

Appendix B

Public Outreach Memos



DATE: June 28, 2019
TO: Plan for Ashuelot Rail Trail Project Advisory Committee
FROM: SWRPC Staff
RE: Outreach – Online Resident Survey

In order to learn about trail issues, trip types, destinations and other information about the Ashuelot Rail Trail, SWRPC, in coordination with the Project Advisory Committee, developed an online survey that was made available to the general public. The survey was open from July 2018 to March 2019. The survey was advertised via SWRPC newsletters, a trail sign posted at various locations along the trail's route, Facebook, printed flyers, and at an open house held in November 2018. This memo summarizes key survey results, including who responded, how respondents use the trail and which issues were identified as priorities, opportunities and concerns.

I. Who Responded

Over the collection period, 555 responses were received in total. Of those responses, 392, or 71 percent, were received from respondents with home zip codes within or partially within southwest New Hampshire, as defined by SWRPC Region (Figure 1). The remainder of respondents had home zip codes elsewhere in NH (12%), Massachusetts (10%), Vermont (3%), Connecticut (1%), or elsewhere in the United States (1%). In total, responses were received from 152 unique home zip codes. Figure 2 depicts respondent home zip codes in the northeastern United States. The wide geographic range of home zip codes indicates that interest in the trail extends beyond local users.

Figure 1 – The SWRPC Region

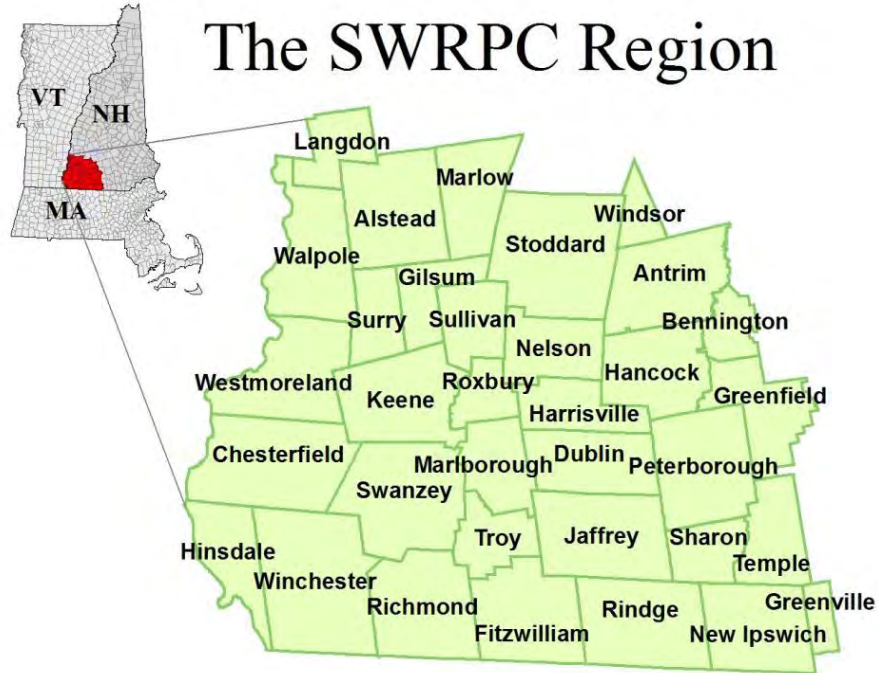
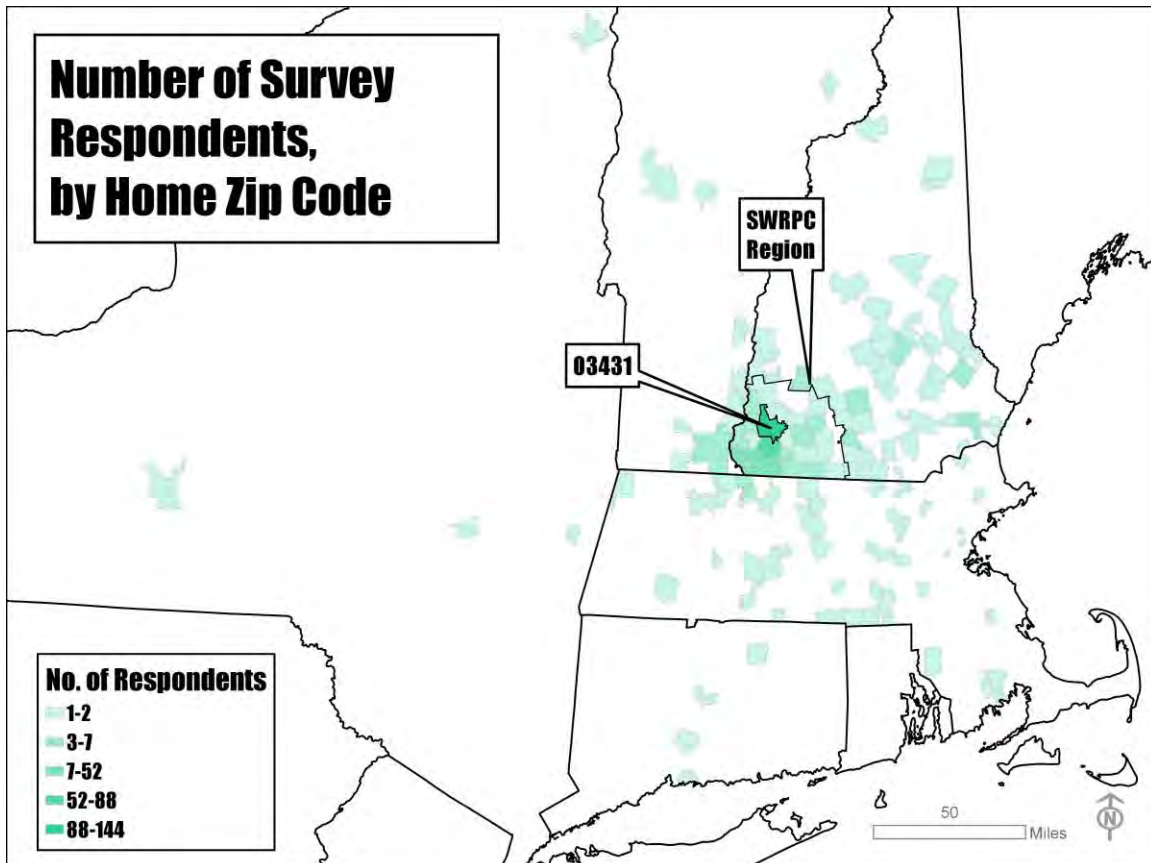


Figure 2 – Number of Survey Respondents, by Home Zip Code



Respondent home zip codes were most commonly located within municipalities along the Ashuelot Rail Trail. Zip code areas do not align perfectly with municipal boundaries, but provide the best means of identifying survey respondents who live or work in municipalities along the trail’s route (Figure 3). Zip code 03431, which includes all of Keene, as well as sections of Surry, Roxbury and Swanzey was the most common respondent home zip code, with about 30 percent of respondents indicating that they live there. Zip code 03446, which includes most of Swanzey was the second most common home zip code, accounting for about 16 percent of responses. About 11 percent of respondents had a home zip code of 03470 or 03441, which together encompass the majority of Winchester and Richmond.¹ The fourth most common home zip code was 03451, which includes most of Hinsdale.

Figure 3 – Zip Code Areas within or Partially within Keene, Swanzey, Winchester, and Hinsdale

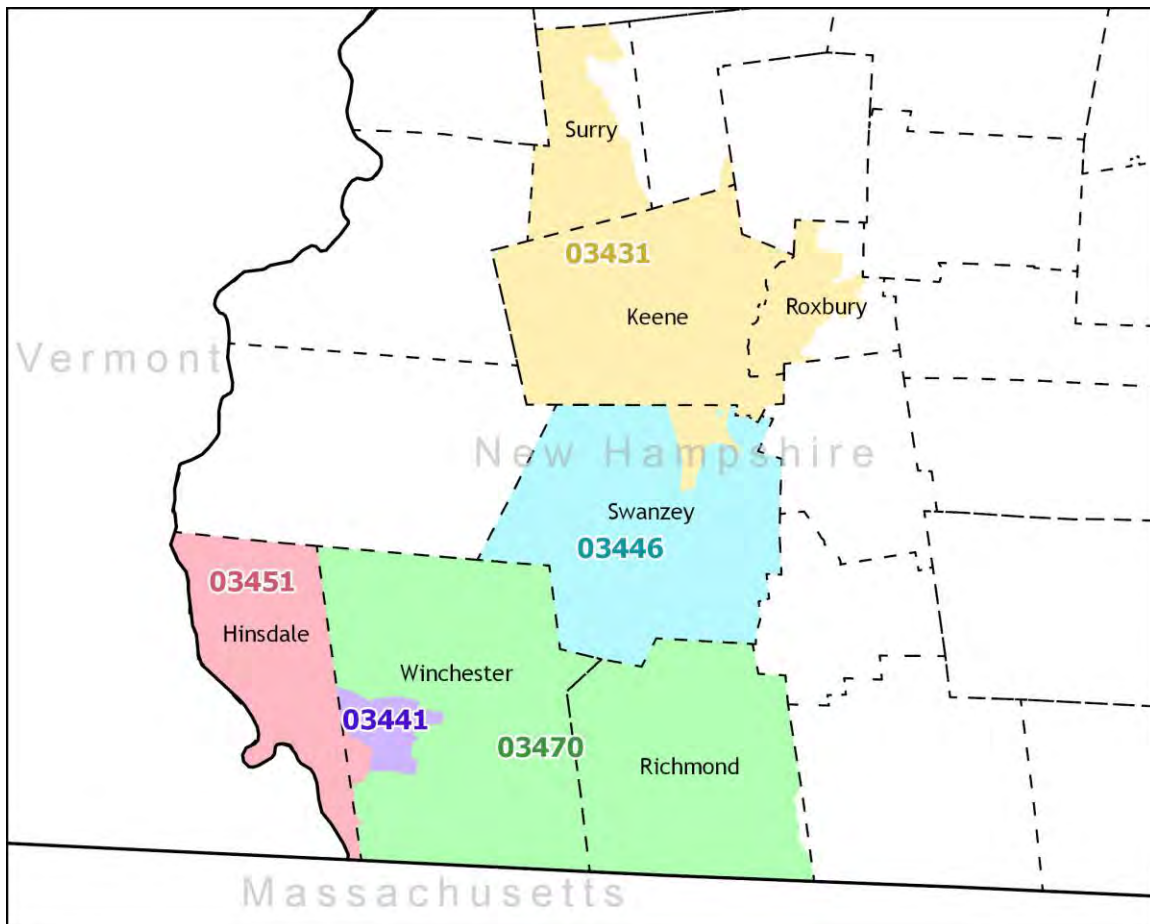


Table 1 cross-tabulates respondent home zip codes with work zip codes in order to determine the frequency of home-work zip code pairings, i.e. how many respondents *live* in Zip Code A and *work* in Zip Code B. Zip codes outside of municipalities along the trail’s route are grouped together as “other,” along with non-responses.² The “total” column shows how many respondents live in each zip code while the “total” row shows how many respondents work in each zip code.

¹ Given the small size of zip code 03441, and the fact that it and 03470 both lie within the Town of Winchester, they are grouped together in order to approximate town boundaries.

² All 555 respondents supplied a home zip code, while 522 supplied a work zip code. Respondents who did not supply a zip code may have chosen to skip the answer or may not be employed.

A plurality of respondents, just over 44 percent, live *and* work within one of the zip codes along the trail's route. About 36 percent of respondents *neither* live *nor* work within a zip code along the trail's route. In short, survey responses represent both individuals with intimate familiarity with the communities along the trail's route as well as individuals who may visit those communities infrequently or perhaps have never visited them at all.

Respondents who both lived and worked in zip code 03431 constituted the most common home-work zip code pairing, accounting for nearly 20 percent of all respondents.

Table 1 – Percent of Respondents, by Home and Work Zip Code (n = 555)

Home Zip Code*	Work Zip Code*					Total
	03431	03446	03470, 03441	03451	Other	
03431	19.6%	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%	5.8%	25.9%
03446	5.6%	5.2%	0.4%	0.5%	4.1%	15.9%
03470, 03441	3.2%	0.2%	4.1%	0.2%	2.7%	10.5%
03451	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	4.0%	2.0%	6.5%
Other	4.1%	0.9%	0.2%	0.2%	35.9%	41.3%
Total	32.8%	6.5%	5.2%	5.0%	50.5%	100.0%

* Refer to Figure 3 for a depiction of zip code geographies.

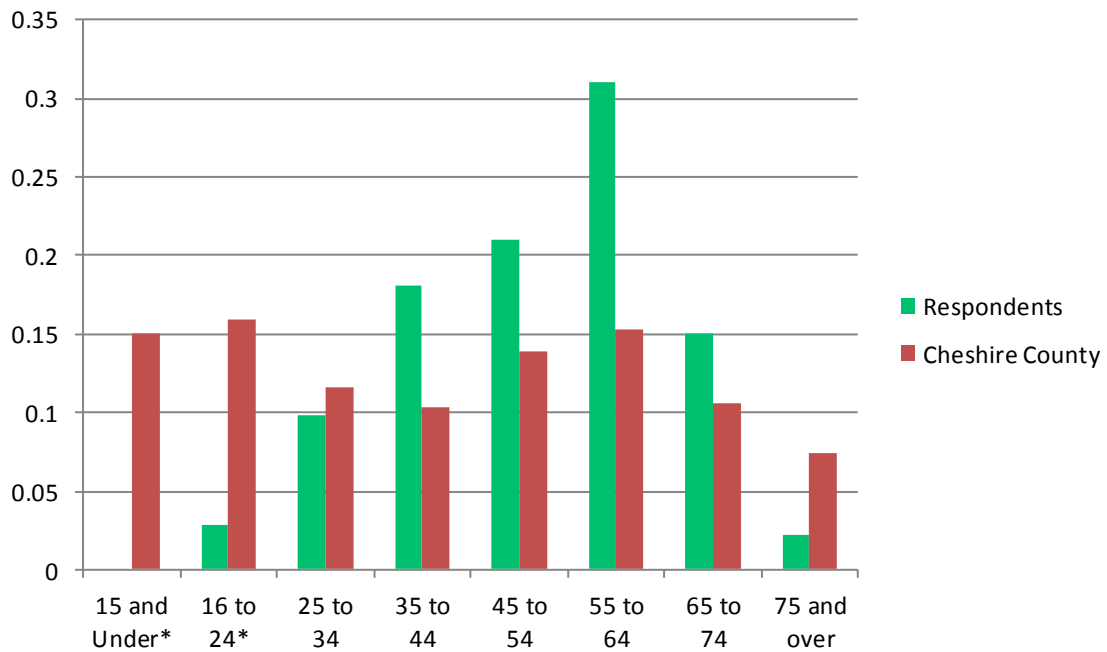
In addition to requesting respondents' home and work zip codes, the survey also asked whether respondents lived or worked within biking or walking distance of the Ashuelot Rail Trail. Out of all survey respondents, 37 percent indicated that *both* their home location and work location were either within walking or cycling distance of the Ashuelot Rail Trail (Table 2).

Table 2 – Survey respondents, by Distance to Ashuelot Rail Trail, from Home and Work Locations (n = 555)

Home within...	Workplace within...		
	Walking Distance	Biking Distance	Neither/No Response
Walking distance	16.0%	3.4%	10.6%
Biking Distance	5.8%	11.4%	8.5%
Neither/No Response	2.5%	2.9%	38.9%

Demographic information collected by the survey was limited to data on respondent age (Figure 4). When comparing the proportion of different age cohorts that live in Cheshire County with the survey sample, the survey sample underrepresented individuals on the tail ends of the age spectrum - the County's youngest and oldest residents. Individuals aged 16 to 24 years old were notably missing from the survey sample, representing only 2.8% of the survey sample, compared to 15.9% of the Cheshire County population in the same age bracket. No survey responses were received from individuals aged 15 years old or younger. Individuals aged 75 and over were also underrepresented: 2.2% of respondents fell within the age bracket, compared with 7.5% of County residents. Older middle aged adults (55-64 years old) were the most overrepresented age bracket, composing 31.1% of respondents but only 15.3% of the Cheshire County population.

Figure 4 - Age Cohorts for Survey Respondents (n = 499) vs. Cheshire County Population 15 and Over



Source: American Community Survey 2017 5-Year Estimates

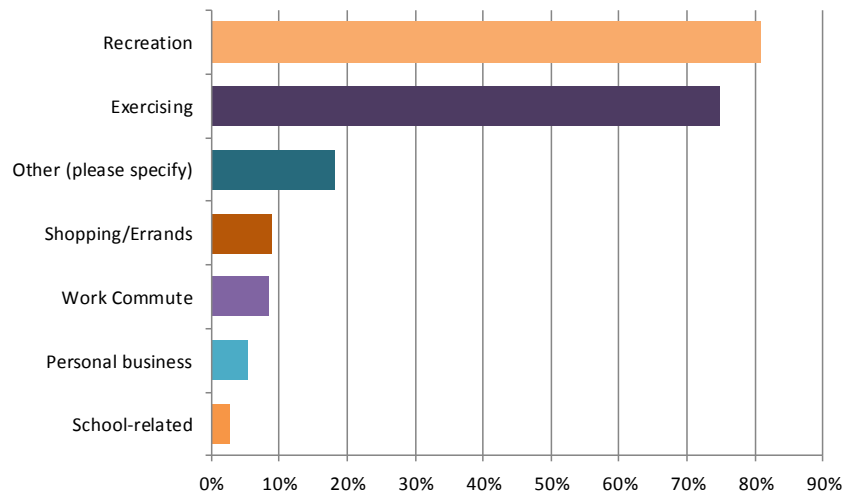
* The number of survey respondents aged 16-24 years old is compared to the 15-24 year-old Cheshire County population, the closest age bracket available from the American Community Survey. Likewise, the number of respondents aged 15 years old and under is compared to the 14 and under County population.

