



**DATE:** October 17, 2019  
**TO:** Plan for Ashuelot Rail Trail Project Advisory Committee  
**FROM:** SWRPC Staff  
**RE:** Outreach – Municipal Survey

The Ashuelot Rail Trail runs through four municipalities: Keene, Swanzey, Winchester, and Hinsdale. Trailside community types vary from regional urban center to rural areas. In each community, the Trail exhibits different qualities and characteristics. Trail-related priorities and management practices may also differ from town to town. If the Ashuelot Rail Trail is to be managed as an integrated regional asset, it is important to understand how each trailside municipality currently approaches trail-related issues and how it plans to address those issues moving into the future.

Toward that end, SWRPC staff developed and distributed a survey to municipal staff and officials in each trailside municipality. This memo summarizes survey methodology, responses, and findings.

## **I. Survey Methodology**

SWRPC staff developed a series of survey questions that spanned a wide variety of trail-related topics. Topic areas included:

- Previous trail planning
- Previous improvements
- Trail programming
- Trail promotion
- Land use
- Encroachment
- Trail-town connections
- Trailheads and parking
- Maintenance
- Enforcement
- Future Trail Development

A complete copy of the survey is attached to this memo.

The survey was distributed via e-mail to municipal representatives on July 30, 2019. Survey recipients in each municipality were encouraged to discuss questions and respond as a group. In some instances, respondents submitted answers via e-mail. In other cases, SWRPC staff facilitated a group discussion among respondents, using the survey questions as a guide. Municipalities differed on their communication preferences with SWRPC.

## **II. Survey Response**

The following section summarizes responses from each of the four communities.

## **a) Keene**

City of Keene staff submitted written responses to the survey. Survey respondents included two Community Development staff members and the Parks, Recreation, Cemeteries and Facilities Director. Written responses are summarized below, by topic area.

### Previous trail planning

The City cited the following as existing plans relevant to the Ashuelot Rail Trail: The 2010 Comprehensive Master Plan, the Active and Passive Recreation Management Plan and the City of Keene Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Respondents also noted that an update to the Bicycle and Pedestrian plan is in process.

Respondents reported that, during previous trail-related planning activities, the City has coordinated with a variety of groups, including Keene Snowriders, Pathways for Keene, the State Trails Bureau, Keene State College, and the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA).

### Previous improvements

Respondents cited the following as funding mechanisms used to support trail development in the City.

- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), a federal program administered by NHDOT and formerly known as the Transportation Enhancements Program
- The Recreation Trail Program (RTP), administered by the State Trails Bureau
- The City of Keene Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
- Community fundraising partners, including Pathways for Keene, Monadnock Conservancy and Keene State College

Respondents also noted that compiling a detailed list of previous projects on the Ashuelot Rail Trail would require further research.

### Trail programming

Respondents indicated that the City does not currently use Ashuelot Rail Trail for public programming or activities.

### Trail promotion

Respondents reported that the City has promoted the trail through multiple rounds of printed maps, an online Parks and Trail Map Application and videos produced by 710 Main Films.

### Land use

Respondents indicated the following as land uses that are currently or could be enhanced by the Ashuelot Rail Trail:

- Parks – Joyce Athletic Fields and the Keene State College Athletic Complex, Hickey-Desilets Park
- Rivers/ponds/lakes – The Ashuelot River itself, Brickyard Pond
- Natural/conservation land – Agricultural lands along Krif Road/NH 101
- Housing – The Mills and Arcadia hall student housing, Emerald Court. Respondents also noted that there was potential for the trail to improve connectivity to residential areas off of NH 10, including those along Bergeron Avenue, Magnolia Way, and Whetmore Street.

- Community Facilities – Keene State College campus and athletic fields. Respondents indicated that there was potential for the trail to improve connectivity to MC2 Charter School and the Cheshire County Children’s Museum, both located at the Center at Colony Mill, as well as Keene Day Care on Wood Street.
- Businesses/Commercial Development – Establishments on Bradco Street and NH 10, including Branch and Blade Brewery, Stingray, Filtrine, and several restaurants.

Respondents indicated that littering near off-campus student housing along the Trail has been an issue.

