.
- The New Hampshire State Trails Plan was adopted in 2005 and has yet to be updated. Although the Plan notes that NHDOT acquired rail corridors to preserve future opportunities to develop railroad transportation, it states that future rail use is not likely on the Ashuelot Branch in the foreseeable future. The Plan recommends that trail improvements focus on segments within downtown areas, that link municipalities, and that connect with other trail segments - all characteristics that describe the Ashuelot Rail Trail.
- New Hampshire state law provides strong legal protection to both owners of property that grant public access for recreational purposes, as well as to groups or individuals that maintain trails for public recreation (as long as a fee is not charged).<sup>1</sup> The strong legal protection should mitigate liability-related concerns of volunteer trail maintenance or improvement groups.

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<sup>1</sup> NH RSA 508:14

## **Recommendations**

- Consider developing an online collection of trail-related plans and documents. Such a collection could serve as a valuable resource for grant proposals and project planning, especially for potential projects that span municipal borders.
- Request on-trail municipalities to share any relevant grant application materials, cost estimates, or project plans. Such materials could be included in an online collection of trail-related materials and prove a valuable resource to municipalities who have yet to make significant trail improvements.

Plan for Ashuelot Rail Trail Literature Review

Note: acronyms listed in glossary at the end of document

Title and Date	Description
State Documents	
<a href="#">NH State Rail Trail Plan</a> , Adopted May 2005	<p>This plan was developed by NHDOT in collaboration with NH DRED. (In 2017, NH DRED merged NH DCR to form the NH DNCR.) Chapter One includes an inventory of abandoned rail corridors and includes maps and a summary of existing conditions for each of the 23 abandoned rail corridors owned by the State of New Hampshire. Chapter Two pertains to trails other than State-owned rail trails, e.g. rail trails owned by other entities, other multi-use trails and pathways adjacent to roadways. Chapter Three provides information on state, regional and local plans that relate to trails. Chapter Four includes a set of guidelines for future trail development, maintenance and management. It also includes a summary of public comments received during the public outreach process, including a high volume of comments from the Southwest Region regarding the Ashuelot and Cheshire Rail Trails. A summary of existing conditions for the Ashuelot Branch is included on page 1-21 of the plan. A contentious issue noted in this plan is the potential conflict between non-motorized users, ATV users and snowmobile users of State-owned rail trails.</p>
<a href="#">New Hampshire Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan</a> , Adopted 2000	<p>This goal of this NHDOT plan was to recognize, support and encourage bicycling and walking as alternatives to motorized forms of transportation and as an element of the state's intermodal transportation system. The plan recognizes recreational trails as a component of such a system and notes that the NHDOT has been purchasing abandoned railroad ROW for future transportation needs, one of which is bicycle and pedestrian use. Objective 6 of the plan states that the NHDOT will work in coordination with the NH DRED to propose a statewide plan for the integration of recreational trails with other bicycle/pedestrian facilities; set standards for their development; and encourage and support their improvement to all season condition. In 2018, the State hired a consultant to update the plan, a process that is still underway as of the summer of 2019. Rail trails, however, is not a focus of the update scope.</p>
<a href="#">2013-2018 NH Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)</a> , Updated 2013	<p>The NH SCORP was developed through the collaborative efforts of the NH OSI and the NH DRED. The purpose of the SCORP is to meet the state's eligibility requirements to participate in the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant program by identifying current needs and trends for outdoor recreation in New Hampshire. A key theme of this plan is creating connections between people and the outdoors in order to promote health and livability. Trails are specifically called out as an important asset for connecting an aging population to outdoor amenities and as opportunities for active transportation.</p>
<a href="#">NH ATV Trail System Plan</a> , Adopted 2003	<p>Adopted by the NH DRED, this plan calls for providing designated seasonal trails for ATVs and trail bikes, identifies major issues related to developing and managing these trails for use by wheeled OHRV during the snow-free months, and offers suggestions for addressing these issues. There are two trail systems designated for OHRV use in Cheshire County: Pisgah State Park and Troy Trails. The plan recommends connecting these trail systems using existing infrastructure whenever possible, such as class VI roads and utility ROW. The Ashuelot Rail Trail is not specifically addressed in this plan</p>