II. How Respondents Use the Trail

Among the survey's 555 respondents, 79 percent reported using the Ashuelot Rail Trail - 65 percent within the last 12 months and 14 percent not within the last 12 months. Respondents who indicated that they had used the trail within the last 12 months were prompted with a series of questions aimed at capturing why, how and when they used the trail, as well where they traveled when using the trail.

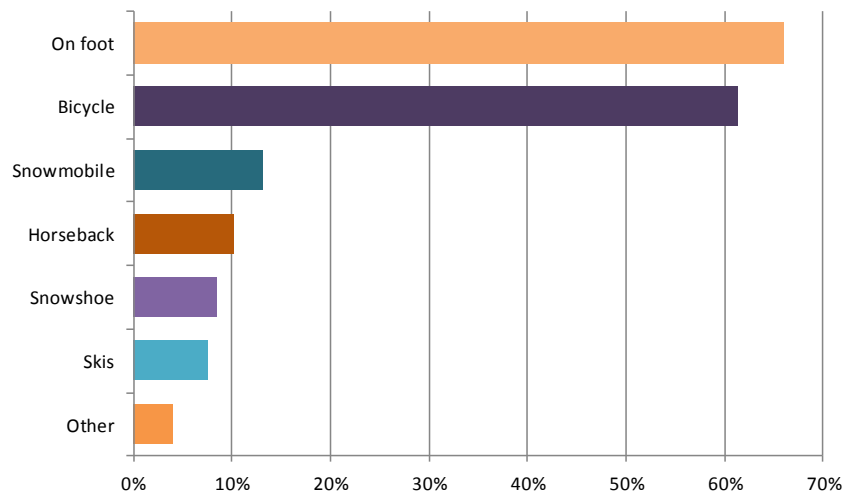
Respondents indicated that they use the trail for a variety of purposes, but by far the most common reason respondents used the trail was for recreation or exercise (Figure 5). For respondents who marked "other," dog walking was a common response.

Figure 5 – Purposes of Respondent On-trail Trips within the Last 12 months (n = 344)



For the 344 respondents who indicated one or more on-trail travel modes, walking was the most common, with 66 percent indicating that they had walked on the trail within the last 12 months (Figure 6). A slightly smaller portion of respondents (61 percent) indicated that they had biked on the trail. Smaller numbers of respondents reported traveling on the trail by snowmobile, horseback, skis, and snowshoes. Under "other," several respondents answered that they've used ATVs on the trail, which is currently not a permitted use.

Figure 6 – Respondent On-trail Travel Modes within the Last 12 months (n = 344)



A majority (52 percent) of the 344 respondents who have used the trail in the last twelve months reported that they have done so using only one travel mode. Significant overlap, however, exists between trail user groups, with many respondents reporting traveling along the trail using two or more travel modes (Figure 7). Overlap is more common among some travel modes than others, as depicted in Figure 8, where thicker lines connecting travel modes represent higher numbers of respondents who use *both* of those modes. For example, many survey respondents who use the trail on bicycle also use it on foot. Conversely, fewer respondents who use the trail by horseback also use it by bicycle. Lines that start and end at a single travel mode (and may appear like humps) represent trail users who use *only* that mode and no other mode.

Figure 7 – Percent of Question Respondents, by No. of Travel Modes Used on the Ashuelot Rail Trail (n = 344)

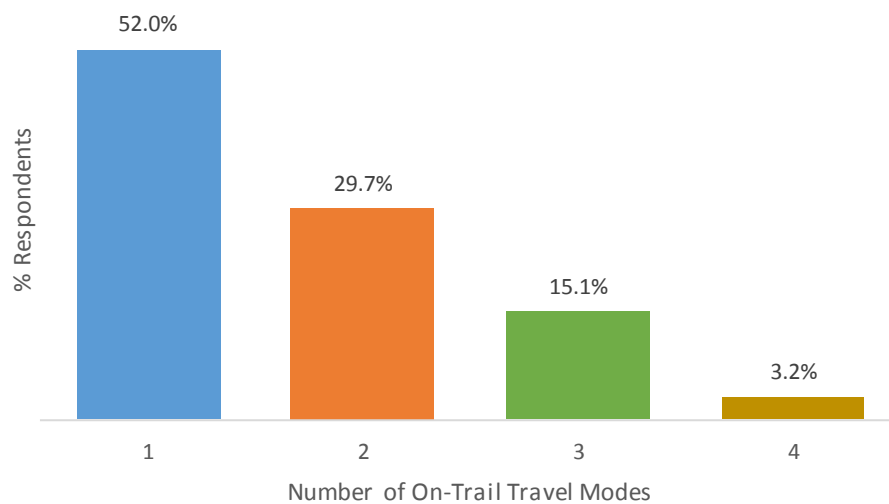
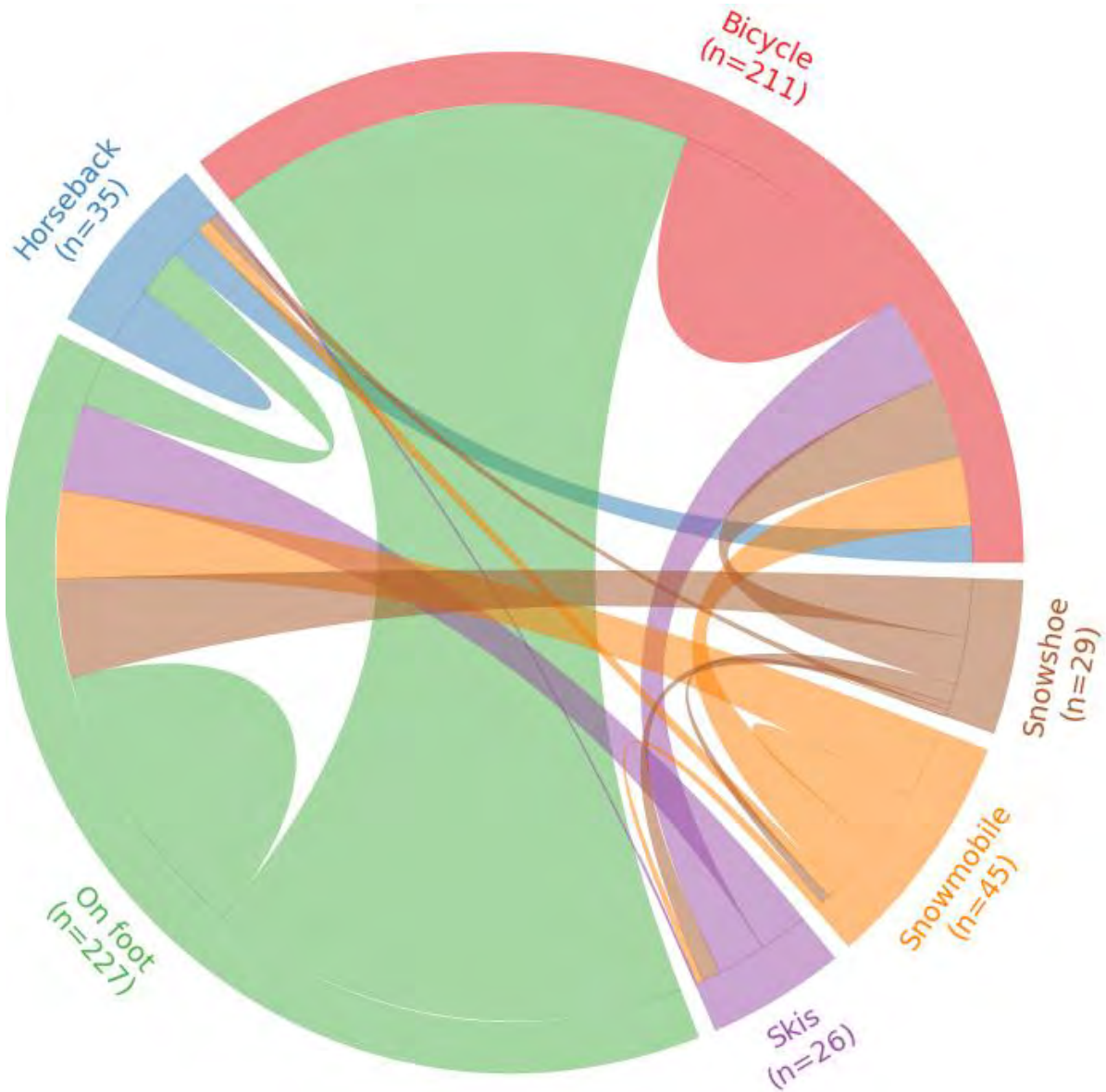
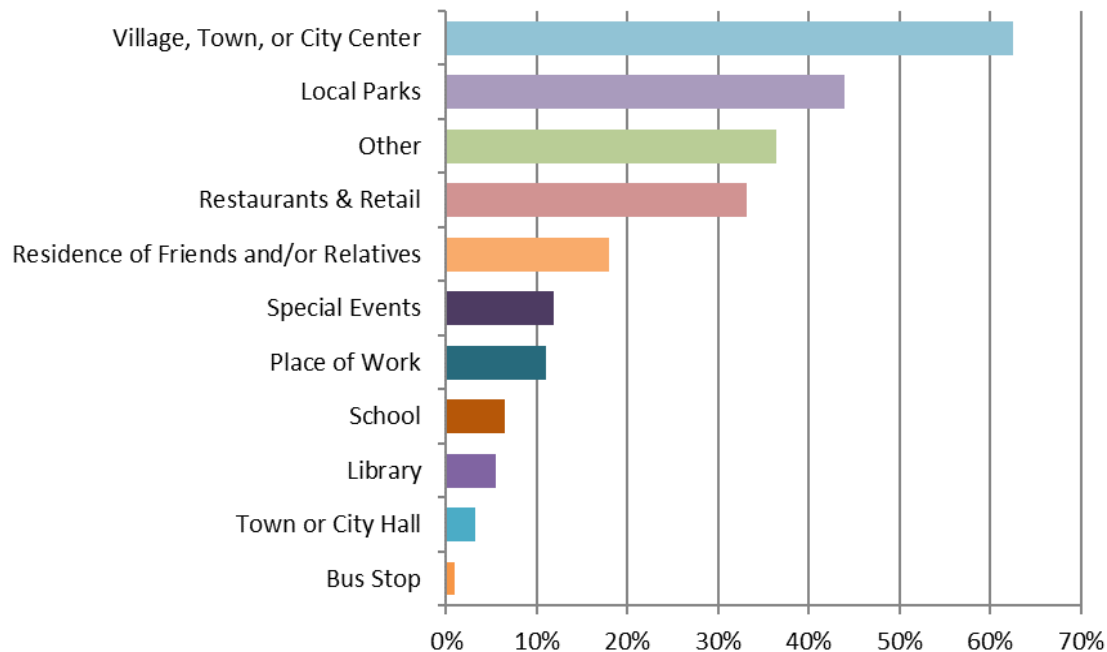


Figure 8 – Overlap among On-Trail Travel Modes Used by Survey Respondents.(n = 344)



The survey asked respondents to indicate places that they traveled to using the rail trail (Figure 9). Among the 344 question respondents, 63 percent said that they had used the rail trail to travel to a village, town, or city center, the most common answer by a substantial margin. This figure may be somewhat inflated, however, by respondents returning to downtown areas after round-trip outings. Other common destinations included local parks (44 percent) and restaurants and retail establishments (33 percent). The majority of respondents who marked “other” noted that they had no particular destination when using the trail.

Figure 9 – Destinations Reached by Respondents When Using the Ashuelot Rail Trail (n =344)



Respondents who had used the trail within the last twelve months were prompted with a question regarding seasons of trail use. Of the 344 respondents who answered the question, 88 percent indicated that they used the trail during the fall, the most commonly cited season of use. A slightly lower number of respondents indicated that they use the trail during the summer (86 percent) or the spring (81 percent). Winter was the least frequently cited season of use, with 49 percent of question respondents indicating that they use the trail during that period of the year.

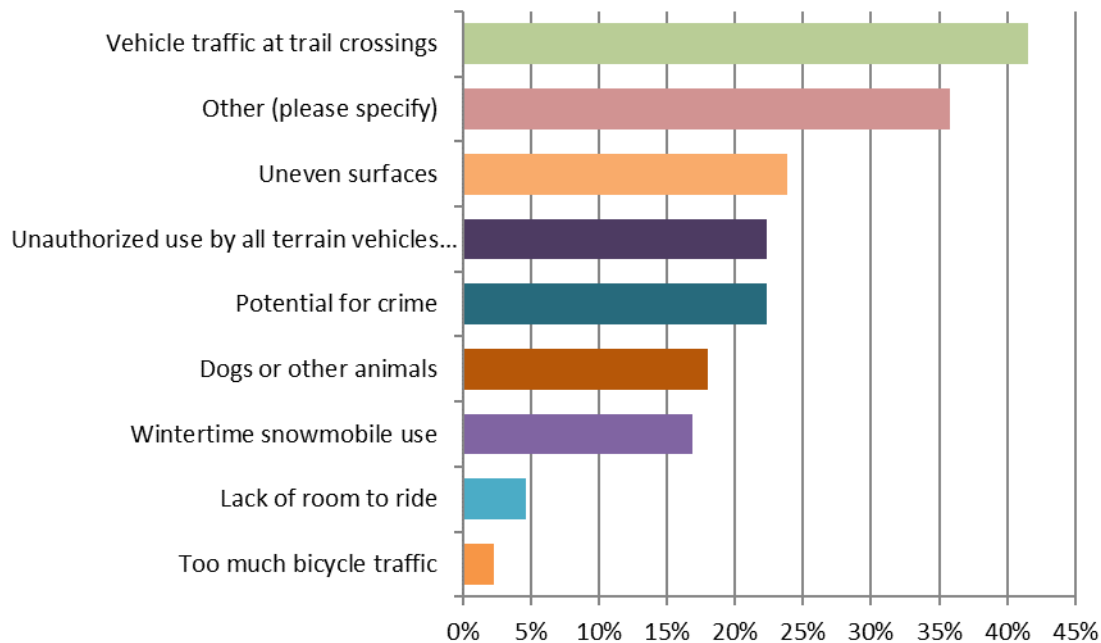
Among the 344 respondents who had used the trail in the last twelve months, 76 percent said that they used the trail on both weekdays and weekends. Thirteen percent said that they use the trail only on weekends while 11 percent said they use the trail only on weekdays.

Respondents who had used the trail in the last twelve months were asked whether they “typically” used the trail alone or with others. About 57 percent of the 344 question respondents indicated that they typically use the trail with others, while 43 percent said that they typically use the trail alone.

III. Respondent Perspectives on Trail-Related Issues

The survey included several questions aimed at capturing respondent trail-related concerns and priorities. Respondents who had used the trail in the last 12 months (n = 344) were asked to indicate their top safety concerns related to the Ashuelot Rail Trail (Figure 10). Vehicle traffic at trail crossings was the top safety concern raised, with 42 percent of question respondents indicating that it was an issue. Many respondents who selected “other” commented that they did so because they did not have safety concerns regarding the trail.

Figure 10 - Safety Concerns of Respondents who Used the Trail in Last 12 Months (n = 344)



When comparing safety concerns among different user groups, similarities and differences emerge. Table 3 lists the safety concerns most frequently cited by individuals using various on-trail transportation modes. It should be noted that these groups are not mutually exclusive, i.e. an individual who uses the trail on a bicycle, for example, may also use it via one or more other transportation modes. Similar to safety concerns of respondents overall, vehicle traffic at trail crossings was the most frequently cited safety concern for each trail user group. Unauthorized use by all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) or motorcycles appeared as a 2nd or 3rd most frequently cited safety concern among those using the trail via bicycle, horseback, skis, or snowshoes. “Potential for crime” appeared as a top-three safety concern only among those who use the trail on horseback and on foot. “Dogs and other animals” appeared as a top-three safety concern only among individuals who snowmobile on the trail.

Table 3 – Top Three Most Frequently Cited Safety Concerns, by On-Trail Travel Mode

	Bicycle	Horseback	On foot	Skis	Snowmobile	Snowshoe
1	Vehicle traffic at trail crossings	Vehicle traffic at trail crossings	Vehicle traffic at trail crossings	Vehicle traffic at trail crossings	Vehicle traffic at trail crossings	Vehicle traffic at trail crossings
2	Uneven surfaces	Unauthorized use by ATVs or motorcycles	Potential for crime	Wintertime snowmobile use	Uneven surfaces	Unauthorized use ATVs or motorcycles
3	Unauthorized use by ATVs or motorcycles	Potential for crime	Uneven surfaces	Unauthorized use by ATVs or motorcycles	Dogs or other animals	Wintertime snowmobile use

Patterns also come to light when comparing safety concerns of trail users from different home zip code areas (Table 4). Among respondents with home zip codes 03431 (Keene) and 03446 (Swanzy), vehicle traffic at trail crossing was the most frequently cited safety concern. By

comparison, respondents with home zip codes 03451 (Hinsdale) and 03470/03441 (Winchester) most frequently cited uneven surfaces as their top safety concern. Potential for crime appeared as a frequently cited safety concern for respondents with home zip codes 03431, 03446, and 03451. Wintertime snowmobile use appeared as a top-three safety concern only among respondents with a home zip code of 03431.