Respondents noted that agricultural land north of Krif Road could be developed for industrial or business uses and that the Krif Road Business Park could be further developed.

Encroachment

Respondents reported that a private parking lot off of Emerald Street is currently encroaching onto City-owned land along the trail. Respondents were not aware of any trail users trespassing onto adjacent private property.

Trail-town connections

Respondents reported that pedestrians and cyclists can use sidewalks and other trails to access the Ashuelot Rail Trail from downtown Keene. Trail signs are present, but no other wayfinding.

According to respondents, the trail is very easily accessed from nearby residential areas. It is also very easily accessed from Keene State College and Saint Joseph’s School. It is relatively easy to access from Wheelock Elementary. A variety of businesses outside of the City’s central business district are accessible via the trail, including: Walmart, Andy’s Cycle Shop, The Pub Restaurant, Best Western Hotel, Filtrine, Branch and Blade Brewery, Stingray Optics, Keene Chrysler Dodge and Jeep, Fairfield Kia. Keene Mitsubishi, Jim Eddies, Harvest Seafood, Hamshaw Lumber. Lodging facilities accessible via the trail include Colony House Bed and Breakfast, Best Western Hotel, Carriage Barn Bed and Breakfast.

Respondents noted that, within the Urban Compact, snowmobiles are not allowed on the Trail and are prohibited from using the multi-use bridges that span NH 101 and NH 9/10/12. Snowmobiles are allowed to cross NH 101 at grade and can access Applebees’s, Koto Steakhouse, Walmart and the Monadnock Plaza further down NH 9.

Respondents reported that the City continues to explore the improvement of trail-street connections via its Complete Streets policy and planning and design guidelines.

Trailheads and parking

Respondents indicated that there are two informal trailheads along the Keene section of the Ashuelot Rail Trail: one at Krif Road and one on Emerald Street. Limited parking is available along Krif Road, in an old cul-de-sac area just before the entrance to the Keene State College athletic complex. As potential improvements, respondents indicated that wayfinding signage/kiosks would be beneficial at both trailheads. A passive recreation area or pocket park could also be well-placed at the Emerald Street trailhead.

## Maintenance

The City performs seasonal mowing along the Ashuelot Rail Trail. In the winter, it plows the trail from Emerald Street to Winchester Street. Snow removal along the trail is currently prioritized as a “3” on 1-3 scale (1 = high priority, 3 = low priority). On an as-needed basis, the City also clears fallen boughs or downed trees and replaces or fixes signage. Crosswalks are repainted annually. Respondents noted that maintenance responsibilities for the trestle bridge over the Ashuelot River falls to Keene State College. NHDOT is responsible for maintaining South Bridge over NH 101.

Respondents noted that the City has worked informally with the groups Sense of Place and Green Up Keene on trail maintenance projects.

The City recently added a trail maintenance capital program to its Capital Improvement Program. The program supports ongoing trail maintenance and clearing activities across the City. Program details can be found on the [Capital Improvement Program 2020-2025](#), pg. 179.

## Enforcement

Respondents indicated that they have no current concerns regarding violation or abuse of trail rules. Golf cars from Keene State College may be the only concern. The Krif Road crossing may pose some safety concerns. The Keene Police Department responds quickly and has easy access to the Keene section of the Trail.

## Future Trail Development

Respondents indicated that paving the gap from Keene State College to South Bridge (over NH 101) is under consideration. Ongoing surface and subsurface maintenance will continue. Improving wayfinding and increasing on-trail amenities is also of interest.

### **b) Swanzey**

On August 28, 2019, SWRPC staff met with the Town of Swanzey Director of Planning and Economic Development, as well as a member of the Swanzey Rail Trail Advisory Committee (RTAC). Using survey questions as a guide, the group discussed a range of trail-related issues. Notable discussion points included the following:

#### Previous trail planning

Discussants cited the Town’s Complete Streets Policy and Planning and Design guidelines as an important guide for integrating off-road facilities like rail trails with on-road bicyclist and pedestrian infrastructure. They also reported that the current 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan includes a \$100,000 line item for a compact excavator, to be shared by the Department of Public Works and the Rail Trails Advisory Committee.