Title and Date	Description
<a href="#">New Hampshire OHRV and Snowmobile Digest of Regulations</a> , Effective July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017	<p>Published by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, this digest of regulations includes useful information about licensing, speed limits, road crossing protocol, and trail locations. The included OHRV trail map shows that some OHRV trail networks are located in close proximity to the Ashuelot Rail Trail, perhaps leading to unpermitted use of the trail by OHRV operators.</p>
<a href="#">RSA 215-C: Snowmobiles</a> , Last modified in 2017	<p>Located under Title XVIII (Fish and Game) of the New Hampshire Revised Statutes, Chapter 215-C governs snowmobile licensing, operation, and state highway crossings. Perhaps most notably, Section 215-C:8 specifies that the speed limit on approved snowmobile trails is 45 MPH, where no speed limit is specified.</p>
<a href="#">RSA 508:14, Landowner Liability Limited</a> , Last modified in 2006	<p>Under state law, landowners, including governmental entities, who permit users to use trails free of charge are not liable for personal injury suffered from trail use, unless the harm was caused intentionally. Individuals or organizations that perform maintenance on trails for public recreation are not liable for personal injury, in the absence of “gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct.”</p>
<a href="#">RSA 212:34, Duty of Care</a> , Last modified in 2011	<p>This statute provides both public and private landowners with additional protections when they grant free-of-charge recreational access.</p>
<a href="#">New Hampshire Bureau of Trail Best Management Practices</a> , Revised in 2017	<p>A useful publication for citizen groups interested in performing trail maintenance. Topics covered include but are not limited to permitting, grading, trail surfacing, flagging, and brush clearing.</p>
<a href="#">NHDOT Cooperative Agreements</a> , Executed in 2005 with the City of Keene	<p>NHDOT owns title to the land underlying the entire extent of the Ashuelot Rail Trail. For most of the trail, NHDOT entered into a cooperative agreement with the NH DRED, a defunct agency whose trail-related responsibilities now fall under the purview of NH DNCR. For a small portion of the trail in Keene, NHDOT has entered into a cooperative agreement with the City of Keene. The cooperative agreements specify trail maintenance responsibilities. The agreement with the City of Keene also allows the city to issue special use permits to third parties for purposes of maintenance, construction, or use consistent with recreational purposes of the trail.</p>
<a href="#">NH Trails Bureau Grant-in-Aid Guidelines</a> , n.d.	<p>This presentation slide deck summarizes the NH Bureau of Trails Grant-in-Aid Program, which awards funds to non-profit snowmobile and OHRV clubs for completing projects that will benefit snowmobile and OHRV trails in the state. For the 2017-18 award cycle, the Bureau awarded about \$1,650,000 through the program. The program is governed by Agency Rules Chapter Res 8400 and RSA 215-A:3-a, III and 215-C:3, II.</p>
<a href="#">NH SB 80 Legislative Report</a> , Adopted 2016	<p>A legislative study committee chaired by Senator Nancy Stiles investigated issues relative to state-owned abandoned rail corridors and their use by recreational groups.</p>