Table 4 – Top Three Most Frequently Cited Safety Concerns, by Home Zip Code

	03431	03446	03451	03470/03441
1	Vehicle traffic at trail crossings	Vehicle traffic at trail crossings	Uneven surfaces	Uneven surfaces
2	Potential for crime	Potential for crime	Dogs or other animals	Vehicle traffic at trail crossings
3	Wintertime snowmobile use	Uneven surfaces	Potential for crime	Dogs or other animals

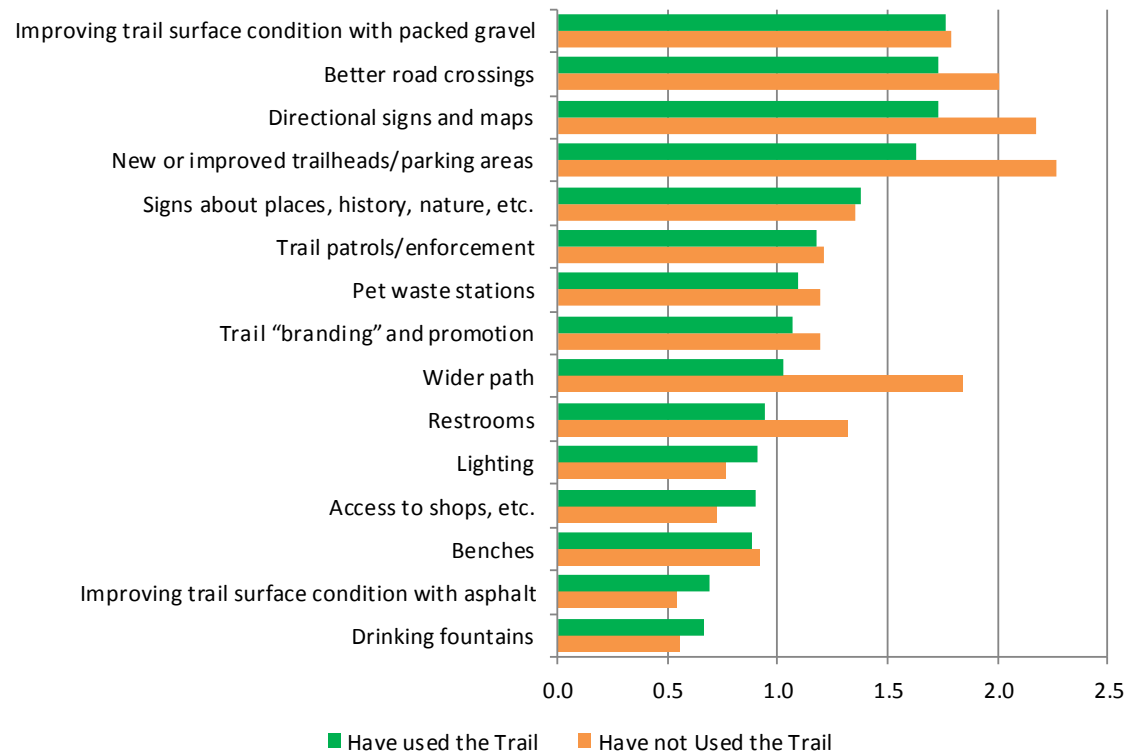
All respondents - not just those who used the trail in the last 12 months - were asked to prioritize trail-related improvements. Given a list of potential improvements, respondents were requested to prioritize each one on a four-point scale: “not a priority”, “low priority”, “medium priority”, and “high priority”, Figure 11 presents the average prioritization of each potential improvement, with zero representing “not a priority” and a three representing a “high priority”³. Results are broken out by respondents who have used the trail (whether in the last 12 months or less recently) and respondents who have not used the trail at all.

Among respondents who had used the trail, the top-three highest prioritized improvements were: improving the trail surface condition with packed gravel; better road crossings; and directional signs and maps. Respondents who had not used the trail expressed somewhat different top priorities. New or improved trailheads/parking areas received the highest average prioritization, followed by directional signs and maps and better road crossings.

Overall, respondent non-users expressed a more urgent need to address various trail improvements when compared to respondent trail users. Most notably, respondent non-users placed much greater importance on increasing trail width than respondent trail users.

³ “No response” was assigned a zero if the respondent prioritized at least one potential improvement. Respondents who skipped the question entirely were dropped from the results.

Figure 11 - Priority of Potential Trail-Related Improvements as Weighted Average of Responses, on a Scale from Zero to Three (n = 499*)



*Of the 499 question respondents, 405 had used the trail within the last 12 months and 94 had not.

Among respondent trail users, priorities for improvements were not uniform. Differences manifested themselves, for example, between respondents who used the trail via different travel modes.

The top priority for snowmobilers was directional signs and maps. The potential trail improvement appears as a top-five priority for other respondent groups, although at somewhat lower levels. Snowmobilers were the only respondent group for which "access to shops" appears as a top-five priority.

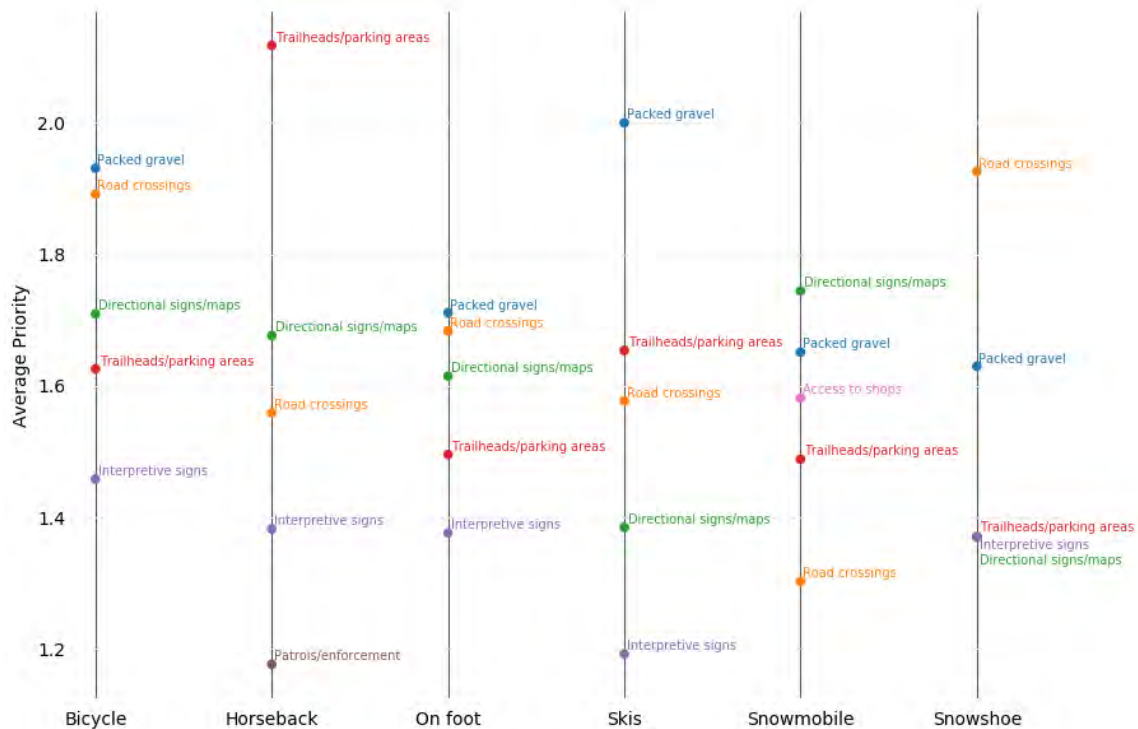
Figure 12 groups respondents by whether or not they use the trail via each listed mode of travel (groups are not mutually exclusive). The top five potential trail improvements - those with the highest *average* prioritization - are then plotted for each group, on a scale from 0 to 3 ("Not a Priority" to "High Priority"). It should be emphasized that sample sizes vary between trail user groups (Figure 6). Although exact on-trail mode share cannot be determined from available data, it is possible to observe that pedestrians and bicyclists are the most common trail users.

Overlap exists between the priorities of various respondent groups, but differences are also apparent. For example, improving the trail surface with packed gravel appears as the first or second highest priority for all groups except for respondent equestrian users. For equestrian respondents, improving the trail surface with packed gravel does not appear as a top-five priority. Unlike other respondent groups, equestrian respondents prioritized improved trailheads and parking areas as the most important potential trail improvement. In fact, this top priority among equestrian respondents received a noticeably higher prioritization score than the top priority of other respondent groups. Through other outreach methods (e.g. the open house), equestrian users have expressed strong interest in trailheads and parking areas that can accommodate trailers and

that include safe areas for loading and unloading horses. Although equestrians assign special importance to improved parking areas and trailheads, it should be noted that the issue appears as a top-five priority for all other respondent groups, albeit at lower levels.

The top priority for snowmobilers was directional signs and maps. The potential trail improvement appears as a top-five priority for other respondent groups, although at somewhat lower levels. Snowmobilers were the only respondent group for which “access to shops” appears as a top-five priority.

Figure 12 - Top Five Priorities for Trail Improvements, by Travel Mode of Respondent



Among respondents who lived in zip code areas along the trail, some top priorities were aligned while others were less so. Improving trail surface conditions with packed gravel was the first or second highest prioritized improvement across all home zip code areas. Directional signs and maps was a top-three priority improvement for respondents who lived in zip code areas 03431 (Keene), 03451 (Hinsdale), and 03470/03441 (Winchester), but not for respondents who lived in zip code area 03446 (Swanzy). “Better road crossings” was the top priority for respondents who lived in zip codes with more developed areas (03431 and 03446) while it wasn’t a top-three priority for respondents who lived in more rural zip codes (03451 and 03470/03441).

Table 5 – Top Three Highest Prioritized Trail Improvements among Respondents with Home Zip Codes along the Ashuelot Rail Trail (n = 299)

	03431	03446	03470/03441	03451
1	Better road crossings	Better road crossings	Improving trail surface condition with packed gravel	Directional signs and maps
2	Improving trail surface condition with packed gravel	Improving trail surface condition with packed gravel	Directional signs and maps	Improving trail surface condition with packed gravel
3	Directional signs and maps	New or improved trailheads/parking areas	New or improved trailheads/parking areas	Signs about places, history, nature, etc.

In addition to asking respondents to assign priorities to specific issues, the survey also invited respondents to identify specific assets and opportunities along the trail. The open form question prompted a wide variety of responses. The most frequently identified opportunity was the potential benefit of opening the trail to off-highway recreational vehicles (OHRVs), which include all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), motorized trail bikes, and utility terrain vehicles (UTVs). Even though potential OHRV use represented the most commonly identified opportunity, only a small fraction (8.1 percent) of all 555 survey respondents indicated support for permitting OHRVs. Among those respondents, 42 percent were snowmobilers and 42 percent had not used the Ashuelot Rail Trail before. Slightly less than half (49 percent) of OHRV-supporting respondents were local users, with home zip code areas that contained a segment of the trail. About half of these local users lived in zip code area 03431 (Keene) while the remainder lived in zip codes 03446 (Swansey), 03470 (Winchester), or 03451 (Hinsdale). It should be emphasized that OHRVs are not currently permitted on the Ashuelot Rail Trail. The terms under which the railroad corridor was originally deeded to the State prohibit trail use by OHRVs.

Other respondent-identified trail assets and opportunities included (but were not limited to): improving connectivity between the rail trail and other trail networks, including those in/near Brattleboro, VT; granting access to horse carriages; installation of trail etiquette signage; and installation of distance markers. Several respondents noted that there is potential to collaborate with particular groups - e.g. New England Mountain Bike Association and the Daniel Webster Council - on trail-related projects. Respondent-identified assets and opportunities will serve as a reference as plan development continues.

Respondents were also prompted to identify particular trail-related challenges and concerns, which included: disruption, safety hazard and trail damage caused by unauthorized OHRV trail use; any threat of future authorization of on-trail OHRV use; the speed of on-trail snowmobile travel; concerns regarding how paving the trail would negatively impact equestrian users; lack of clarity on where the trail proceeds south of Swansey; loiterers on/near the trail; and trail maintenance (mowing/brush clearing). Like with respondent-identified assets and opportunities, respondent-identified challenges and concerns will inform plan development as the project continues.

Key Findings

- **Interest in the Ashuelot Rail Trail extends beyond local users, suggesting that it and other rail trails in the Monadnock Region hold potential as tourist attractions.** Tourist interest is indicated by the large number of survey responses received from outside the Monadnock Region and individuals who have never used the trail before.

Considering that respondents most commonly used the trail in the Fall, special opportunity may exist to promote the trail for foliage-based tourism (“leaf peeping”).

- **Vehicle traffic at trail crossings was the top safety concern among survey respondents who had used the trail in the last twelve months.** When survey respondents were grouped by on-trail travel mode (e.g. bicycling, snowmobiling), vehicle traffic at trail crossings was the top safety concern for each group. In short, survey respondents, no matter how they travel on the trail, generally agreed that vehicle traffic at trail crossings is the top safety concern. Respondents who had not used the trail in the last twelve months or at all were excluded from the questions relating to safety concerns.
- **Improving the trail surface (with packed gravel) was the highest priority improvement identified by survey respondents who had used the trail.** Improved trail crossings ranked a close second.
- **Some priorities among trail user groups aligned while others diverged.** For example, improving the trail surface with packed gravel ranked highly as a priority among all trail user groups except for equestrian users, who prioritized improved trailheads and parking highest.
- **Many survey respondents travel on the trail by more than one mode,** suggesting that there may be opportunity for coordination and collaboration among different trail user groups.
- **Some survey respondents strongly supported permitting OHRV use on the rail trail while others strongly objected.** Respondents who supported using OHRVs on the trail tended to be snowmobilers or non-users of the trail.
- **Respondents who live in urban areas may have priorities that differ from respondent who live in rural areas.** For example, respondents who live in zip codes areas that contained urbanized areas - 03431 (Keene) or 03446 (Swanzy) - strongly prioritized better road crossings, which was not a highly-ranked priority for respondents from more rural zip code areas - 03470/03441 (Winchester) and 03451 (Hinsdale).
- **Compared with current or past trail users, non-user respondents tended to assign a greater importance to making trail improvements.** Non-user respondents may have higher standards for trail conditions and/or a more negative/uniformed view of current trail conditions.

Recommendations

- **Form an umbrella trail group that includes representatives from multiple trail constituencies,** e.g. snowmobilers, equestrians, bicyclists. Such a trail group may help trail user groups to recognize where priorities align and opportunities exist for collaboration.
- **Considering the wide geographic distribution of respondent home zip codes, pursue a conversation regarding specific marketing strategies to boost trail-based tourism.**
- **Since traffic at trail crossings is a top safety concern among survey respondents, identify specific trail crossings where safety issues exist.** Once problematic crossings are established, inventory existing safety measures (e.g. pedestrian warning signs, traffic calming) and identify potential improvements.
- **Since improving trail surface with packed gravel is the top priority among survey respondents, identify particular trail segments where improvements are especially needed.** Municipalities who have experience improving trail surfaces could serve as a valuable resource for municipalities seeking to enhance segments within their boundaries.

- **Recognizing that towns and village centers are the most common destination indicated by survey respondents, examine how trail-to-downtown connections might be enhanced to support current trail use and encourage increased future use.**



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

A number of trail user groups have an interest in the Ashuelot Rail Trail. User group priorities may overlap in some areas, and differ in others. In order to gather trail user group perspectives on a number of trail-related issues, SWRPC staff developed and distributed an online survey. This memo summarizes survey methodology and response.

I. Survey Methodology

SWRPC staff developed survey questions on a variety of trail-related issues, including:

- Respondent information
- Group information
- Participation to date in trail user survey
- Trail use
- Trail conditions and facilities
- Trail stewardship
- Coordination
- Balancing the needs of multiple trail user groups
- Trail connectivity
- Trail-related education

Prior to distributing the survey to respondents, SWRPC sent draft questions to NH Fish and Game, NH Trail Bureau, and NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) for comment and feedback. SWRPC received some suggestions for minor modifications from NHDOT.

A copy of finalized survey questions is attached to this memo.

Once survey questions were finalized, SWRPC staff migrated survey questions to the online platform Survey Monkey. Survey recipients were then contacted via e-mail or Facebook to participate in the survey. Email was used as the preferred method of contact, but, where an e-mail address was unavailable, Facebook was used. Survey recipients are listed below, in Table 1.

Table 1 – Trail User Group Survey Recipients and Contact Method

Recipient Group	Method of Contact
NH Horse Council	Email
Monadnock Happy Trails Association	Email
Monadnock Cycling Club	Email
Keene Sno-Riders	Email
Ashuelot Valley Blazers Snowmobile Club	Facebook
Winchester Trail Riders	Email
Pisgah Mt. Trail Riders	Email
Pathways for Keene	Email
Friends of Pisgah	Email
Winchester Learning Center	Email

Survey recipients were advised to complete the survey as a group exercise, with fellow group members. The goal was to receive a single survey response from each contacted trail user group. Survey recipients were given three weeks to submit responses.

II. Survey Response

Four contacted trail user groups submitted survey responses: the New Hampshire Horse Council (NHHC), the Monadnock Happy Trail Association (MHTA), the Winchester Trail Riders, and the Monadnock Cycling Club. The New Hampshire Arabian Horse Association, who was not included on the original distribution list, also submitted a response. Respondent answers to each questions are summarized below.

In what year was your organization founded?

Table 2 – Respondent Groups, Year of Founding

Group/organization	Year founded
Monadnock Cycling Club	2006
NHHC	1986
NH Arabian Horse Assoc.	No response
MHTA	2000
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	1994

On average, how frequently does you group/organization meet? (Please include both off-trail and on-trail gatherings.)