The Rail Trails Advisory Committee, established formally approximately two years ago, is the primary municipal entity responsible for rail trail planning activities. Prior to formal establishment, Committee members coordinated on an informal basis.

A discussant noted how increased capacity to recruit more volunteers - and different types of volunteers - would bolster RTAC’s ability to tackle trail-related issues. For example, some volunteers are interested in performing trail maintenance tasks while others excel at seeking grant opportunities and fundraising. Discussants noted how trainings regarding volunteer recruitment and management could help RTAC expand its volunteer base.

### Previous improvements

Discussants reported that the segment of trail running from the Keene-Swanzey town line to Pine Street was improved in stages, using a variety of funding mechanisms. They recalled that the segment from the Keene-Swanzey town line to Sawyers Crossing Road was improved with support from a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant. The section from Sawyers Crossing Road to Pine Street was improved with funding from private sources. The staged trail work focused on upgrading the unimproved railroad bed to a packed stoned dust trail surface.

It was observed that prior trail improvement projects have made it easier to budget for planned or proposed projects. For example, from previous trail work, it was possible to estimate that planned work to resurface the Ashuelot Rail Trail from Pine Street to the Swanzey-Winchester town line would cost approximately \$18 per linear foot. Planned work will result in a 10-foot trail width and packed stone dust surface.

### Trail programming

Discussants were aware of, but not closely familiar with, trail awareness days that have been organized in the past. They had not heard of any trail programming that had occurred recently.

### Trail promotion

In the summer of 2019, RTAC members tabled at the Walldogs Mural Festival in Keene. They distributed maps and brochures, which festival attendees were eager to accept. An RTAC member tabled at Swanzey Old Homes Day. RTAC members continue to promote the trail through the local/regional trail management and advocacy community.

### Land use

Discussants noted that there is likely more opportunity for commercial development in proximity to the Cheshire Rail Trail, given how near it is to NH 12 and commercially zoned parcels. There are still opportunities, however, for the establishment of certain types of small businesses in West Swanzey.

West Swanzey contains a variety of land uses in proximity to the trail, including multifamily housing. Complementary nearby land uses include an inn located in the central village of West Swanzey and a campground located on Pine Street.

### Encroachment

Discussants identified a property in West Swanzey with trail encroachment issues. Personal property, and perhaps structures, currently impinge on the trail right-of-way. Discussants believed that the owner had been informed of encroachment issues. Discussants observed that the trail was otherwise free of encroachment or dumping issues. Dumping poses more of a concern on the Cheshire Rail Trail, which travels through unpopulated areas. The Ashuelot Rail Trail travels through residential areas with more “eyes on the trail” to observe potential problems.

### Trail-town connections

Discussants identified the trail crossing at Eaton Road in West Swanzey as a prime candidate for improvement. The intersection represents a significant decision point for trail users, who can either continue traveling along the Rail Trail or turn onto Railroad Street to access the central village of

West Swanzey. The Town continues to focus on improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in and around the central village.

It was observed that both of the Town's rail trails run along north-south routes. On-road east-west connections are needed to establish loops, often preferred by recreational users over out-and-back routes. One loop that has been discussed would connect the Cheshire Rail Trail to the Ashuelot Rail Trail via a proposed east-west connection along existing roads and proposed pathways. Running from east to west, the connecting route would begin at the intersection of NH 12 and Marcy Hill Road, proceed westward onto Fox Run Road, onto a proposed path that would connect with Sycamore Hill Road, across old Homestead Highway and onto Keene Airport land, exact route to be determined, but likely following an onsite utility corridor for part of the way. The proposed pathway on Keene Airport land would likely require a bridge/boardwalk to traverse wet areas. The proposed route would then connect with a residential side street off of Sawyers Crossing Road, and then run westward along Sawyers Crossing Road until intersecting the Ashuelot Rail Trail. The proposed pathway over Keene Airport land has been broached with the interim airport manager.

In addition to the east-west connector route, a complete loop would require installation of a bridge on the Cheshire Rail Trail over NH 101 in Keene. It was observed that the proposed east-west connector would pass over hilly terrain, which may discourage certain users.