Title and Date	Description
<a href="#">HEAL NH Recreation Access in NH Communities</a> , Completed 2016	<p>This statewide report, produced by Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) New Hampshire, addresses access to recreational spaces in lower income communities in terms of park distribution, quality and access. It also highlights the results of an Active Recreation Inventory completed in ten NH communities by the HEAL NH Active Recreation Workgroup. The report notes that access to walking and bicycling routes that are safe from traffic and crime make it easier to access recreation areas, present less barriers and can influence resident choices to use recreation areas. The results of a community interview process show that low income residents in rural areas tend to live on state routes and rural roads that are not safe for walking and bicycling, which is a barrier to accessing recreational areas. Another major barrier identified for rural areas was distance. Appendix C includes a map of recreational areas in Winchester (p. 33).</p>
Regional Documents	
<a href="#">Monadnock Region Future (MRF)</a> , Adopted 2015	<p>The MRF is organized into four over-arching themes: Community Vitality, Economic Prosperity, Stewardship, and Preparedness. Objective 1.b under “Community Vitality” recommends increasing non-motorized transportation options and notes that multiuse paths are integral components of the Region’s transportation system (p. 25). Objective 2.c under “Economic Prosperity” is to “Maintain Adequate Infrastructure,” and includes a strategy to “Support and develop a well-maintained and diversified transportation system to sustain and grow regional and local economies (e.g. highways, bridges, trails, transit, park and ride lots, sidewalks, airports, rail, etc.).”</p>
<a href="#">Southwest Connects</a> , Adopted 2014	<p>This plan is organized around eight major transportation corridor systems in the region. For each corridor, an arterial highway was identified as the main regional thoroughfare with supporting minor or urban arterials, collectors and multi-modal infrastructure (including rail trails). The Ashuelot Rail Trail is identified as part of the NH 10 South Corridor system. Plan objectives which relate to rail trails in some way include Objectives 2E: “...work to preserve elements of the Region’s transportation history including its historic bridges, trestle bridges, railroad depots, rail rights-of-way, and other resources,” 3C: “...improve mode of transport choices as well as the quality of existing alternative choices inside the region and with outside destinations,” and 3D: “...support and encourage local efforts to improve street, sidewalk, bicycle path, and virtual connectivity as well as land use practices that reduce overreliance on building transportation capacity or requirements for long-distance transportation solutions.” Page 74 of the plan includes a table which provides Ashuelot Rail Trail traffic in terms of weekly volume. Most of this data is from October 2014 (Keene is from August 2014), and it shows much higher volumes in Keene than the other communities.</p>
<a href="#">Ashuelot River Corridor Management Plan</a> , Adopted 2006	<p>This plan was funded by NHDES and prepared by the Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee (LAC) with assistance from SWRPC and the NHDES Rivers Program. It includes a “Summary of Issues” for each segment of the river, which includes existing conditions, locally specific issues and management goals. Four out of the six river segments listed in the plan are impacted by the Ashuelot Rail Trail (see pages 11-24). Specific recommendations that relate to the rail trail include “Monitoring and management of public use of Ashuelot Rail Trail to prevent destruction of resources by overuse or misuse by the public” and “Encourage community support for development and maintenance of the Ashuelot Rail Trail.”</p>

Title and Date	Description
<a href="#">The Ashuelot Rail Trail: The ART of Commuting</a> , Completed 2014	<p>This report was produced by KSC geography students as part of a seminar class in 2014. The report includes an assessment of the trail condition (attribute and user data) as well as the commuting viability of the trail. The report concludes that the trail is underutilized as a commuter pathway despite its good condition. The students used two surveys to gather data on commuter viability, an online survey and a paper survey. There are several recommendations within the report to increase the use of the trail, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add pull-outs along major roads at access points with signage.</li> <li>• Create a trail map which includes points of interest such as viewsheds, historic rail depots, bridges, rivers, etc. to encourage more people to use the trail.</li> <li>• Develop new trails to connect the Ashuelot Rail Trail to downtown/village centers, other regional trails, schools, shopping centers, neighborhoods, etc. and place signs with maps at these locations.</li> <li>• Place mile markers, information kiosks with year-round trail maps, and other amenities along the length of the trail.</li> <li>• Generate an online mapping service, available as a Public Participation geographic information system (PPGIS).</li> </ul>
Local Documents	
<a href="#">Keene Comprehensive Master Plan</a> , Adopted 2010	<p>This plan envisions “a well-developed trail system that provides connections between neighborhoods, open spaces and other communities while simultaneously supporting a healthy lifestyle.” One recommendation is to develop a wayfinding system that allows people to find trail linkages that is “consistent in design and clear in purpose” (p. 44). Other strategies include connecting suburban neighborhoods to the trail network (p. 56 &amp; 64), maintaining trails for bicycle &amp; pedestrian access and fill in gaps in the network (p. 57), create programs to retrofit existing flood channels and detention basins with trails and other recreational amenities (p. 92), and make use of the trail system easier (p. 133).</p>
Keene Transportation Master Plan, Adopted 2002	<p>The Keene Transportation Master Plan was adopted by Keene City Council in 2002 and attached as an appendix to the CMP in 2010. The plan references the Keene Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Master Plan and includes recommendations to “<i>Continue to support the development of off-road bike paths</i>” (Recommendation 5 of Part 3) and to “<i>Develop trailhead-parking facilities for access to the state-owned rail corridors located outside of the Downtown</i>” (Recommendation 9 of Part 3) One of the locations identified for trailhead parking is Krif Road, which can be used to access the Ashuelot Rail Trail.</p>