All respondents indicated that they meet once a month, with the exception of the NH Horse Council, which reported that the Trails Committee meets 3-4 times a year and also corresponds regularly through e-mail.

How many individuals are members of your group/organization?

Table 3 – Respondent Groups/Organizations, Number of Members

<u>Group/organization</u>	<u>Number of Members</u>
Monadnock Cycling Club	100
NHHC	No response
NH Arabian Horse Assoc.	20
MHTA	15
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	200

What do members of your group do on the Ashuelot Rail Trail? Please select all that apply

Three of the respondents represented equestrian groups, while one represented a cycling club, and another, a snowmobile club. Some respondents also indicated other activities that they personally pursue on the trail.

Which sections of the trail does your group use the most? If possible, use specific landmarks or cross streets to describe trail sections.

Trail segments used by respondents overlapped in some cases and were distinct in others. Taken together, trail sections used by respondents covered the entire extent of the Ashuelot Rail Trail.

Table 4 – Respondent Groups/Organizations, Used Trail Sections

Monadnock Cycling Club	<i>Mostly just in Keene, quality of the trail diminishes as you get further away.</i>
NH Horse Council	<i>Local riders will need to answer this</i>
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	<i>Matthews Rd in Swanzey to Rt. 10 in Winchester</i>
MHTA	<i>Matthews Rd. parking lot, Keene end to West Swanzey; NH 63 parking lot in Hinsdale to Ashuelot village</i>
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	<i>Recycle way, Ashuelot to Oak Hill Cemetery, Railroad Street, Swanzey</i>

There are many ways to improve the trail. Please rank the following in terms of priority

Respondents were asked to select whether potential trail improvements were a “high priority,” “medium priority,” a “low priority,” or “not a priority.” Table 5 compiles responses, with blank cells representing “not a priority.”

Improving the trail surface with packed gravel was the most commonly recognized high or medium priority improvement among respondents.

Table 5 - Group/Organization Trail Improvement Priorities

	Monadnock Cycling Club	NH Horse Council	NH Arabian Horse Assn.	MHTA	Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.
Wider path	Low	Low	Low		High
Benches	Low	Low			
Lighting	Low	Low			
Directional signs and maps	Medium	High		Low	
Trail etiquette signs	Medium	High		Medium	
New or improved trailheads/parking areas	Low	High		Medium	High
Better road crossings	High	Medium		Low	Medium
Access to shops, etc.	Medium	Low			
Improved trail surface w/packed gravel	High	High	Medium		High
Trail “branding” and promotion	Low	Low			
Trail patrols/enforcement		Low	Low	Low	Medium
Restrooms	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
Drinking fountains	Low	Low	Medium		
Signs about places history, nature, etc.	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
Pet waste stations	Low	Low	Low		

Would members of your group/organization consider paying an annual fee to help fund the priorities indicated above?

Table 6 - Group/Organization Willingness to Fund Priorities

Group/Organization	Willingness to Fund Priorities
Monadnock Cycling Club	Maybe
NH Horse Council	Maybe
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Unknown. Would have to ask them.
MHTA	Maybe
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	Already pay a fee through snowmobile registration

Does your group/organization volunteer time to help with any of the following management tasks on the Ashuelot Rail Trail? If so, please describe location, frequency, and equipment used.

Most respondent groups and organizations indicated that they had at some point engaged in trail maintenance activities (Table 7). The Winchester Trail Riders reported that they perform a full range of trail maintenance tasks on the trail section that they manage (Recycle Way in Winchester to Railroad Street in Swanzey).

Table 7 – Respondent Organization/Group Maintenance Activities

	Monadnock Cycling Club	NH Horse Council	NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Monadnock happy trails assoc.	Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.
Mowing					Our trail section, tractor and mower
Cutting back trailside brush	Yes		Have done this in the past	Matthews Road section	Our trail section, tractor and mower
Removing downed trees	Yes				Our trail section, tractor and mower
Maintaining trail surface (grading, maintaining drainage features)	Yes				Our trail section, tractors, back hoes, dump trucks
Repairing bridges	Yes		Have done this in the past		Our trail section
Picking up trash	Yes		Have done this in the past	Matthews Road section	Our trail section
Snow grooming					Our trail section, Tucker Snocat and grooming drag
Other (please specify)	Already do most of the above as a user	Would likely help if advertise a trail care day			Wood chipper

If given the opportunity, would members of your group/organization volunteer time to help with any of the following activities on the Ashuelot Rail trail? (Choices: Yes, No, Maybe, Already Doing)

Most respondent groups and organizations indicated that their members would be willing to contribute volunteer time towards at least some trail maintenance tasks (Table 8). Most groups, for example, said that their members would or might be willing to help repair bridges.

Table 8 - Respondent Group/Organization Interest in Providing Additional Volunteer Help towards Trail Maintenance

	Monadnock Cycling Club	NH Horse Council	NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Monadnock happy trails assoc.	Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.
Mowing	Yes		No	No	Already doing
Cutting back trailside brush	Already doing		Maybe	Already doing	Already doing
Removing downed trees	Already doing		No	Yes	Already doing
Maintaining trail surface (grading, maintaining drainage features)	Yes		No	No	Already doing
Repairing bridges	Yes		Maybe	Yes	Already doing
Picking up trash	Already doing		Maybe	Already doing	Already doing
Snow grooming	No		No	No	Already doing
Other (please specify)		Locals will need to answer			

Has your group/organization coordinated with other groups/organizations on trail maintenance or development?

Respondent equestrian groups indicated that they had worked with other trail user groups on trail maintenance projects, although they did not specify whether these were projects on the Ashuelot Rail Trail or on other trails (Table 9). The respondent snowmobile club reported that other trail user groups did not want to coordinate on trail maintenance project, although the level of outreach to other trail user groups was not specified.

Table 9 – Respondent Coordination with Other Groups/Organizations

Group/Organization	Coordination with Other Groups
Monadnock Cycling Club	Not participated
NH Horse Council	Worked with both bike and snowmobile groups, doing basic maintenance and providing funds for bridges
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Yes. We did work with multiple groups on a bridge repair.
MHTA	Our equestrian group has helped with clean up and bridge repair with the snowmobile group
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	No other club wants to participate at this time to help us

Would your group/organization be interested in establishing a trail user group focused on improving the trail for all permitted users?

All respondent groups/organizations indicated interest in establishing an umbrella trail organization.

Table 10 – Respondent Interest in Coordinating with other Trail Groups/Organizations

Group/Organization	Interested in Coordinating?
Monadnock Cycling Club	Yes
NH Horse Council	Maybe
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Yes
MHTA	Yes
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	Yes

Would members of your group/organization be interested in organizing fundraisers with other trail user groups to support improving the trail?

Most respondent groups/organizations were unsure whether members would be interested in organizing fundraisers with other trail user groups (Table 11). Only the Monadnock Cycling club responded that it would be interested.

Table 11 – Respondent Interest in Organizing Fundraisers with other Groups/Organizations

Group/Organization	Interested in Coordinating?
Monadnock Cycling Club	Yes
NH Horse Council	Maybe
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Maybe
MHTA	Maybe
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	Maybe

Are there ways in which your group's use of the trail conflicts with how others use the trail? Where applicable, please describe specific instances and locations where these conflicts have impacted your group's experience on the trail.

Four out of the five respondents identified on-trail conflicts between user groups (Table 12)

Table 12 – Respondent-Identified On-Trail Conflicts

Group/Organization	Identified Conflicts with other Trail User Groups
Monadnock Cycling Club	Walkers and runners with headphones who never hear you approaching and are then surprised when you pass them.
NH Horse Council	Mostly it is a speed issue with other users, need to slow down and speak when approaching and passing horses
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Trail etiquette problems - bicyclists don't know to speak when approaching horses, especially from the rear. A simple "passing on your left" would do. Off leash dogs are a problem, can be aggressive with horses; may get kicked or stepped on.
MHTA	We have had instances where bike riders come up behind the horses, but don't announce that they are there and startle the horse... a simple "Hi can I pass" would alert us they are there. Loose dogs have also been an issue, a barking dog coming at a horse can cause a spook... dangerous to rider, dog and anyone standing near.
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	None at this time.

In your opinion, what on-trail changes might minimize or prevent the conflicts described above?

Table 13 – Respondent-Identified Measures to Mitigate On-Trail Conflicts

Group/Organization	Identified Mitigation Measures
Monadnock Cycling Club	No Headphones
NH Horse Council	Keep the trail surface natural, prefer no paving, if paving is done do only in congested developed areas and provide a third unpaved parallel path for horses
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Trail etiquette educational signs indicating multi-use trail, be courteous!
MHTA	Education of trail rules and best practices
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	None

Does your group use the Ashuelot Rail Trail to connect to other trails? If so, please provide the name and location of any trails that you access from the Ashuelot Rail Trail.

Respondents reported that they use the Ashuelot Rail Trail to connect with other trails in Keene and Pisgah State Park (Table 14).

Table 14 – Respondent-Identified Trail Connections

Group/Organization	Identified Trail Connections
Monadnock Cycling Club	Connections to other trails within Keene
NH Horse Council	Locals will need to answer this
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Rarely but have parked in Winchester and used the rail trail to connect to Pisgah State Park trails.
MHTA	Not yet... we have not explored any of the trails off the rail bed yet
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	Corridor 5 Pisgah State Park, & Trail 15 Pisgah State Park

Would members of your organization be interested in participating in any of the following trainings, should they be offered? Please check all that apply.

Among survey respondents, workshops regarding trail maintenances technique was the most commonly indicated training type of interest (Table 15).

Table 15 – Respondent Interest in Trail-Related Training/Workshop Topics

	Monadnock Cycling Club	NH Horse Council	NH Arabian Horse Assn.	MHTA	Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.
How to coordinate with state agencies and local government on volunteer-led trail maintenance and development	✓	✓			✓
Developing a trail maintenance plan		✓	✓		✓
Trail maintenance techniques		✓	✓	✓	✓
Recruiting volunteers for rail trail maintenance			✓		✓
Leading on-trail volunteer events					✓
Fundraising for rail trail projects	✓		✓		

If you have additional thoughts or opinions related to the Ashuelot Rail Trail, please feel free to share them here.

Table 16 – Additional Respondent Comments

Group/Organization	Additional Comments
Monadnock Cycling Club	<i>No response</i>
NH Horse Council	Would love to see horse use on lists of users in the same manner and importance as snowmobiles, bikers, hikers and sled dogs. We may be a smaller users group but just as important.
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	<i>No response</i>
MHTA	We do not want to see the rail trail paved as it is in Keene, that is not desirable for horses.
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	Open to ATV's & UTV's

III. Findings

- All respondents indicated some interest in establishing an umbrella entity that includes representatives from different trail user groups, demonstrating interest in enhanced coordination among trail user groups/organizations.
- Although trail segments used by respondent groups/organizations overlapped in some cases, they were distinct in others. Together, trail segments used by respondents encompassed the entire Ashuelot Rail Trail. If the Ashuelot Rail Trail is to be developed and managed as a single, continuous asset (as opposed to a series of unrelated segments), leveraging the collective knowledge of the trail's varied user groups will be critical.
- Improving the trail surface with gravel was the only high priority improvement indicated by cyclist, equestrian, and snowmobile user groups.

IV. Recommendation

- During future outreach to trail user groups, consider using a variety of engagement methods, including phone interviews and in-person discussions. Relying solely on a written survey distributed via e-mail and Facebook yielded a low response rate skewed toward certain user groups. Given that snowmobile clubs currently play a central role in trail management and maintenance, enhancing outreach to those groups would be especially valuable.



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 14th, 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



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

A number of trail user groups have an interest in the Ashuelot Rail Trail. User group priorities may overlap in some areas, and differ in others. In order to gather trail user group perspectives on a number of trail-related issues, SWRPC staff developed and distributed an online survey. This memo summarizes survey methodology and response.

I. Survey Methodology

SWRPC staff developed survey questions on a variety of trail-related issues, including:

- Respondent information
- Group information
- Participation to date in trail user survey
- Trail use
- Trail conditions and facilities
- Trail stewardship
- Coordination
- Balancing the needs of multiple trail user groups
- Trail connectivity
- Trail-related education

Prior to distributing the survey to respondents, SWRPC sent draft questions to NH Fish and Game, NH Trail Bureau, and NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) for comment and feedback. SWRPC received some suggestions for minor modifications from NHDOT.

A copy of finalized survey questions is attached to this memo.

Once survey questions were finalized, SWRPC staff migrated survey questions to the online platform Survey Monkey. Survey recipients were then contacted via e-mail or Facebook to participate in the survey. Email was used as the preferred method of contact, but, where an e-mail address was unavailable, Facebook was used. Survey recipients are listed below, in Table 1.

Table 1 – Trail User Group Survey Recipients and Contact Method

Recipient Group	Method of Contact
NH Horse Council	Email
Monadnock Happy Trails Association	Email
Monadnock Cycling Club	Email
Keene Sno-Riders	Email
Ashuelot Valley Blazers Snowmobile Club	Facebook
Winchester Trail Riders	Email
Pisgah Mt. Trail Riders	Email
Pathways for Keene	Email
Friends of Pisgah	Email
Winchester Learning Center	Email

Survey recipients were advised to complete the survey as a group exercise, with fellow group members. The goal was to receive a single survey response from each contacted trail user group. Survey recipients were given three weeks to submit responses.

II. Survey Response

Four contacted trail user groups submitted survey responses: the New Hampshire Horse Council (NHHC), the Monadnock Happy Trail Association (MHTA), the Winchester Trail Riders, and the Monadnock Cycling Club. The New Hampshire Arabian Horse Association, who was not included on the original distribution list, also submitted a response. Respondent answers to each questions are summarized below.

In what year was your organization founded?

Table 2 – Respondent Groups, Year of Founding

Group/organization	Year founded
Monadnock Cycling Club	2006
NHHC	1986
NH Arabian Horse Assoc.	No response
MHTA	2000
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	1994

On average, how frequently does you group/organization meet? (Please include both off-trail and on-trail gatherings.)

All respondents indicated that they meet once a month, with the exception of the NH Horse Council, which reported that the Trails Committee meets 3-4 times a year and also corresponds regularly through e-mail.

How many individuals are members of your group/organization?

Table 3 – Respondent Groups/Organizations, Number of Members

Group/organization	Number of Members
Monadnock Cycling Club	100
NHHC	No response
NH Arabian Horse Assoc.	20
MHTA	15
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	200

What do members of your group do on the Ashuelot Rail Trail? Please select all that apply

Three of the respondents represented equestrian groups, while one represented a cycling club, and another, a snowmobile club. Some respondents also indicated other activities that they personally pursue on the trail.

Which sections of the trail does your group use the most? If possible, use specific landmarks or cross streets to describe trail sections.

Trail segments used by respondents overlapped in some cases and were distinct in others. Taken together, trail sections used by respondents covered the entire extent of the Ashuelot Rail Trail.

Table 4 – Respondent Groups/Organizations, Used Trail Sections

Monadnock Cycling Club	<i>Mostly just in Keene, quality of the trail diminishes as you get further away.</i>
NH Horse Council	<i>Local riders will need to answer this</i>
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	<i>Matthews Rd in Swanzey to Rt. 10 in Winchester</i>
MHTA	<i>Matthews Rd. parking lot, Keene end to West Swanzey; NH 63 parking lot in Hinsdale to Ashuelot village</i>
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	<i>Recycle way, Ashuelot to Oak Hill Cemetery, Railroad Street, Swanzey</i>

There are many ways to improve the trail. Please rank the following in terms of priority

Respondents were asked to select whether potential trail improvements were a “high priority,” “medium priority,” a “low priority,” or “not a priority.” Table 5 compiles responses, with blank cells representing “not a priority.”

Improving the trail surface with packed gravel was the most commonly recognized high or medium priority improvement among respondents.

Table 5 - Group/Organization Trail Improvement Priorities

	Monadnock Cycling Club	NH Horse Council	NH Arabian Horse Assn.	MHTA	Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.
Wider path	Low	Low	Low		High
Benches	Low	Low			
Lighting	Low	Low			
Directional signs and maps	Medium	High		Low	
Trail etiquette signs	Medium	High		Medium	
New or improved trailheads/parking areas	Low	High		Medium	High
Better road crossings	High	Medium		Low	Medium
Access to shops, etc.	Medium	Low			
Improved trail surface w/packed gravel	High	High	Medium		High
Trail “branding” and promotion	Low	Low			
Trail patrols/enforcement		Low	Low	Low	Medium
Restrooms	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
Drinking fountains	Low	Low	Medium		
Signs about places history, nature, etc.	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
Pet waste stations	Low	Low	Low		

Would members of your group/organization consider paying an annual fee to help fund the priorities indicated above?

Table 6 - Group/Organization Willingness to Fund Priorities

Group/Organization	Willingness to Fund Priorities
Monadnock Cycling Club	Maybe
NH Horse Council	Maybe
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Unknown. Would have to ask them.
MHTA	Maybe
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	Already pay a fee through snowmobile registration

Does your group/organization volunteer time to help with any of the following management tasks on the Ashuelot Rail Trail? If so, please describe location, frequency, and equipment used.

Most respondent groups and organizations indicated that they had at some point engaged in trail maintenance activities (Table 7). The Winchester Trail Riders reported that they perform a full range of trail maintenance tasks on the trail section that they manage (Recycle Way in Winchester to Railroad Street in Swanzey).