#### Trailheads and parking

The primary trailheads identified by discussants are located at the intersection of Matthews and Sawyers Crossing Road and the Riley Conservation Area off of Matthews Road. It was noted that many trail users park at the Krif Road trailhead in Keene.

#### Maintenance

Discussants reported that trail maintenance work is currently hampered by not having access to adequate equipment. Drainage/ditch repair is prohibitively time intensive when performed by hand. Trail maintenance capabilities are expected to improve when a compact excavator is acquired in coordination with the Department of Public Works. It is expected to cost \$100,000 to purchase a compact excavator with the necessary attachments: two digging buckets, a bucket "thumb" and a brush hog. The compact excavator is included as a line item in the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan. It has yet to be discussed who exactly will be allowed to use the excavator to perform trail maintenance. Discussants said that certifying volunteers to use the machine may be one option.

Currently, mowing is performed by RTAC members using personally owned tractors. Mowing twice per year seems sufficient to keep trailside vegetation under control.

On an ad hoc basis, the Department of Public Works helps remove leaves from trail culverts using a leaf vacuum.

Discussants reported that while they knew that a local snowmobile club performs some trail maintenance on the Cheshire Rail Trail, they were not aware of any efforts by snowmobile clubs to maintain the Swanzey section of the Ashuelot Rail Trail.

It was noted that RTAC members notify the NH Trails Bureau when they plan to perform substantial maintenance tasks.

### Enforcement

Discussants said that they were aware of a volunteer group that monitors trail rule compliance on the Cheshire Rail Trail, but that they have not been in close contact.

### Future Trail Development

In 2018, the Town of Swanzey was awarded \$600,000 through the Transportation Alternative Program to resurface and improve drainage on 2.9 miles of the Ashuelot Rail Trail and 4 miles of the Cheshire Rail Trail. The section slated for improvements on the Ashuelot Rail Trail runs from Pine Street in West Swanzey to the Swanzey/Winchester town line. Project costs total \$750,000. In the project application, the Town of Swanzey guaranteed the required 20% local match with the understanding that RTAC would undertake a fundraising effort to cover those costs. RTAC members are currently seeking funding from a variety of private sources.

Discussants noted that there was need to improve wayfinding along the entire trail corridor.

#### **c) Winchester**

Town of Winchester planning staff completed the survey in writing, in consultation with the Vice-President of the Winchester Trail Riders.

### Previous trail planning

The respondents did not identify any municipal plans or policies that address trail-related issues. Thus far, coordination regarding the trail has been limited to the Town and the Winchester Trail Riders.

### Previous improvements

Respondents noted that snowmobile club has made capital improvements on the trail, but did not specify any improvements.

### Trail programming

Respondents did not identify any trail-related programming.

### Trail promotion

Respondents indicated that “private promotion” does occur, but did not specify. Future promotion is under discussion.

### Land use

Respondents cited Pisgah State Park as an asset that could be enhanced by the presence of the Ashuelot Rail Trail. They also noted that downtown is within a few hundred feet of the rail trail, where there are restaurants, lodging and gas. The Monadnock Speedway is also located nearby. The town owned “Tannery” property abuts the rail trail and could be redeveloped for many different uses that would enhance the benefit of the trail, e.g. parking, bathrooms and information. Respondents also pointed to the potential of establishing a 40-mile bike route entirely in the Town, from downtown, through Pisgah State Park, and back.

### Encroachment

Respondents did not cite any encroachment issues on the trail.

### Trail-town connections

Respondents indicated that it is easy for visitors to find and access downtown from the trail. They noted that sidewalks exist between the trail and downtown, but no bicycle infrastructure is present. There are no active plans to install wayfinding signage but the idea has been discussed as a potential future project.

Respondents noted that it is easy for trail users to access residential areas. The Ashuelot River abuts the trail along many sections, but slopes may hinder access. Lodging facilities are located less than half a mile away from the trail.

According to respondents, the Town does not have any active plans to improve connections between the trail and key destinations, but community members have discussed the idea.

### Trailheads and parking

Respondents identified the entrance to Pisgah State Park off of NH 119 as an area used as a trailhead. They indicated that additional parking is needed along the trail. Potential sites included the “Tannery” property, and an area used as a farm stand on NH 119. A nearby private landowner has offered an area for parking.