Title and Date	Description
<p>Kenne Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, Adopted 1999 (update in process)</p>	<p><b>Goals and Objectives related to rail trails:</b> Goal 5 of this plan is “To assure the integrity of the former railroad corridors are developed for transportation enhancement and recreational use.” Objective 4 is “To incorporate existing paths, paths approved for construction and former railroad corridors into a city-wide network of bicycle/pedestrian paths,” and Objective 8 is “To link the City with neighboring towns, states and regional routes into a network of bicycle/pedestrian paths.”</p> <p><b>User Groups Described in this Plan:</b> User groups described in the plan include bicyclists, pedestrians, in-lane skaters/skateboarders, cross-country skiers, snowmobiles, and equestrians. According to this plan, the Keene Sno’Riders have maintenance responsibility of the Ashuelot Branch rail bed from Rt. 101 south of the Bypass through Keene to the Swanzey/Winchester town line. A primary interest and concern of the Keene Sno’Riders is creating a safe connection between the Cheshire Branch and the Ashuelot rail beds. This is also a concern for the equestrian community. Uses identified for the Ashuelot Rail Trail south of Rt. 101 include pedestrians, mountain biking, cross country skiing, equestrians, and snowmobiles.</p> <p><b>Pathway Design, Management &amp; Funding:</b> Section IV of the plan includes recommended design considerations, pathway rules and regulations, and maintenance considerations. Page 18 of the document includes a “Path System Safety Checklist,” and this section also includes a description of trailside amenities which mentions the need for consistent signage of the trail system.</p> <p><b>The Pathway System:</b> This plan is composed of two elements: (1) the Keene Bicycle/Pedestrian Path System consisting of bike paths, bike lanes and “Share the Road” signs; and, (2) the Statewide System of Bike Routes, Multi-Use Paths, and Rail-to-Trail Recreational Corridors. The plan notes that these facilities must be interconnected to enable all non-motorized users to travel to various parts of Keene as well as to adjoining towns and other regional destinations. The Ashuelot Rail Trail - Phase I (between Winchester St. and Rt. 101 to the south) was identified as a “Priority A Corridor,” and the Ashuelot Rail Trail - Phase II (south of Rt. 101 to the Keene/Swanzey town line) was identified as a “Priority B” Corridor.</p>
<p>Keene Active/ Passive Recreation Master Plan, Adopted 2012</p>	<p>The purpose of this plan is to guide the development of the City’s parks, trails and recreation system, and provide strategic recommendations to measure how the system is meeting the needs of residents. The plan includes 9 key issues. Key issue #5, <i>Coordinate Active Transportation/Recreation and Trail Connectivity</i>, includes three recommendations which are described on pages 42 and 43 of the document. Key Issue #6, <i>Monitor Levels of Service for Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Facilities</i>, includes two recommendations which are described on pages 43-47. Examples, strategies and action steps listed in the plan include “Design and install consistent signage/kiosks, public art, benches, and way finding markers for important community destinations,” “Develop and distribute ‘A Walking Guide to Keene’ and ‘A Bicycling Guide to Keene,’” and “Explore the option of including improvements pathways, greenways and trails in the CIP, considering recreation transportation infrastructure as a parks and recreation facility.”</p>
<p><a href="#">Keene Complete Streets Policy</a>, Adopted 2015</p>	<p>This policy directs the City to consider the needs of all users in municipally managed projects and project phases. The policy defines “all users” as bicyclists, motorists, public transportation users, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. The policy applies to all city-owned transportation facilities in the public ROW, including connecting pathways.</p>