Table 7 – Respondent Organization/Group Maintenance Activities

	Monadnock Cycling Club	NH Horse Council	NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Monadnock happy trails assoc.	Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.
Mowing					Our trail section, tractor and mower
Cutting back trailside brush	Yes		Have done this in the past	Matthews Road section	Our trail section, tractor and mower
Removing downed trees	Yes				Our trail section, tractor and mower
Maintaining trail surface (grading, maintaining drainage features)	Yes				Our trail section, tractors, back hoes, dump trucks
Repairing bridges	Yes		Have done this in the past		Our trail section
Picking up trash	Yes		Have done this in the past	Matthews Road section	Our trail section
Snow grooming					Our trail section, Tucker Snocat and grooming drag
Other (please specify)	Already do most of the above as a user	Would likely help if advertise a trail care day			Wood chipper

If given the opportunity, would members of your group/organization volunteer time to help with any of the following activities on the Ashuelot Rail trail? (Choices: Yes, No, Maybe, Already Doing)

Most respondent groups and organizations indicated that their members would be willing to contribute volunteer time towards at least some trail maintenance tasks (Table 8). Most groups, for example, said that their members would or might be willing to help repair bridges.

Table 8 - Respondent Group/Organization Interest in Providing Additional Volunteer Help towards Trail Maintenance

	Monadnock Cycling Club	NH Horse Council	NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Monadnock happy trails assoc.	Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.
Mowing	Yes		No	No	Already doing
Cutting back trailside brush	Already doing		Maybe	Already doing	Already doing
Removing downed trees	Already doing		No	Yes	Already doing
Maintaining trail surface (grading, maintaining drainage features)	Yes		No	No	Already doing
Repairing bridges	Yes		Maybe	Yes	Already doing
Picking up trash	Already doing		Maybe	Already doing	Already doing
Snow grooming	No		No	No	Already doing
Other (please specify)		Locals will need to answer			

Has your group/organization coordinated with other groups/organizations on trail maintenance or development?

Respondent equestrian groups indicated that they had worked with other trail user groups on trail maintenance projects, although they did not specify whether these were projects on the Ashuelot Rail Trail or on other trails (Table 9). The respondent snowmobile club reported that other trail user groups did not want to coordinate on trail maintenance project, although the level of outreach to other trail user groups was not specified.

Table 9 – Respondent Coordination with Other Groups/Organizations

Group/Organization	Coordination with Other Groups
Monadnock Cycling Club	Not participated
NH Horse Council	Worked with both bike and snowmobile groups, doing basic maintenance and providing funds for bridges
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Yes. We did work with multiple groups on a bridge repair.
MHTA	Our equestrian group has helped with clean up and bridge repair with the snowmobile group
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	No other club wants to participate at this time to help us

Would your group/organization be interested in establishing a trail user group focused on improving the trail for all permitted users?

All respondent groups/organizations indicated interest in establishing an umbrella trail organization.

Table 10 – Respondent Interest in Coordinating with other Trail Groups/Organizations

Group/Organization	Interested in Coordinating?
Monadnock Cycling Club	Yes
NH Horse Council	Maybe
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Yes
MHTA	Yes
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	Yes

Would members of your group/organization be interested in organizing fundraisers with other trail user groups to support improving the trail?

Most respondent groups/organizations were unsure whether members would be interested in organizing fundraisers with other trail user groups (Table 11). Only the Monadnock Cycling club responded that it would be interested.

Table 11 – Respondent Interest in Organizing Fundraisers with other Groups/Organizations

Group/Organization	Interested in Coordinating?
Monadnock Cycling Club	Yes
NH Horse Council	Maybe
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Maybe
MHTA	Maybe
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	Maybe

Are there ways in which your group's use of the trail conflicts with how others use the trail? Where applicable, please describe specific instances and locations where these conflicts have impacted your group's experience on the trail.

Four out of the five respondents identified on-trail conflicts between user groups (Table 12)

Table 12 – Respondent-Identified On-Trail Conflicts

Group/Organization	Identified Conflicts with other Trail User Groups
Monadnock Cycling Club	Walkers and runners with headphones who never hear you approaching and are then surprised when you pass them.
NH Horse Council	Mostly it is a speed issue with other users, need to slow down and speak when approaching and passing horses
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Trail etiquette problems - bicyclists don't know to speak when approaching horses, especially from the rear. A simple "passing on your left" would do. Off leash dogs are a problem, can be aggressive with horses; may get kicked or stepped on.
MHTA	We have had instances where bike riders come up behind the horses, but don't announce that they are there and startle the horse... a simple "Hi can I pass" would alert us they are there. Loose dogs have also been an issue, a barking dog coming at a horse can cause a spook... dangerous to rider, dog and anyone standing near.
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	None at this time.

In your opinion, what on-trail changes might minimize or prevent the conflicts described above?

Table 13 – Respondent-Identified Measures to Mitigate On-Trail Conflicts

Group/Organization	Identified Mitigation Measures
Monadnock Cycling Club	No Headphones
NH Horse Council	Keep the trail surface natural, prefer no paving, if paving is done do only in congested developed areas and provide a third unpaved parallel path for horses
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Trail etiquette educational signs indicating multi-use trail, be courteous!
MHTA	Education of trail rules and best practices
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	None

Does your group use the Ashuelot Rail Trail to connect to other trails? If so, please provide the name and location of any trails that you access from the Ashuelot Rail Trail.

Respondents reported that they use the Ashuelot Rail Trail to connect with other trails in Keene and Pisgah State Park (Table 14).

Table 14 – Respondent-Identified Trail Connections

Group/Organization	Identified Trail Connections
Monadnock Cycling Club	Connections to other trails within Keene
NH Horse Council	Locals will need to answer this
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	Rarely but have parked in Winchester and used the rail trail to connect to Pisgah State Park trails.
MHTA	Not yet... we have not explored any of the trails off the rail bed yet
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	Corridor 5 Pisgah State Park, & Trail 15 Pisgah State Park

Would members of your organization be interested in participating in any of the following trainings, should they be offered? Please check all that apply.

Among survey respondents, workshops regarding trail maintenances technique was the most commonly indicated training type of interest (Table 15).

Table 15 – Respondent Interest in Trail-Related Training/Workshop Topics

	Monadnock Cycling Club	NH Horse Council	NH Arabian Horse Assn.	MHTA	Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.
How to coordinate with state agencies and local government on volunteer-led trail maintenance and development	✓	✓			✓
Developing a trail maintenance plan		✓	✓		✓
Trail maintenance techniques		✓	✓	✓	✓
Recruiting volunteers for rail trail maintenance			✓		✓
Leading on-trail volunteer events					✓
Fundraising for rail trail projects	✓		✓		

If you have additional thoughts or opinions related to the Ashuelot Rail Trail, please feel free to share them here.

Table 16 – Additional Respondent Comments

Group/Organization	Additional Comments
Monadnock Cycling Club	<i>No response</i>
NH Horse Council	Would love to see horse use on lists of users in the same manner and importance as snowmobiles, bikers, hikers and sled dogs. We may be a smaller users group but just as important.
NH Arabian Horse Assn.	<i>No response</i>
MHTA	We do not want to see the rail trail paved as it is in Keene, that is not desirable for horses.
Winchester Trail Riders, Inc.	Open to ATV's & UTV's

III. Findings

- All respondents indicated some interest in establishing an umbrella entity that includes representatives from different trail user groups, demonstrating interest in enhanced coordination among trail user groups/organizations.
- Although trail segments used by respondent groups/organizations overlapped in some cases, they were distinct in others. Together, trail segments used by respondents encompassed the entire Ashuelot Rail Trail. If the Ashuelot Rail Trail is to be developed and managed as a single, continuous asset (as opposed to a series of unrelated segments), leveraging the collective knowledge of the trail's varied user groups will be critical.
- Improving the trail surface with gravel was the only high priority improvement indicated by cyclist, equestrian, and snowmobile user groups.

IV. Recommendation

- During future outreach to trail user groups, consider using a variety of engagement methods, including phone interviews and in-person discussions. Relying solely on a written survey distributed via e-mail and Facebook yielded a low response rate skewed toward certain user groups. Given that snowmobile clubs currently play a central role in trail management and maintenance, enhancing outreach to those groups would be especially valuable.

Key Stakeholder Group Survey
Trail User Group Version

- **Respondent Information**
 - What is your name? If more than one person is contributing to this survey response, please indicate the name of each respondent.
 - For which group/organization are you responding?
 - What is/are your position(s) within the group/organization (e.g. volunteer, member, president)?
- **Group Information**
 - In what year was your organization founded?
 - How frequently does your group/organization meet? (Please include both off-trail and on-trail gatherings.)
 - How many individuals are members of your group/organization?
- **Trail User Survey**
 - To your knowledge, how many members of your group/organization have taken the Plan for [Ashuelot Rail Trail online Trail User Survey](#)?
 - If you haven't done so already, would you be willing to promote the online survey to your group/organization's membership?
- **Trail Use**
 - What do members of your group do on the Ashuelot Rail Trail? Please select all that apply.
 - Walk
 - Hike
 - Jog/Run
 - Bike
 - Cross-country ski
 - Snowshoe
 - Snowmobile
 - Dogsled
 - Other (please describe)
 - Which sections of the trail does your group use the most? If possible, use specific landmarks or cross streets to describe trail sections. If needed, please reference the online map [here](#).
 - Which trail access points do members of your group/organization generally use when visiting the trail? Please describe access points referencing landmarks and/or cross streets. If needed, please reference the online map [here](#).
- **Trail Conditions/Facilities**
 - There are many ways to improve the trail. Please rank the following trail improvement, with number one represent your top priority. If you *oppose* a listed improvement, select "Opposed" from the drop-down menu.
 - Wider path

Key Stakeholder Group Survey Trail User Group Version

- Benches
- Lighting
- Directional signs and maps
- Trail etiquette signs
- New or improved trailheads/parking areas
- Better road crossings
- Access to shops, etc.
- Improving trail surface condition with packed gravel
- Trail “branding” and promotion
- Trail patrols/enforcement
- Restrooms
- Drinking fountains
- Signs about places history, nature, etc.
- Pet waste stations
- If you would like to describe in more detail your priorities listed above, please do so here. Also feel free to describe trail priorities *not* listed above. If possible, please identify specific locations for potential improvement by referencing landmarks and cross streets. An online map of the trail is available [here](#).
- **Trail Stewardship**
 - Does your group/organization volunteer time to help with any of the following management tasks on the Ashuelot Rail Trail? If so, please describe location, frequency, and equipment used.
 - Mowing
 - Cutting back trailside brush
 - Removing downed trees
 - Maintaining trail surface (grading, maintaining drainage features)
 - Repairing bridges
 - Picking up trash
 - Snow grooming
 - Other (please specify)
 - If given the opportunity, would members of your group/organization volunteer time help with any of the following activities on the Ashuelot Rail trail? (Choices: Yes, No, Maybe, Already Doing)
 - Mowing
 - Cutting back trailside brush
 - Removing downed trees
 - Maintaining trail surface (grading, maintaining drainage features)
 - Repairing bridges

Key Stakeholder Group Survey Trail User Group Version

- Picking up trash
 - Grooming
 - Other (please specify)
- Would members of your group/organization consider paying an annual fee to help maintain the trail? (If members of your group already pay a fee, e.g. through snowmobile registrations, please describe whether group members would be willing to contribute additional dollars, if it meant funding additional trail improvements.)
- **Coordination**
 - Has your group/organization coordinated with other groups/organizations on trail maintenance or development? Hypothetical examples include a snowmobile club working with a town parks and recreation department to trim brush or an equestrian club working with a cycling club to raise money for trail improvements. Please describe any coordinated efforts in which your group/organization has participated.
 - Would your group/organization be interested in establishing a trail user group focused on improving the trail for all permitted users?
 - Would members of your group/organization be interested in organizing fundraisers with other trail user groups to support improving the trail?
- **Balancing the Needs of Multiple Groups**
 - Please describe how use of the Ashuelot Rail Trail by members of your group/organization are compatible or incompatible with the following groups (Choice: Compatible, Incompatible - Why?):
 - Walkers/hikers/joggers
 - Bicyclists
 - Cross-country skiers
 - Snowshoers
 - Snowmobilers
 - Equestrians
 - Mushers (dogsledders)
 - OHRV users: ATV riders and trail bike riders
 - Other (please specify)
 - What on-trail changes might improve compatibility between your group/organization and other trail users?
- **Connectivity**
 - Does your group use the Ashuelot Rail Trail to connect to other trails? If so, please provide the name and location of any trails that you access from the Ashuelot Rail Trail.
- **Education**
 - Would members of your organization be interested in participating in any of the following trainings, should they be offered?

Key Stakeholder Group Survey
Trail User Group Version

- How to coordinate with state agencies and local government on volunteer-led trail maintenance and development
- Developing a trail maintenance plan
- Trail maintenance techniques
- Recruiting volunteers for rail trail maintenance
- Leading on-trail volunteer events
- Fundraising for rail trail projects
- **Anything else?**
 - If you have additional thoughts or opinions related to the Ashuelot Rail Trail, please feel free to share them here.
- **Contact Information**
 - What is your email address? (If available, please provide an organizational e-mail address?)
 - If applicable, what is the web address of your organization's website?



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

In order to further understand trail user perceptions and behavior, SWRPC conducted pedestrian intercept surveys on the Ashuelot Rail Trail. Intercept surveys provide a value to the planning project because they do not rely on a database of existing trail users and the results are guaranteed to represent current experiences of the trail in a specific area. SWRPC staff also coordinated with an Antioch graduate student who conducted additional bicyclist and pedestrian intercept surveys using a similar methodology as part of a Service Learning Project through the Environmental Studies Department. This memo includes information about the survey methodologies that were used as well as a summary of the survey results. It then highlights key findings and provides recommendations for further study and analysis.

I. Survey Methodology

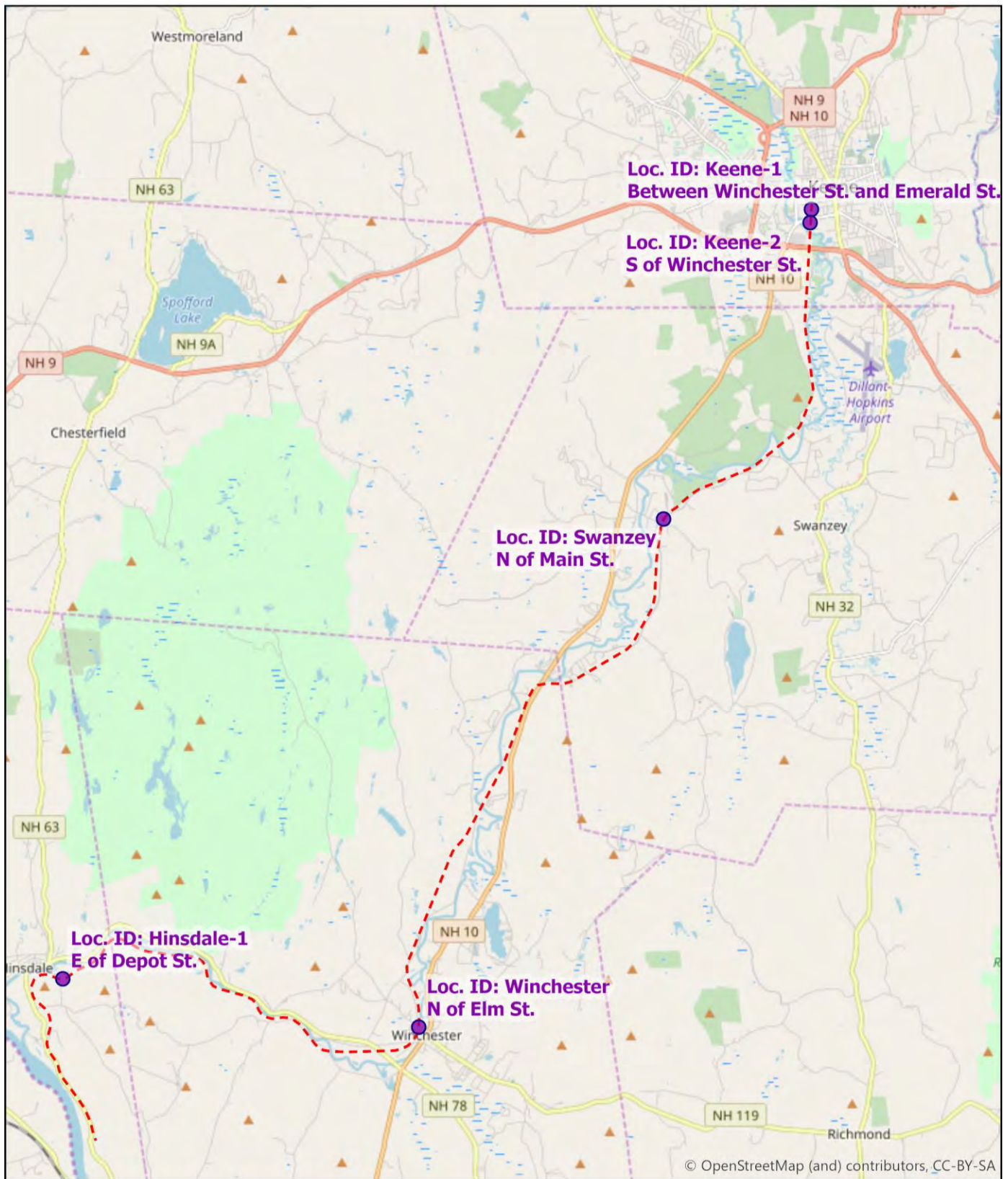
In the summer of 2018, SWRPC conducted intercept surveys on three days: July 18 (9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.), July 31 (9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.), and August 7 (1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.). Surveys were conducted at two on-trail locations in Keene (Table 1 and Figure 1). All survey collection days were weekdays. To conduct the surveys, SWRPC used forms developed by the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project (NBPDP), including the Standard Pedestrian Survey and the Standard Screenline Count Form. The Standard Pedestrian Survey is a 10-question instrument that addresses topics such as pedestrian trip purpose, frequency of trail use, and trip length/duration. The Standard Screenline Count Form is a standardized form for tallying pedestrians and cyclists over a two-hour period. The SWRPC surveyor was also provisioned with copies of the Standard Bicycle Survey, but did not intercept any on-trail cyclists, so did not administer any surveys using the form (failure to intercept cyclists is discussed further below, under Survey Results). Copies of NBPDP forms are included as attachments to this memo.