### Maintenance

Respondents indicated that the snowmobile club performs all trail-related maintenance. Club members mow the trail each year. They noted that the club spent about \$10,000 on ditching and bridge work. Today, the work is minimal.

### Enforcement

Respondents reported that residents have complained about illegal ATV and motorcycle use on the trail. They also noted that there “have been grants for ATV patrols.” They also said that they were aware of homeless encampments on the trail.

### Future Trail Development

Respondents indicated that future trail improvements are in the discussion stage, but did not specify particular projects.

#### **d) Hinsdale**

On August 14<sup>th</sup>, SWRPC staff facilitated a conference call with Town of Hinsdale Community Development staff, the Board of Selectmen Chair, and another municipal representative. The group used survey questions to guide discussion, points which include the following:

#### Previous trail planning

Interviewees did not cite any previous planning initiatives that focused on the trail. One discussant did note that he intended to form a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose purpose would be to develop a boardwalk on the Fort Hill Recreational Trail, which runs on the east shore of the Connecticut River. Discussants said that they refer to both the Ashuelot Rail Trail and the Fort Hill Recreational Trail as the “Ashuelot Rail Trail.” “Fort Hill Recreational Trail” was not a familiar designation.



### Previous improvements

Discussants reported that the Pisgah Mountain Trail Riders were responsible for any improvements on the trail. To date, the Town has not pursued any on-trail improvements.

### Trail programming

The Town has formed a partnership with the National Parks Service, which operates under the brand "Outdoor Hinsdale." The partnership seeks to promote outdoor recreation in Hinsdale. In September, 2018, the group organized a series of hiking and boating excursions on local trails and waterways. The 2018 event attracted about 35 attendees. Through the National Parks Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, the Town received \$1,000 to support Outdoor Hinsdale efforts.

The group plans to replicate the event in September 2019. One of the listed hikes for the 2019 event runs along the Ashuelot Rail Trail, from the parking area on NH 119 to the historic Hinsdale House, located in downtown Hinsdale.

Other cited trail programming included: cross-country team practices, snowshoeing during school physical education classes, and summer camp activities.

### Trail promotion

The Town is working with the National Park Service to develop a trail map, which is expected to go to print in the fall of 2019. National Park Service is managing map development and will print the maps at no cost to the town.

### Land use

Discussants noted parcels abutting the Ashuelot Rail Trail were typically used for residential purposes. The T-Bird gas station on NH 119 was a common refueling spot for snowmobilers on the Fort Hill Recreational Trail. A-1 Pizza, also located on NH 119 also attracted quite a few snowmobilers as customers.

One interviewee noted that many commercially-zoned parcels fronting on NH 119 have rear lot lines that abut the Fort Hill Recreational Trail.

Discussants reported that there are places to ice fish along the Fort Hill Recreational Trail, but no known locations along the Ashuelot Rail Trail. They also noted that the Hinsdale Campground at Thicket Hill Village, a mobile home park, is located in close proximity to the Fort Hill Recreational Trail.

### Encroachment

One discussant noted that, on the Fort Hill Recreational Trail, two landowners have cut down trees alongside the trail in order to gain views of the Connecticut River. Homeless encampments also pose an issue on the Fort Hill Trail. Interviewees did not report any encroachment issues on the Ashuelot Rail Trail.

### Trail-town connections

Interviewees noted that the Ashuelot Rail Trail lies within walking distance of downtown Hinsdale, but currently no signage is present. Sidewalks are present for only a portion of distance between the trail and downtown. Currently, there are no plans to enhance connections between the Ashuelot Rail Trail and the village center.

### Trailheads and parking

Interviewees identified the parking lot on NH 63 as a key trailside parking area, since it can accommodate trailers. Snowmobilers use it in the winter to load/unload equipment. There is a limited amount of parking at the Depot Street trailhead, but there is insufficient space to accommodate trailers.

### Maintenance

Interviewees reported that any trail maintenance on either the Fort Hill Recreational Trail or the Ashuelot Rail Trail is handled by the Pisgah Mountain Trailriders. The club mows the right of way and performs bridge repair work. The club has keys for trail gates.