Title and Date	Description
<a href="#">Keene Complete Streets Planning &amp; Design Guidelines,</a> Adopted 2016	This document is meant to be used as a resource for City staff when working within the public ROW. It is organized by a Complete Streets typology system which includes the following street types: Slow Streets, Gateway Streets, Bicycle Streets, Neighborhood Streets, Rural Streets, and a Transit Overlay. The Guidelines note that the City's bicycle network is comprised of Bicycle Streets, Gateway Streets, Slow Streets, and off-road paths.
<a href="#">Swanzy Master Plan,</a> Adopted 2003	The Swanzy Master Plan includes several chapters which relate to the rail trail planning project, notably the Recreation and Transportation chapters. Within the Recreation Chapter, the plan identifies the Ashuelot Rail Trail as a recreational asset and addresses the issue of conflicting user groups, such as OHRV/ATV riders, snowmobile riders and non-motorized users. Under Goal 1, the plan recommends that the Town develop a Plan that accommodates the differing interests of recreation users. Goal 2 directs the town to develop multi-use corridors toward Keene to enable recreational uses such as jogging and biking. The Transportation Chapter includes an objective to "Enhance pedestrian, bicycle and public transit opportunities," and it lists multiple targets which pertain to trails and their use (see pages 72 and 73). One of these targets is to "Coordinate with adjacent towns to ensure inter-municipal pedestrian/trail system connections." The Preservation Chapter includes a goal to preserve the industrial heritage of Swanzy and recommends installing interpretive markers near historic sites. Interpretive signs may be warranted along sections of the Ashuelot Rail Trail.
<a href="#">Swanzy Open Space Plan,</a> Adopted 2004	A key finding of the Open Space Plan is the need to protect or restore resources that provide recreation and public access. The "Swanzy Open Space Plan Project Rating Sheet," which is attached to the plan as an appendix, includes existing trails and potential for trails in the rating system. The plan also lists priority areas for conservation within the town, including the Ashuelot River corridor and agricultural fields in West Swanzy and Westport.
<a href="#">West Swanzy Charrette Report,</a> Complete 2012	Under "Circulation/Connection to the river," the plan recommends the following: "Celebrate and grow pedestrian/bicycle accessibility throughout West Swanzy. Create a West Swanzy River Heritage Trail along both sides of the Ashuelot River between main Street and Denman Thompson Avenue and link it to the Ashuelot Rail Trail to the east and Route 10 to the west." The report also recommends connecting sidewalks in the village to the Ashuelot Rail Trail.
<a href="#">Swanzy Complete Streets Policy,</a> Adopted 2015	This policy directs the Town to consider the needs of all users in municipally managed projects and project phases. The policy defines "all users" as bicyclists, motorists, public transportation users, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. The focus of the policy is on the street network, however, it encourages the town to give priority to projects that enhance overall connectivity including corridors that provide important continuity or connectivity links to existing pedestrian or bicycle networks.

Title and Date	Description
Swansey Complete Streets Planning & Design Guidelines, Adopted 2015	This document is meant to be used as a resource for town staff when working within the public ROW. It is organized by a Complete Streets typology system which includes the following street types: Collector Streets, i.e. roads whose primary function is to provide access and link neighborhoods and intersecting local streets to arterial thoroughfares; Compact Neighborhood Streets, i.e. local streets located in medium to high density residential areas; Residential Streets, i.e. local streets located in low density suburban and residential areas; and Rural Streets, i.e. streets located in rural areas. The document also mentions state routes and the importance they play in linking the Town's transportation system.
<a href="#">Description of Dickinson Memorial Forest</a> , n.d.	This online resource provides basic information about the Dickinson Memorial Forest, a protected property in Swansey that abuts the Ashuelot Rail Trail. The 70-acre property is owned and stewarded by the Society for the Preservation of New Hampshire Forests.
Winchester Master Plan, Updated 2017	This plan was most recently updated in 2017 (Population & Housing, Energy, Economic Development, and Traffic & Transportation chapters). The other chapters of the plan were last updated in 2008. The 2017 Transportation Chapter recommends that the Town adopt a Complete Streets policy and notes that connecting pathways and bike lanes to local destinations will help to avoid conflicts between bikes and vehicles. This chapter also recommends requiring bicycle racks for new developments when appropriate. The Ashuelot Rail Trail is listed as an important recreational facility in the "Cultural and Recreational Resources" chapter of the plan, and the plan notes that the Winchester Trail Riders snowmobile club grooms and maintains the trail during the winter months. One recommendation from this chapter is to increase awareness of recreational and cultural opportunities in town, for example by providing trail maps.
Winchester Complete Streets Policy, Adopted 2017	The Winchester Complete Streets policy, which directs the Town to consider the needs of all users in all transportation projects and project phases, has a strong focus on trails and the role they play in completing the non-motorized transportation network in Winchester. The definition of "all users" includes bicyclists, pedestrians, snowmobiles, equestrians, and motorized users. The preamble to the policy, which establishes the purpose for the policy, specifically mentions the Ashuelot Rail Trail as an integral component of the Town's non-motorized transportation network. The policy applies to town and state owned transportation facilities, including pathways. A performance metric listed in the policy is "The number of new or improved bicycle and pedestrian access points to rail trails."
Winchester Complete Streets Planning & Design Guidelines, Adopted 2017	The Winchester Design Guidelines document is split into five major sections: an introduction section which provides general information about complete streets and the purpose and goals of Winchester's policy; a section which describes the Winchester complete streets typology system; a complete streets toolbox with recommended design treatments for streets in Winchester, a section on opportunities for achieving complete streets, and a section which describes priority implementation areas identified by the Winchester complete streets committee. Goal #5 of the document is "integrate off-road paths and recreational trails with local roads to create a safe network for non-motorized transportation." Priority Implementation Area #5 is the Ashuelot Rail Trail between Ashuelot Village and Elm Street. Specifically, this section of the trail is in need of surfacing improvements and crossing improvements where it crosses NH Rt. 119.