In April of 2019, an Antioch graduate student conducted intercept surveys using a similar methodology. The Antioch student administered surveys on 28 days over the course of the month, for one hour each day. Surveys were conducted from 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. (4 count periods), 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. (16 count periods), or 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (8 count periods). Three collection days were on the weekend, with the rest on weekdays. A single survey instrument was used for both pedestrians and cyclists. Survey questions were similar to those included on the Standard Pedestrian Form and the Standard Bicycle Form, with minor modifications. For example, the Standard Pedestrian Form asked respondents for a home zip code while the Antioch questionnaire requested a home town/city. The Antioch questionnaire is included as an attachment to this memo. The Antioch student also tallied the total number of passing trail users, including pedestrians, cyclists, skateboarders, dogs, and unauthorized motorized vehicles. Unlike the Standard Screenline Count Form used by SWRPC, the tally compiled by the Antioch student did not document trail user gender.

Table 1 – Intercept Survey Locations Relative to Ashuelot Rail Trail

Location	Location Description	Surveyors
Keene-1	In between Emerald Street and Winchester Street	SWRPC, Antioch
Keene-2	South of Winchester Street	SWRPC
Swanzey	North of Main Street	Antioch
Winchester	North of Elm Street	Antioch
Hinsdale	East of Depot Street	Antioch

Figure 1 – Map of Intercept Survey Locations



- Intercept Survey Locations
- Ashuelot Rail Trail

2.5
Miles



SWRPC staff compiled results from surveys administered by both SWRPC and the Antioch graduate student. Hand-recorded results from SWRPC-administered surveys were scanned. The Antioch graduate student delivered survey results in two spreadsheets - one including total trail user counts and one with survey responses. Survey responses were merged into a single spreadsheet, as were trail user counts. The Antioch student also provided a brief document that reflected upon survey methods, results and findings.

II. Survey Results

SWRPC conducted 12 intercept surveys while Antioch conducted 32, for a total of 44. On average, surveyors completed a survey every 50 minutes. The number of responses varied significantly by location, with most surveys being conducted at Locations 1 or 2, in Keene (Table 2). While weather conditions varied from day to day, no periods of rain were reported during any of the survey collection periods.

Table 2 – Completed Surveys and Observed Trail Users (n=44)

Location	Surveys Completed	Observed Trail Users				Survey Participation per Observed Trail User
		Pedestrians	Cyclists	Other*	Total Trail Users	
Keene-1	7	24	19	0	43	16%
Keene-2	25	408	69	13	490	5%
Swanzy	3	8	9	0	17	18%
Winchester	3	6	1	2	9	13%
Hinsdale	6	6	4	0	10	60%
Total	44	452	102	15	569	8%

*Trail users categorized under “other” were predominately skateboarders

a) Respondent Home Location

Surveys conducted by both SWRPC and Antioch asked the respondent to supply a home location. The SWRPC survey requested a home zip code, while the Antioch survey requested a home town/city. For purposes of combining survey data, SWRPC staff assigned a home town/city for each home zip code supplied by respondents to SWRPC-administered surveys.

The City of Keene was the most frequently indicated home city/town among survey respondents (Table 3), influenced by the fact that a majority of surveys were conducted in the City. Only six respondents - 13.6 percent - indicated that they did not live in one of the four trailside municipalities. Of those respondents only two indicated home municipalities that were 20 miles or further from the trail. Some respondents did not indicate a home location, either simply not supplying one or choosing to share other reasons why they were using the trail, e.g. they work nearby or have a child attending Keene State College.

Table 3 – Respondent Home City/Town, by Survey Location (n = 44)

Location ID	Location	Home City/Town											
		Keene		Swanzy		Winchester		Hinsdale		Other		Unknown	
	Total	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Keene-1	7	5	71.4%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%
Keene-2	25	15	60.0%	2	8.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	8.0%	6	24.0%
Swanzy	3	0	0.0%	3	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Winchester	3	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	66.7%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Hinsdale	6	1	16.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	16.7%	3	50.0%	1	16.7%
Total	44	21	47.7%	6	13.6%	2	4.5%	2	4.5%	6	13.6%	7	15.9%

Mode of Transportation

The vast majority of respondents were pedestrians (Table 4). Only three respondents were bicyclists, one of which was riding an electric bike (e-bike). The one respondent who was driving on the trail was doing so to monitor a trailside property that she owned. Survey data does not indicate what type of vehicle the respondent was driving (e.g. ATV, truck). The underrepresentation of cyclists can be attributed to the relative difficulty of intercepting cyclists, who travel at higher speeds than pedestrians. Future intercept surveys may be able to increase the cyclist response rate by selecting survey locations where cyclists are likely to slow down (e.g. busier trail or road intersections or near gates or other obstacles).

Table 4 – Mode of Survey Respondent, by Survey Location (n=44)

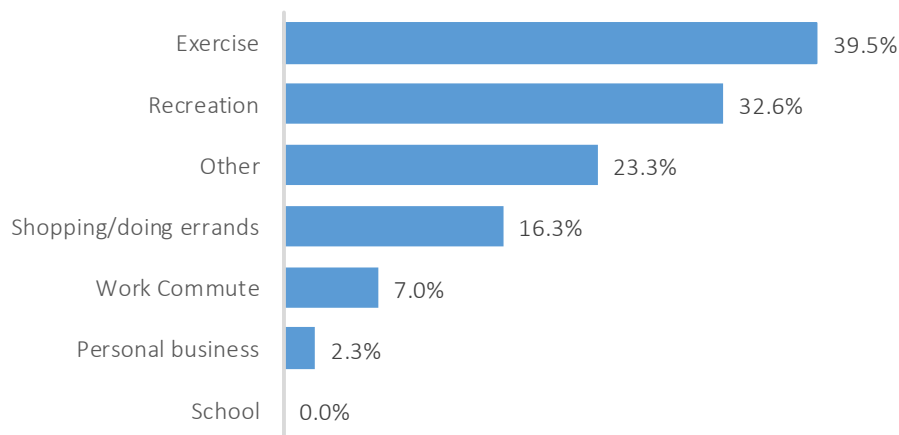
Location	Travel Mode								Location Total
	Walking		Biking		E-Biking		Driving		
	Count	Loc. %	Count	Loc. %	Count	Loc. %	Count	Loc. %	
Keene-1	7	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7
Keene-2	24	96.0%	1	4.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	25
Swanzey	3	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3
Winchester	2	66.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%	3
Hinsdale	4	66.7%	1	16.7%	1	16.7%	0	0.0%	6
Grand Total	40	90.9%	2	4.5%	1	2.3%	1	2.3%	44

b) Trip Purpose

Both SWRPC and Antioch-administered surveys asked respondents to indicate the purpose of their trip. The SWRPC-administered survey presented respondents with a list of options and asked them to circle all that apply. Options included: exercising; work commute; school; recreation; shopping/doing errands; personal business (medical, visiting friends, etc.). Antioch survey responses were open ended. In cases when answers from the Antioch survey could be classified under the rubric used in the SWRPC survey, SWRPC did so. If provided answers did not fit a specific category utilized by SWRPC, they were grouped under “other.”

Exercise and recreation were the trip purposes most frequently reported by respondents (Figure 2). Trip purposes categorized as “other” included dog walking, geocaching, property monitoring, and trail work.

It should be emphasized that most survey collection periods occurred midday. The share of trips taken for commuting purposes would have likely been larger had more surveys been collected during peak morning and evening commute hours.



c) Frequency of Use

Both the SWRPC and Antioch-administered surveys requested that respondents indicate how frequently they had used the trail in the last month. The SWRPC survey asked respondent to select one answer from a list of options: first time, 0-5 times, 6-10 times, 11-20 times, or daily. The Antioch survey used an open question format. For purposes of merging the two data sets, SWRPC staff categorized Antioch-collected responses into one of the categories specified on the SWRPC survey (the Standard Pedestrian Survey).

Overall, survey respondents exhibited a wide range of trip frequency (Table 5). Respondents at Keene locations were often daily trail users while none of the respondents at rural locations indicated that they use the trail on a daily basis.

Table 5 – Frequency of Respondent Trail Use in the Last Month, by Survey Location (n = 41)

Loc. ID	First time		0-5 times		6-10 times		11-20 times		Daily		Total
	Count	Loc. %	Count	Loc. %	Count	Loc. %	Count	Loc. %	Count	Loc. %	
Keene-1	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	1	14.3%	5	71.4%	7
Keene-2	2	8.3%	6	25.0%	4	16.7%	3	12.5%	9	37.5%	24
Swanzey	0	0.0%	1	33.3%	2	66.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3
Winchester	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2
Hinsdale	1	20.0%	1	20.0%	2	40.0%	1	20.0%	0	0.0%	5
Grand Total	3	7.3%	9	22.0%	10	24.4%	5	12.2%	14	34.1%	41

d) Season of Use

Both the SWRPC and Antioch surveys asked respondents to indicate which seasons they use the trail (respondents were able to select more than one season). Across all answering respondents, spring was the most commonly indicated season. Since most surveys were conducted in the spring, however, results are likely biased, over representing springtime users (Figure 3).

Figure 3 – Seasons of Respondent Trail Use (n = 43)



e) Trip Length/Duration

Both SWRPC and Antioch surveys asked respondents to indicate the length of their current trip, either in terms of distance or time. Some respondents provide route information in lieu of trip time or distance, which was usually too general to make a determination about trip length. Some respondents did not provide trip length information.

Among pedestrians who provided trip length information (n = 33), the median trip length was 1.5 miles. SWRPC staff standardized trip length information by converting travel times into miles, assuming a walking speed of 3 miles per hour. Cyclist respondents were so few that it was not possible to generate meaningful summary statistics.

f) Origin and Destination Zip Code

The SWRPC survey asked respondents to indicate trip origin and destination, either with a zip code or other location description. All answering respondents (n = 12) reported origins and destinations in zip codes 03431 (Keene) or 03435 (Keene State College). The Antioch-administered survey did not ask for origin and destination information. Consequently, collected responses represent trail users at Keene survey locations only.

Although collected responses suggest that most trips along the Keene segment of the trail originate and end in the same zip code, additional responses would be necessary to confirm origin and destination patterns.

g) Use of Public Transit

Both the SWRPC and Antioch survey asked respondents whether any part of their current trip would be taken on public transit. All 44 respondents except for one indicated that they would *not* use public transit as part of their trip. One respondent indicated that she *might* use the bus if she was unable to carry purchased goods or if there was bad weather.

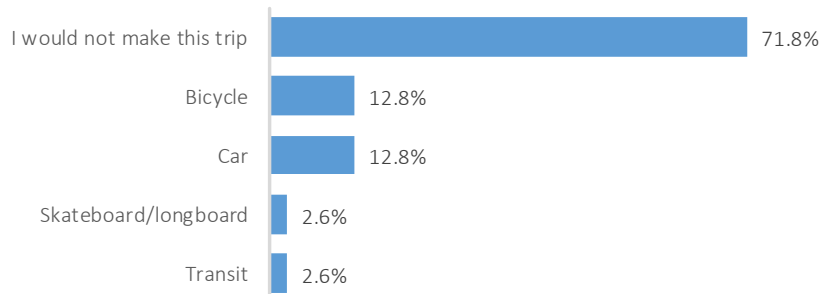
h) Alternatives to Trail Use

The SWRPC-administered survey asked pedestrian respondents if they were not walking for their current trip, how would they be traveling? The closed-format question provided respondents with five options: car, carpool, transit, bicycle, and “I would not make this trip.” The analogous question on the Antioch survey targeted not only pedestrians, but also cyclists. Given the low number of cyclist respondents, only data collected from pedestrian respondents are considered here.

The vast majority of respondents reported that if they were not walking for their current trip, they would not have made the trip at all (Figure 4). The result likely reflects the fact that many respondents identified their trip purpose as “exercise” or “recreation” and that most trips were relatively short in length. It is important to note that the question does not ask respondents which transportation alternatives they would consider if they were not walking/cycling *on the trail*.

Some respondents, if they were not walking/cycling on the trail would likely choose to walk/bicycle using a different, possibly inferior route. Others may choose not to travel along any route at all.

Figure 4 – Percent of Pedestrian Respondents Indicating Alternative Transportation Mode (n = 39)

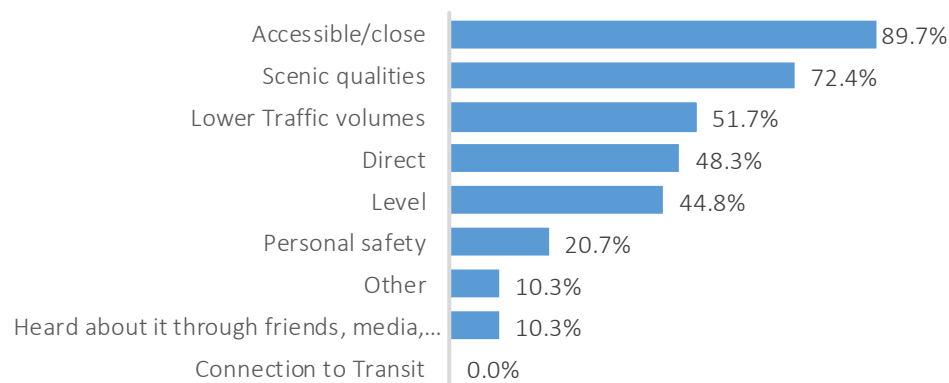


i) Reasons for Using Route

The survey instrument used by SWRPC asked pedestrian trail users why they were using their current route, as opposed to walking somewhere else. Possible responses included: accessible/close; direct; lower traffic; heard about it through friends, media, etc.; scenic qualities; level; personal safety; and connection to transit. The Antioch-administered survey included an analogous question, but used an open-ended format instead of supplying a set of potential answers.

Accessibility/closeness was the top the reason on-trail pedestrian respondents chose their current route (Figure 5).

Figure 5 – Percent of Pedestrian Respondents Indicating Reasons for Choosing Route (n = 39)

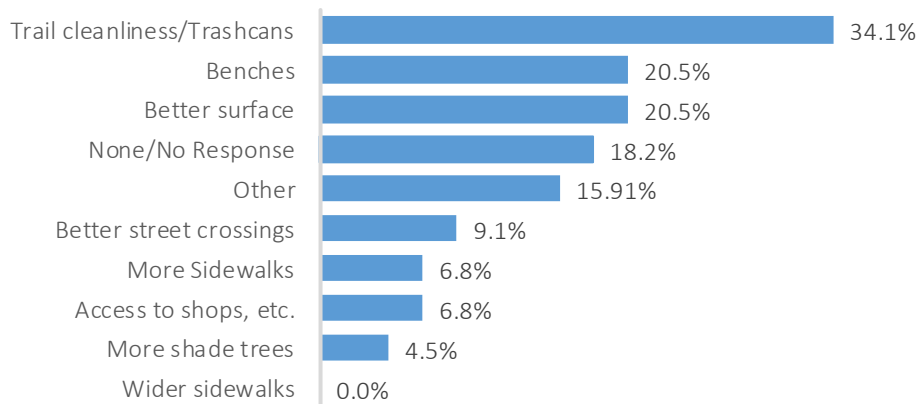


j) Desired Improvements

Both the SWRPC and Antioch surveys prompted respondents to indicate desired trail improvements. The SWRPC asked respondents to select potential improvements from a list of options: wider sidewalks; better surface; better street crossing; more shade trees; bench; access to shops, etc.; more sidewalks. The analogous question on the Antioch survey used the same verbiage, but did not supply a list of options, using an open format instead. Where possible, SWRPC staff categorized open-ended responses under the categories specified in the SWRPC survey. In cases where that was not possible, responses were grouped under new categories or an “other” category.

Respondents most frequently identified improved trail cleanliness or more trashcans as a desired trail improvement, with 15 respondents (34.1 percent) in support (Figure 6). Given that trail cleanliness/trashcans was not included as a response option on the SWRPC survey, support for the potential improvement may be underrepresented by the survey results. Several responses categorized under “other” pertained to improved lighting and safety.

Figure 6 – Percent of Respondents who Indicated Desired Trail Improvements (n = 44)



Respondent preferences for trail improvements varied by location. For example, while 85.7 percent of respondents at the Keene-1 survey location (n = 7) expressed interest in more trailside benches, only 12.0 percent respondents at the Keene-2 location (n = 24) registered the same interest. No respondents at the Swanzey, Winchester, or Hinsdale locations expressed an interest in benches. Respondent desire for improved trail cleanliness was somewhat more uniform across survey locations, with 42.9 percent of respondents at the Keene-1 location (n = 7), 32 percent of respondents at the Keene-2 location (n = 24), zero percent at the Swanzey location (n = 3), 33.3 percent at the Winchester location (n = 3), and 50.0% in Hinsdale (n = 6) indicating support. Due to small sample sizes, variation between survey locations may be heavily influenced by sampling error.

k) Respondent Ethnicity

All 44 respondents except for two identified themselves as Anglo/Caucasian. One respondent identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino and one did not indicate a race/ethnicity. Considering the small sample size, it is difficult to determine whether the racial/ethnic breakdown of trail users differs significantly from the surrounding population.

l) Respondent Age

The Antioch-administered survey asked respondents to indicate their age whereas the SWRPC survey did not. The predominance of young adult respondents (19-30 years old) at the Keene-2 location (south of Winchester Street) can be attributed to the proximity of Keene State College. Individuals aged 18 years old and younger are completely absent from the survey responses. Considering that minors are important users of multiuse pathways, intercept survey collection techniques may need to be modified in order to document accurately how minors use the trail.