### Enforcement

Discussants cited homeless encampments on the trail as an enforcement issue. They also said that there is some unauthorized ATV and trail bike activity. Illegal dumping is an issue on the Fort Hill Recreational Trail.

### Future Trail Development

An interviewee suggested that the combined mileage of the Fort Hill Trail and the Ashuelot Rail Trail could accommodate a marathon. The interviewee also suggested that development of family camping amenities along the trail, such as tent platforms and potable water stations, could attract more trail users. Better boat access along the Fort Hill Recreational Trail was also cited as a potential area for improvement.

The abandoned railroad bridge connecting the Vermont shore with the Fort Hill Recreational Trail has garnered some interest as a potential trail development project. Currently, the bridge lacks decking and is unsafe to cross. To date, the Town has been unsuccessful in its attempts to gain information from NHDOT regarding estimated costs to improve the bridge. Interviewees thought that improving the bridge would be an effective way to boost trail activity, not only on the Fort Hill Recreational Trail, but also on the Ashuelot Rail Trail. Interviewees saw bridge renovation as a key strategy for unlocking the economic development potential of the Town's rail trails.

## **III. Findings**

- In each trailside municipality, there are municipal staff and officials who are keenly interested in realizing the full potential of the Ashuelot Rail Trail. The very fact that each municipality dedicated time to respond to the substantial set of survey questions indicates that they consider the Trail an important issue.
- Municipalities have taken different approaches to trail maintenance and development. For example, in some municipalities, municipal workers perform regular trail maintenance tasks while in others volunteers and snowmobile club members are primarily responsible for trail maintenance. Municipalities have also used different funding mechanisms to

support trail-related work. Municipalities may be able to find value in learning from the experiences of the neighbors.

- Municipalities consider issues related to the Ashuelot Rail Trail within the context of the overall trail network, both existing and potential. For example, in Hinsdale, there is more interest and attention directed at improving the Fort Hill Recreational Trail than at improving the Ashuelot Rail Trail. Interviewees, however, did not distinguish between the Fort Hill Recreational Trail and the Ashuelot Rail Trail, referring to both as the “Ashuelot Rail Trail.” In Swanzey, respondents considered development of both the Ashuelot Rail Trail and Cheshire Rail Trail as a priority. Connections between the two trails was also identified as a priority.
- Facilitating survey responses in person offered certain advantages over facilitating responses over the phone or soliciting written responses. In-person facilitation allowed for the use of maps as visual aids, enabling collection of geographically specific information.

#### **IV. Recommendations**

- Follow-up with municipal staff and officials about sharing documentation from previous trail-related projects, including grant applications, engineering studies, and project budgets. Such documentation from previous trail-related projects could be compiled into a trail project library that could function as a resource for all trailside municipalities.
- Evaluate the feasibility of sharing trail maintenance equipment across municipal boundaries. In some cases, it may make sense for trailside municipalities to share equipment rather than purchase their own or to hire an independent contractor. It may also be useful under certain circumstances to establish relationships between municipalities whereby staff in one municipality is permitted to perform maintenance activities along a section of the trail in a neighboring municipality.
- Create an inventory of points of interest along the trail. Survey respondents identified a variety of land uses that should be considered in tandem with planning improvement to the trail and the surrounding transportation network. Such an inventory could be developed as a GIS resource that could be layered on top of other trail-related information.

## Plan for Ashuelot Rail Trail Municipal Survey

### 1) Previous trail planning

- a) Please describe any municipal plans or policies that directly or indirectly address maintenance, development, or use of the Ashuelot Rail Trail.
- b) Has your municipality coordinated with or consulted other groups, organizations, agencies, consultants, etc. on trail-related planning or development? Examples could include a local school, trail-focused group like a snowmobile club, State or federal agency, outside municipality or body, etc. If so, please describe.
- c) Has your municipality identified opportunities for integrating use or development of the Ashuelot Rail Trail with community or economic development goals (e.g. public health, housing, recreation, tourism?). If so, please describe.