Title and Date	Description
<a href="#">Winchester Charrette Report</a> , Completed 2008	<p>This report recommends developing the rail bed into a multi-use trail for bikes, walking, snowmobiles, snowshoes, etc. A major issue identified during the listening sessions was the need for the downtown to be more walkable, and the need to connect the downtown to the Ashuelot River. The report notes that both sides of the river in the downtown area need to be cleared of brush and non-essential trees to open up visual connections. The report also recommends installing a pedestrian bridge over the Ashuelot River across from the VFW. This would create a walking loop with the Elm Street Bridge, the proposed river walk and the Ashuelot Rail Trail for pedestrians and bicyclists.</p>
<a href="#">Winchester Economic Development Resource Inventory</a> , Completed 2012	<p>The Economic Development Resource Inventory provides an overview of current town resources (as of 2012) in the following categories: Infrastructure; Available Business Sites; Travel, Leisure and Recreation Opportunities; and Historical Sites. It also includes a list of external funding sources for economic development. The Ashuelot Rail Trail is listed within the “Travel, Leisure and Recreation” section of the report (p. 15).</p>
<a href="#">Hinsdale Master Plan</a> , Updated 2014	<p>The Traffic and Transportation chapter of the Hinsdale Master Plan includes an objective to “<i>Advocate for and encourage alternative modes of transportation within town and within the sub-regional* area of Hinsdale.</i>” This chapter also notes that the rail trails are a unique feature of Hinsdale’s transportation system and are available for recreational use and for alternative, off-highway bicycle routes due to the long distance connections they provide cyclists. The Recreation chapter includes a goal to “Provide a range of year-round recreational opportunities for users of all ages and mobility levels to enjoy” and lists the rail trail as a recreational asset.</p>
<a href="#">Hinsdale Complete Streets Policy</a> , Adopted 2016	<p>This policy directs the Town to consider the needs of all users in municipally managed projects and project phases. The policy defines “all users” as bicyclists, motorists, public transportation users, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. The focus of the policy is on the street network, however, it encourages the town to give priority to projects that enhance overall connectivity including corridors that provide important continuity or connectivity links to existing pedestrian or bicycle networks. A recommended performance metric listed in the policy is “The number of new or improved bicycle and pedestrian access points to rail trails.”</p>
Hinsdale Complete Streets Planning & Design Guidelines, Adopted 2016	<p>The Hinsdale Complete Streets Design Guidelines document includes four major sections: Introduction/Benefits of Complete Streets, Components of Complete Streets, Hinsdale Complete Streets Typology, and Priority Implementation Areas. While the guidelines focus on street treatments, within the “Gateway Streets” section the document recommends wayfinding signs to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to recreation areas, which could include the rail trail access points.</p>

Title and Date	Description
Sustainable Strategies for Small Cities and Rural Areas - Next Steps Memo, Completed 2016	In 2016, Hinsdale was selected to participate in the EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities (OSC) Building Blocks Technical Assistance Program. This involved several pre-workshop conference calls and a 2-day workshop in March 2016. During the first day of the workshop, there was a tour of sites within the town and a public meeting was held to gather input from the general public. On the second day, a group of key stakeholders at the local and state level were convened to identify three goals and develop an action plan around those goals. Recreational trails - including the two rail trails in town - were identified as one of Hinsdale's strengths. The need to expand and maintain recreational resources and improve transportation connections with other towns/states were key issues identified in the memo. A major opportunity is to capitalize off of the construction of the new Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge to ensure bike/ped connections with Brattleboro and public access to waterways.

List of Acronyms:

- ATV - All-terrain vehicle
- HEAL NH - Healthy Eating Active Living – New Hampshire
- KSC - Keene State College
- LWCF - Land and Water Conservation Fund
- NH DCR - New Hampshire Department of Cultural Resources (defunct)
- NH DNCR - New Hampshire Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
- NH DRED - New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development (defunct)
- NHDES - New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
- NHDOT - New Hampshire Department of Transportation
- NH OSI - New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives
- OHRV - Off-highway recreational vehicle
- ROW - Right of way
- RSA - Revised Statutes Annotated (The Laws of the State of New Hampshire)