Table 6 – Survey Respondent Age (n = 29)

Loc. ID	Respondent Age										Total
	0-13		13-18		19-30		31-50		51+		
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
Keene-2	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	9	52.9%	5	29.4%	3	17.6%	17
Swanzey	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%	2	66.7%	3
Winchester	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%	1	33.3%	1	33.3%	3
Hinsdale	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	50.0%	2	33.3%	1	16.7%	6
Total	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	13	44.8%	9	31.0%	7	24.1%	29

III. Findings

- Conducting in-person surveys was a labor-intensive process, especially along rural or low-volume trail segments. Completing 44 surveys required 36 hours of effort, yielding about one response per 50 minutes. For that reason, it requires a lot of volunteer or staff time.
- Currently, only a small minority of Ashuelot Rail Trail users are tourists from outside the region, at least during the periods that intercept surveys were conducted (spring and summer). The number of tourist trail users may be significantly higher during the fall, when foliage attracts tourists to the region, or the winter, when the opportunity to snowmobile attracts out-of-town users.
- Trail cleanliness was a top priority among survey respondents, although preferences on-trail improvements varied substantially by survey location.
- Trail accessibility/proximity was the top driver for respondent trail use, suggesting that, at least at some locations, improving connections to/from the trail could be equally if not more important than making on-trail enhancements.

IV. Recommendations

- Given the labor-intensive nature of actively administered intercept surveys, future survey efforts might consider or put more emphasis on passive techniques, e.g. placing printed surveys at trailside kiosks and providing collection boxes (or return postage), poster with QR code linking to a digital survey. Passive techniques could be especially appropriate in rural locations.
- In the future and when practical, intercept survey collection should be coordinated closely with the deployment of automatic counters (e.g. infrared, pneumatic tube), with both intercept surveys and automatic counter data collection occurring at the same time and location. Automatic counter data can then be used to extrapolate the more detailed information collected through survey responses.
- Survey instruments used for future intercept surveys may have increased utility if they include questions related to economic activity of trail users. Data collected from such questions could be used to provide information about of the trail's economic impact.
- In order to effectively intercept cyclists during future intercept survey efforts, surveyors should position themselves at location where cyclists are likely to stop or slow down, e.g. intersections. Visual cues, e.g. a sandwich board advertising the survey, may also help intercept cyclists.
- To expedite survey data processing, digital collection methods could be substituted for paper forms. Esri Survey123 could be considered for administering surveys while the

Rails to Trails Conservancy's Go Counter app could be used for recording trail user counts. Digital collection methods may also help ensure that the survey methodology remains consistent among different surveyors.

- Since trail use may differ significantly in the fall and winter, intercept survey collections during those seasons would be essential to develop a year-round understanding of who uses the trail, how and why.
- Consider using other data sources, such as cell phone geolocation data, as a complement to origin and destination information collected through intercept surveys. New Hampshire Department of Transportation purchases anonymized and aggregated data from Strava, a fitness and recreation app that allows users to record running, cycling, hiking, and other activities.
- Evaluate any intercept survey methods utilized as part of the upcoming State Trails Plan update for future use on the Ashuelot Rail Trail and throughout the Monadnock Region.
- Any future intercept surveys should include questions related to age and gender in order to assess similarities/differences across demographic groups regarding travel behavior and priorities.

National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project

FORMS

Table of Contents

COUNT AND SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS.....	1
STANDARD SCREENLINE COUNT FORM	3
STANDARD BICYCLE INTERSECTION COUNT FORM	5
STANDARD BICYCLE INTERSECTION COUNT TALLY SHEET	7
STANDARD PEDESTRIAN SURVEY.....	8
STANDARD BICYCLE SURVEY	9
ENCUESTA PEATONAL	10
ENCUESTA DE CICLISTA	11
BACKGROUND DATA SHEET	12
INSTRUCTIONS FOR SURVEY TABULATION	16
EXAMPLE PEDESTRIAN SURVEY TABULATION FORM	17
EXAMPLE EBICYCLE SURVEY TABULATION FORM	18

COUNT AND SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

Please review these instructions before going to the count or survey site.

Items you should bring to the site include:

1. These instructions
2. Safety vest
3. Location map
4. Count/Survey forms
5. Clipboard
6. Pen or pencil and a spare
7. Watch or time to record 15 minute intervals
8. Count/survey manager business cards
9. Optional: hat, sunscreen, jacket, snacks, water

Once you've reached the site please ensure your safety. Be aware of your surroundings.

It is best to arrive at the site 15 minutes before the count period. Once you've arrived:

1. Find a safe location to conduct the survey or counts.
2. Record the background information at the top of the count/survey form.

If conducting a survey, be sure to approach the bicyclists or pedestrians in a friendly engaging manner. A suggested script is:

"Hello, do you have time to answer a few questions about walking and biking?"

If yes:

"My name is _____ and I'm conducting this survey for _____.
The information will be used to better understand why people walk and bike where they do. The survey will take about 5 minutes.

"You don't have to answer all the questions, and you can stop taking the survey at any time. I won't ask for any personal information. Would you like to take the survey?"

After completing your count or survey period, return your forms to the count/survey manager as soon as possible.

STANDARD SCREENLINE COUNT FORM

Name: _____ Location: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Weather: _____

Please fill in your name, count location, date, time period, and weather conditions (fair, rainy, very cold).
Count all bicyclists and pedestrians crossing your screen line under the appropriate categories.

- Count for two hours in 15 minute increments.
- Count bicyclists who ride on the sidewalk.
- Count the number of people on the bicycle, not the number of bicycles.
- Pedestrians include people in wheelchairs or others using assistive devices, children in strollers, etc.
- People using equipment such as skateboards or rollerblades should be included in the "Other" category.

	Bicycles		Pedestrians		Others
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
00-:15					
15-:30					
30-:45					
45-1:00					
1:00-1:15					
1:15-1:30					
1:30-1:45					
1:45-2:00					
Total					

STANDARD BICYCLE INTERSECTION COUNT FORM

Name: _____ Location: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Weather: _____

Please fill in your name, count location, date, time period, and weather conditions (fair, rainy, very cold).
Count all bicyclists crossing through the intersection under the appropriate categories.

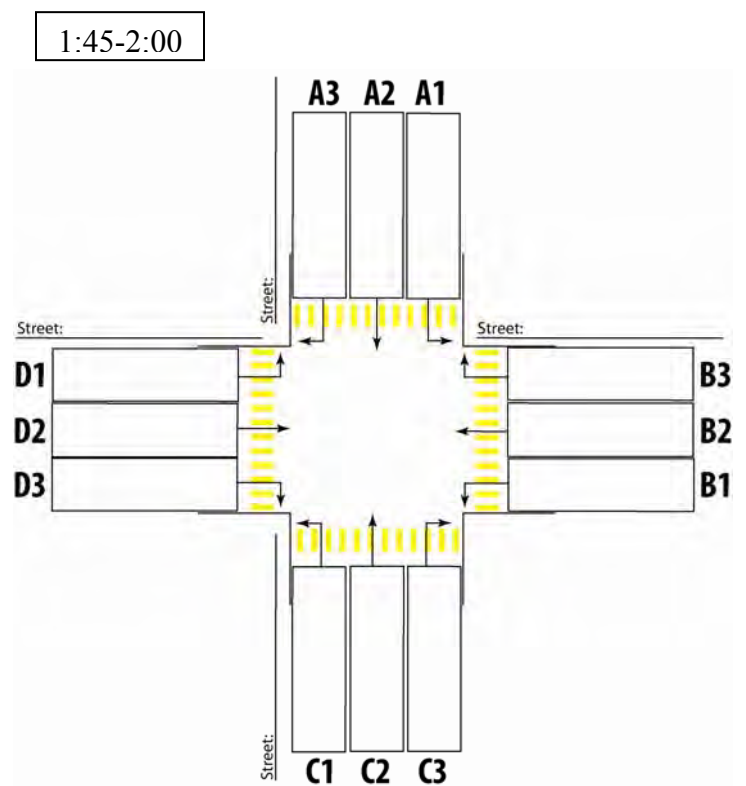
- Count for two hours in 15-minute increments.
- Count bicyclists who ride on the sidewalk.
- Count the number of people on the bicycle, not the number of bicycles.
- Use one intersection graphic per 15-minute interval.

00-:15

15-:30

30-:45

45-1:00



Notes:

STANDARD BICYCLE INTERSECTION COUNT TALLY SHEET

	Bicycle Counts											
Time Period	Leaving Leg A			Leaving Leg B			Leaving Leg C			Leaving Leg D		
	A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3
00-:15												
15-:30												
30-:45												
45-1:00												
1:00-1:15												
1:15-1:30												
1:30-1:45												
1:45-2:00												
Total												
Total Leg:												
Street Name A to C:							Location 1 (Total Leg A + Total Leg C) =					
Street Name B to D:							Location 2 (Total Leg B + Total Leg D) =					

STANDARD PEDESTRIAN SURVEY

Location: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Surveyor: _____ Weather: _____
(sunny, cloudy, rainy, windy, hot, and/or cold)*"Excuse me, but may I ask you a few questions? I'm with [name of agency] and we want to learn more about why people walk where they do. This will take less than two minutes and the information will be kept confidential."***1. What is your home zip code?**

Home zip code: _____

2. What best describes the purpose of this trip?

- ☐ Exercising (a) ☐ Work commute (b) ☐ School (c)
☐ Recreation (d) ☐ Shopping/doing errands (e) ☐ Personal business (medical, visiting friends, etc.) (f)

3. In the past month, about how often have you walked here?

- ☐ First time (a) ☐ 0 – 5 times (b) ☐ 6 – 10 times (c) ☐ 11 – 20 times (d) ☐ Daily (e)

4. Please check the seasons in which you walk.

- ☐ All Year (a) ☐ Summer (b) ☐ Fall (c) ☐ Winter (d) ☐ Spring (e)

5. What is the total length of this trip (start to finish)? (complete one or more of the following)

1. Distance: _____ miles		and / or	2. Time: _____ minutes		
and / or	3. Origin (zip code) _____		and	Destination (zip code) _____	
	Or location description other than zip code:*			Or location description other than zip code:*	
	_____			_____	
* Address, intersection, landmark, etc.			* Address, intersection, landmark, etc.		

6. Will any part of this current trip be taken on public transit?

- ☐ Yes (a) ☐ No (b)

7. If you were not walking for this trip, how would you be traveling?

- ☐ Car (a) ☐ Carpool (b) ☐ Transit (c) ☐ Bicycle (d) ☐ I would not make this trip (e)

8. Why are you using this route as opposed to walking somewhere else? (please check all that apply)

- ☐ Accessible/close (a) ☐ Direct (b) ☐ Lower traffic volumes (c) ☐ Heard about it through friends, media, etc.(d)
☐ Scenic qualities (e) ☐ Level (f) ☐ Personal safety (g) ☐ Connection to transit (h)

9. What would you like to see improved along this route (mark with an 'X') and community in general (mark with an 'O')? (please check all that apply)

- ☐ Wider sidewalks (a) ☐ Better surface (b) ☐ Better street crossings (c)
☐ More shade trees (d) ☐ Benches (e) ☐ Access to shops, etc. (f)
☐ More sidewalks (g)

10. What ethnic group do you belong to? (please check all that apply) (optional)

- ☐ Hispanic/Latino (a) ☐ African American (b) ☐ Anglo/Caucasian (c) ☐ Asian (d)

STANDARD BICYCLE SURVEY

Location: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Surveyor: _____ Weather: _____
(sunny, cloudy, rainy, windy, hot, and/or cold)***"Excuse me, but may I ask you a few questions? I'm with [name of NTPP agency] and we want to learn more about why people bike where they do. This will take less than two minutes and the information will be kept confidential."*****1. What is your home zip code?**

Home zip code: _____

2. What best describes the purpose of this trip?

- ☐ Exercising (a) ☐ Work commute (b) ☐ School (c)
☐ Recreation (d) ☐ Shopping/doing errands (e) ☐ Personal business (medical, visiting friends, etc.) (f)

3. In the past month, about how often have you ridden a bicycle here?

- ☐ First time (a) ☐ 0 – 5 times (b) ☐ 6 – 10 times (c) ☐ 11 – 20 times (d) ☐ Daily (e)

4. Please check the seasons in which you bicycle.

- ☐ All Year (a) ☐ Summer (b) ☐ Fall (c) ☐ Winter (d) ☐ Spring (e)

5. What is the total length of this trip (start to finish)? (complete one or more of the following)

1. Distance: _____ miles (a)		and / or	2. Time: _____ minutes (b)
and / or	3. Origin (zip code) _____ (c)	and	Destination (zip code) _____ (d)
	Or location description other than zip code:*		Or location description other than zip code:*
	_____		_____
	* Address, intersection, landmark, etc.		* Address, intersection, landmark, etc.

6. Will any part of this current trip be taken on public transit?

- ☐ Yes (a) ☐ No (b)

7. If you were not biking for this trip, how would you be traveling?

- ☐ Car (a) ☐ Carpool (b) ☐ Transit (c) ☐ Walking (d) ☐ I would not make this trip (e)

8. Why are you using this route as opposed to riding somewhere else? (please check all that apply)

- ☐ Accessible/close (a) ☐ Direct (b) ☐ Lower traffic volumes (c) ☐ Scenic qualities (d)
☐ Level (e) ☐ Bike lanes (f) ☐ Wider lanes (g) ☐ Separation from traffic (h)
☐ Connection to transit (i) ☐ Heard about it through friends, media, etc. (j)

9. What would you like to see improved along this route (mark with an 'X') and community in general (mark with an 'O')? (please check all that apply)

- ☐ Bike lanes (a) ☐ Better surface (b) ☐ Shoulders (c) ☐ Less traffic (d)
☐ Signs/stencils (e) ☐ Better maintenance (f) ☐ Signal detection (g) ☐ Better crossings (h)

10. What ethnic group do you belong to? (please check all that apply) (optional)

- ☐ Hispanic/Latino (a) ☐ African American (b) ☐ Anglo/Caucasian (c) ☐ Asian (d)

ENCUESTA PEATONAL

Location: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Surveyor: _____ Weather: _____

(sunny, cloudy, rainy, windy, hot, and/or cold)

"¿Perdone, pero le puedo preguntar algunas preguntas? Trabajo para [name of agency] y queremos aprender más acerca de por qué personas caminan donde ellos hacen. Esta tomará menos de dos minutos y la información será mantenida confidencial".

1. ¿Cual es el código postal de su domicilio?

Código postal _____

2. ¿Qué describe mejor el propósito de este viaje?

- ☐ Para propósito ejercicio (a) ☐ Para ir/regresar del trabajo (b) ☐ Para ir/regresar a la Escuela (c)
- ☐ Para propósito recreativo (d) ☐ Para ir de compras o mandatos (e) ☐ Negocios personales (médicos, visitando amigos, etc.)(f)

3. ¿En el último mes, cuantas veces ha caminado aquí?

- ☐ Primera vez (a) ☐ 0 – 5 veces (b) ☐ 6 – 10 veces (c) ☐ 11 – 20 veces (d) ☐ Diario (e)

4. Por favor indique todas las estaciones en que usted camina.

- ☐ Todo el año (a) ☐ Verano (b) ☐ Otoño (c) ☐ Invierno (d) ☐ Primavera (e)

5. ¿Cuál es la distancia aproximada de este viaje (de principio a fin)? (complete uno o más de los siguientes)

1. Distancia : _____ millas		y / o	2. Tiempo: _____ minutos
y / o	3. Origen (código postal) _____ O descripción de ubicación de otra manera que código postal:*	y	Destinación (código postal) _____ O descripción de ubicación de otra manera que código postal:*
	_____		_____
	* Dirección, intersección, punto de referencia, etc.		* Dirección, intersección, punto de referencia, etc.

6. ¿Será tomada cualquier parte de este viaje sobre el tránsito público?

- ☐ Sí (a) ☐ No (b)

7. ¿Si no caminará para este viaje, cómo se viajaría?

- ☐ Automóvil (a) ☐ Carpool (b) ☐ Tránsito Público (c) ☐ Bicicleta (d) ☐ No me llevaría por este viaje (e)

8. ¿Por qué utiliza esta ruta en lugar de caminar en algún otro lugar? (indique todas las que aplican)

- ☐ Accesibilidad/proximidad (a) ☐ Directo (b) ☐ Menos volumen de tráfico (c)
- ☐ Lo oí por un amigo, los medios, etc., los medios, etc. (d) ☐ Calidad escénica (e)
- ☐ Plano (f) ☐ La seguridad (g) ☐ Conexión al tránsito público (h)

9. ¿Qué le gustaría ver mejorado a lo largo de esta ruta (indique con un 'X') y de la comunidad en general (indique con un 'O')? (indique todas las que aplican)

- ☐ Banquetas más amplias (a) ☐ Mejor superficie (b) ☐ Mejores cruces peatonal (c)
- ☐ Mas árboles de sombreados (d) ☐ Bancos (e) ☐ Acceso a tiendas, etc. (f)
- ☐ Más banquetas (g)

10. ¿A qué grupo étnico pertenece usted? (indique todas las que aplican) (opcional)

- ☐ Hispano/Latino (a) ☐ Afro-Americano (b) ☐ Anglo/Caucásico (Blanco/No-Hispano) (c) ☐ Asiático (d)

ENCUESTA DE CICLISTA

Location: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Surveyor: _____ Weather: _____
(sunny, cloudy, rainy, windy, hot, and/or cold)

"¿Perdone, pero le puedo preguntar algunas preguntas? Trabajo para [name of agency] y queremos aprender más acerca de por qué personas pasean en bicicleta donde ellos hacen. Esta tomará menos de dos minutos y la información será mantenida confidencial".