### 2) Previous improvements

- a) Please describe any capital improvements your municipality has made on the Ashuelot Rail Trail. If possible, include information about project dates, costs, funding sources, and outcomes.
- b) Would you be willing to share with SWRPC and/or other municipalities documents from past capital projects (e.g. budgets, site plans)?
- c) What funding mechanisms (e.g. government programs, private foundations, tax revenue) has the municipality pursued to support trail development or maintenance? Please describe.

### 3) Trail programming

- a) Does your municipality use the Ashuelot Rail Trail for public programming or activities? If so, please describe, including lead department, program frequency, and participation rates.

### 4) Trail promotion

- a) How do you promote or publicize the trail?

### 5) Land use

- a) What nearby land uses are **currently** or **could be** enhanced by the presence of the Ashuelot Rail Trail? Please describe specific locations/examples for the following categories:
  - i) Parks
  - ii) Rivers/ponds/lakes
  - iii) Natural/conservation land
  - iv) Housing
  - v) Community facilities (e.g. library, schools)
  - vi) Businesses/commercial development
  - vii) Other
- b) What nearby land uses that *conflict with* the presence of the Ashuelot Rail Trail? Please describe specific locations as well as any potential mitigation measures that your community has considered.
- c) What development or redevelopment opportunities exist along or near the Ashuelot Rail Trail?

**6) Encroachment**

- a) Are you aware of any encroachment onto the Ashuelot Rail Trail right of way? If so, please describe, including locations, severity, and any countermeasures taken (e.g. signs, education).
- b) To what degree has trespassing from the Ashuelot Rail Trail onto adjacent private property been an issue? Please describe problematic locations and any countermeasures taken.

**7) Trail-town Connections**

- a) How easy or difficult is it for visitors to find and access downtown, town centers or village areas from the trail? Please address the following:
  - i) Can people use sidewalks to travel from the trail to downtown/town centers/village areas?
  - ii) Can people biking use other trails, on-road bike lanes, or sharrow-marked roadway to travel from the trail to downtown/town centers/village areas?
  - iii) Is there wayfinding signage that directs trail users towards downtown/town centers/village areas?
- b) How easy or difficult is it for trail users to access the trail from:
  - i) Residential areas
  - ii) Schools
  - iii) Key businesses outside of downtown or central business districts
  - iv) Parks and natural areas
  - v) Waterfront recreational areas (including the Ashuelot River)
  - vi) Lodging facilities, e.g. bed and breakfasts and hotels
- c) Where do snowmobiles connect to the Ashuelot Rail Trail from other trails? How about destinations such as gas stations, convenience stores or restaurants?
- d) Does the municipality have plans to improve connections between the trail and key town destinations? Please explain:

**8) Trailheads and parking**

- a) What locations are used as “trailheads?” Please describe each location.
- b) Is there a need for additional parking or other improvements at trailheads? What are specific improvements that have been proposed?
- c) Do trailhead parking areas accommodate larger vehicle or vehicle/trailer combinations such as those carrying horses or snowmobiles?

**9) Maintenance**

- a) Does your municipality perform any of the following maintenance activities on the Ashuelot Rail Trail? For each task, please indicate “yes” or “no” as well as frequency. To the extent you are aware of unit costs (time and money), please share.
  - i) Mowing
  - ii) Grading
  - iii) Filling washed out or wet areas
  - iv) Repaving

- v) Snow removal
  - vi) Clearing fallen boughs or downed trees
  - vii) Replacing/fixing signage
  - viii) Repainting crosswalks
  - ix) Repairing Bridges
  - x) Other
- b) Does your municipality coordinate with volunteer groups who perform maintenance on the Ashuelot Rail Trail? If so, please describe formal or informal processes for coordinating on-trail maintenance.
- c) Is there anything else that you would like to add about trail maintenance?

**10) Enforcement**

- a) Describe concerns and experiences related to safety and law enforcement (including violations of trail rules).

**11) Future trail development**

- a) Is your municipality planning on making future improvements to the Ashuelot Rail Trail? If so please describe planned activities, funding source(s), and timeframe.

**12) What did we miss?**

- a) Feel free to share anything else you would like to highlight about the Ashuelot Rail Trail