1. ¿Cuál es el código postal de su domicilio?

Código postal _____

2. ¿Qué describe mejor el propósito de este viaje?

- ☐ Para propósito ejercicio (a) ☐ Para ir/regresar del trabajo (b)
- ☐ Para ir/regresar a la Escuela (c) ☐ Para propósito recreativo (d)
- ☐ Para ir de compras o mandatos (e) ☐ Negocios personales (médicos, visitando amigos, etc.) (f)

3. ¿En el último mes, cuantas veces ha paseado la bicicleta aquí?

- ☐ Primera vez (a) ☐ 0 – 5 veces (b) ☐ 6 – 10 veces (c) ☐ 11 – 20 veces (d) ☐ Diario (e)

4. Por favor indique todas las estaciones en que usted usa la bicicleta.

- ☐ Todo el año (a) ☐ Verano (b) ☐ Otoño (c) ☐ Invierno (d) ☐ Primavera (e)

5. ¿Cuál es la distancia aproximada de este viaje (de principio a fin)? (complete uno o más de los siguientes)

1. Distancia : _____ millas		y/o	2. Tiempo: _____ minutos		
y/o	3. Origen (código postal) _____		y	Destinación (código postal) _____	
	O descripción de ubicación de otra manera que código postal: *			O descripción de ubicación de otra manera que código postal: *	
_____			_____		
* Dirección, intersección, punto de referencia, etc.			* Dirección, intersección, punto de referencia, etc.		

6. ¿Será tomada cualquier parte de este viaje sobre el tránsito público?

- ☐ Sí (a) ☐ No (b)

7. ¿Si no usara la bicicleta para este viaje, cómo se viajaría?

- ☐ Automóvil (a) ☐ Carpool (b) ☐ Tránsito Público (c) ☐ Caminar (d) ☐ No me llevaría por este viaje (e)

8. ¿Por qué utiliza esta ruta en lugar de pasear por algún otro lugar? (indique todas las que aplican)

- ☐ Accesibilidad/proximidad (a) ☐ Directo (b) ☐ Menos volumen de tráfico (c)
- ☐ Calidad escénica (d) ☐ Plano (e) ☐ Ciclovías (f)
- ☐ Vías más amplias (g) ☐ Separación del tráfico (h)
- ☐ Conexión al tránsito público (i) ☐ Lo oí por un amigo, los medios, etc. (j)

9. ¿Qué le gustaría ver mejorado a lo largo de esta ruta (indique con un 'X') y de la comunidad en general (indique con un 'O')? (indique todas las que aplican)

- ☐ Ciclovías (a) ☐ Mejor superficie (b) ☐ Acotamiento (c)
- ☐ Menos tráfico (d) ☐ Símbolos/plantillas (e) ☐ Mejor mantenimiento (f)
- ☐ Detectores en los semáforos para ciclistas (g) ☐ Mejores áreas de cruce ciclista (h)

10. ¿A qué grupo étnico pertenece usted? (indique todas las que aplican) (opcional)

- ☐ Hispano/Latino (a) ☐ Afro-Americano (b) ☐ Anglo/Caucásico (Blanco/No-Hispano) (c) ☐ Asiático (d)

BACKGROUND DATA SHEET

The Background Data Sheet is included in the Data Tabulation Form Excel Spreadsheet. The Spreadsheet is downloadable from the NBPDP website (www.bikepeddocumentation.org).

Each count and survey location will be identified by a Location Number that in turn is associated with a Background Data Sheet. If possible, include a numbered digital photo with each count and survey location. The Background Data Sheet is intended to allow researchers to test the impact of various background materials against count and survey results. Please fill out the data to the best of your ability. Most of this data is available through published sources such as the U.S. Census (demographics, journey to work), Bureau of Transportation Statistics (National Household Travel Survey), or by regional agencies.

The Bicycle Friendly Community website (www.bicyclefriendlycommunity.org) website also provides direct links to most of the relevant U.S. Census and other data sources. You may leave these blank if you do not know the answers, or if the information is not available.

The following key will help you fill in the required fields in the excel spreadsheet:

General Area Background:

General area is described as the jurisdictions where the counts or surveys are being conducted, which could range from a community to a region

- Name of Jurisdiction: region, city, town, county, or community
 - If County or Region, number of local agencies included in count or survey area
 - Source of demographic data
 - Year of data
 - Population of survey or count area
 - Density (people per square mile)
 - Bicycle mode share: Journey to Work
 - Pedestrian mode share: Journey to Work
 - Average age
 - Average income
 - Number of annual visitors to area (if not published, enter best guess in round numbers)
-

Count and Survey Location Description:

To be completed for each count and survey location.

Type of facility:

- 1 = paved multi use path at least 8 feet wide
- 2 = unpaved trail
- 3 = bike lane with standard signing and striping
- 4 = signed bike route
- 5 = street or road with marked shoulders (min. 2 feet wide)
- 6 = street or road with no shoulders or less than 2 feet wide
- 7 = sidewalk (at least 4 feet wide)
- 8 = unimproved (dirt, gravel) shoulder

Type of setting:

- 1 = urban
- 2 = suburban
- 3 = rural

Scenic Quality:

- 1 = high scenic qualities (views, shaded, quiet, historical)
- 2 = neutral or better scenic qualities
- 3 = poor scenic qualities

Surrounding land uses (within 1 to 2 miles):

- 1 = residential
- 2 = rural/agricultural/open space
- 3 = retail
- 4 = office
- 5 = manufacturing/warehouse
- 6 = mixed use

Schools, parks, visitor destinations adjacent or close to the facility:

- 1 = none
- 2 = 1-2
- 3 = 3-5
- 4 = 6 and over

Quality of connecting facilities (paths, bike lanes, routes):

- 1 = no connections, poor access
- 2 = limited connections (one end only)
- 3 = good system connections (both ends)
- 4 = excellent system connections (both ends and intermediate)

Length of Facility:

- 1 = less than 1 mile
- 2 = 1-2 miles
- 3 = 2-5 miles
- 4 = 5-10 miles
- 5 = over 10 miles
- 6 = part of sidewalk network

Access:

- 1 = poor direct access from adjacent neighborhoods
- 2 = adequate access
- 3 = excellent access, including trailheads
- 4 = part of sidewalk system

Quality of overall network:

- 1 = poor community system of bikeways or walkways
- 2 = adequate community system (intermittent)
- 3 = good community system (continuous, good condition)

Traffic volumes (ADT) of adjacent road:

- 1 = under 2,500 ADT
- 2 = 2,500 – 7,500 ADT
- 3 = 7,500 – 15,000 ADT
- 4 = over 15,000 ADT

Traffic speeds (posted) of adjacent roads:

- 1 = 25mph
- 2 = 26-35 mph
- 3 = 36-45 mph
- 4 = 46-55mph
- 5 = 56mph or over

Crossings and Intersections (average number per linear feet):

- 1 = every 400 feet or less
- 2 = every 400-1,000 feet
- 3 = every 1,000-5,000 feet
- 4 = 5,000-10,000 feet
- 5 = none

Crossing and Intersection Traffic:

- 1 = all minor streets (less than 2,500 ADTs)
- 2 = minor to moderate traffic (2,501 – 7,500 ADTs)
- 3 = minor to high traffic (7,501 – 15,000 ADTs)
- 4 = minor to very high traffic (over 15,001 ADTs)

Crossing and Intersection Protection:

- 1 = inadequate (no crosswalks, stop signs, or signals)
- 2 = minimal: crosswalks only
- 3 = adequate: crosswalks, stop signs, and signals as needed

Condition:

- 1 = poor condition (rough surface, vandalism, debris, etc.)
- 2 = good condition (smooth surface, good maintenance)

Topography:

- 1 = level
 - 2 = moderate grades
 - 3 = steep topography
-

Count or Survey Data*To be completed for each count or survey*

Date: date of count or survey

Time period:

- 1 = weekday, 7-9am
- 2 = weekend, 12-2pm
- 3 = weekday, 5-7pm
- 4 = weekday, 7am – 7pm
- 5 = weekend, 7am – 7pm

Weather:

- 1 = extreme (heavy rain, snow, freezing, very humid, over 95 degrees)
- 2 = poor (32-50 degrees, 90-95 degrees, light rain, wind)
- 3 = acceptable (50-90 degrees, no rain)

Bicycles: number of bicycles counted or interviewed during period

Pedestrians: number of pedestrians counted or interviewed during period

Other: number of equestrians, skaters, bladders, skateboards, and others counted or interviewed

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SURVEY TABULATION

Use the survey tabulation form to compile the answers to surveys on one sheet. There is a tabulation form for each type of survey. For each survey, mark an "x" in the box that corresponds with the answer to each question. For questions with more than one answer, mark an "x" next to each answer given.

For example, for the pedestrian survey question one: "What best describes why you are out here today?" survey respondent one answered "a: Exercising" and survey respondent two answered "b: Going to Work." For sidewalk survey question two: "In the past month, about how often have you walked or rode here?" respondent one answered "a. First time" and respondent two answered "d. 10-20 times." To tabulate these results, you would record the respondent one's answers in column 1 and respondent two's answers in column 2. Answers would be recorded next to the appropriate question number.

An example of this hypothetical situation is below:

Example Survey Tabulation Form

(please enter data on NBPDP data spreadsheet)

Answer Number	Survey Numbers														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	1a	X													
	1b		X												
	1c														
	2a	X													
	2b														
	2c														
	2d		X												
	2e														

EXAMPLE PEDESTRIAN SURVEY TABULATION FORM**(please enter data on NBPDP data spreadsheet)**

Name: _____ Location: _____ # _____

Date: _____ Time Period: _____ Sheet # _____

	Survey Numbers														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Answer Number	1a														
	1b														
	1c														
	2a														
	2b														
	2c														
	2d														
	2e														
	3a														
	3b														
	3c														
	3d														
	3e														
	4a														
	4b														
	4c														
	4d														
	5a														
	5b														
	5c														
	5d														
	6a														
	6b														
	6c														
	6d														
	6e														
	6f														

EXAMPLE BICYCLE SURVEY TABULATION FORM**(please enter data on NBPDP data spreadsheet)**

Name: _____ Location: _____ # _____

Date: _____ Time Period: _____ Sheet # _____

		Survey Numbers														
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Answer Number	1a															
	1b															
	1c															
	2a															
	2b															
	2c															
	2d															
	2e															
	3a															
	3b															
	3c															
	3d															
	3e															
	4a															
	4b															
	4c															
	4d															
	5a															
	5b															
	5c															
	5d															
	6a															
	6b															
	6c															
	6d															
	6e															
	6f															
	6g															
	7a															
	7b															
	7c															
	7d															
7e																
7f																
7g																

Location:

Date:

Time:

Where do you live (city/town)?

What best describes the purpose of this trip (circle all that apply)?

In the past month, how often have you walked/biked here?

Please circle the season(s) in which you walk/bike:

All Seasons

Spring

Summer

Fall

Winter

What is the total length of this trip?

Distance:

and/or

Time:

Will any part of this current trip be taken on public transit?

If you were not walking/biking for this trip, how would you be traveling? (circle all)

Car

Carpool

Transit

Bicycle

Walk

I would not make this trip

Why are you using this route as opposed to walking elsewhere?

What would you like to see improved on this route?

What ethnic group do you belong to?

What age group do you belong to? (circle)

0-13

13-18

19-30

31-50

51+



DATE: June 28, 2019
TO: Plan for Ashuelot Rail Trail Project Advisory Committee
FROM: SWRPC Staff
RE: Outreach - Open House

In order to inform the general public about the Plan for Ashuelot Rail Trail initiative, SWRPC staff held an open house at Whitcomb Hall in Swanzey on November 17, 2018 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The purpose of the open house was to:

- Share information about project goals, existing trail conditions, and input received to date;
- Gather perspectives from trail stakeholders and the general public about perceived trail assets and opportunities;
- Prompt trail stakeholders to envision and identify ideal trail qualities; and
- Create an opportunity for interested members of the public to discuss with each other issues related to the Ashuelot Rail Trail.

The open house included a variety of displays and activities that attendees were invited to explore. Displays and activities were distributed around the periphery of the room (see Figure 1) and included:

- Historical materials about the railway corridor, such as maps, photos, and interpretive text.
- An exercise that invited attendees to identify trail assets and opportunities on a large strip map (about 20 feet long). Participants used green arrow stickers to identify trail opportunities and orange arrow stickers to identify challenges.
- A slideshow of rails trails in other communities, including examples of how trails have benefited public health, transportation, tourism, and economic development.
- A station with laptops where attendees could take the online survey.
- A station with a camera and chalkboard speech bubble that attendees could use to photograph themselves or friends/family posing with a written message regarding trail priorities.
- A paper “mural” that prompted attendees to imagine and describe their “dream trail.”

Attendance at the open house was strong, with 53 individuals signing in over the course of the two-hour event (more may have attended without signing in). The good turnout suggests a substantial amount of interest in the Ashuelot Rail Trail and the region’s rail trails in general. Although staff issued a press release, the event was not covered by traditional media. Most outreach occurred through mass e-mail distributions, efforts of the project advisory committee, and SWRPC newsletters. Attendees included residents from towns along the trail’s route as well as some individuals who live outside the region.

Although a wide variety of trail users were present at the open house, some groups may have been better represented than others. Many equestrian users, for example appear on the sign-in sheet, while few attendees identified themselves as snowmobilers or representatives of

snowmobile clubs. From conversation with attendees, however, all user groups (walkers/runners, bicyclists, snowmobilers, skiers, etc.) were present to a certain extent.

Figure 1 – Open house displays and activities set up the night before the event

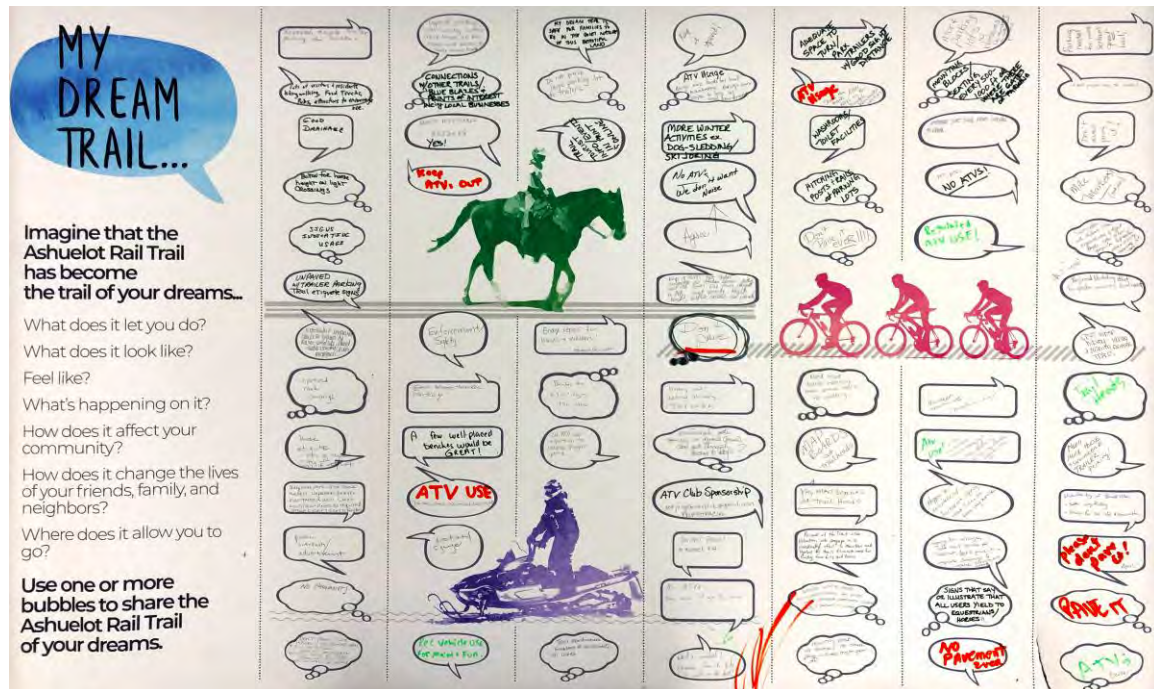


Figure 2 – Attendees mingling at the open house



Attendees readily engaged with the displays and activities, with many providing trail-related input via the paper mural, mapping exercise, or online survey. Attendees covered almost the entirety of the paper mural with comments regarding trail priorities (Figure 3). While the mural prompted attendees to describe their “dream trail” and its qualities, attendees also used the exercise as an opportunity to express current trail-related concerns, strategies for making improvements, and general opinions about the trail. Attendee comments are documented in List 1.

Figure 3 – Paper mural with comments from open house attendees



List 1 – Attendee comments on paper mural

- Unpaved, ample trailer parking for horses
- Lots of visitors and residents biking, walking. Food Trucks, pubs, attractions to encourage use.
- Good drainage
- Button for horse height on light crossings
- Signs indicating usage
- Unpaved w/trailer parking. Trail etiquette signs.
- Wonderful unpaved trails with views of river, wildlife, eagle viewing, bird migration
- Improved road crossing
- Horse etiquette: clean up manure and stay off trail if wet/soft
- Adequate parking for horse trailers. Unpaved! Bridge maintained well. Clear brush/blow downs as required. Network user groups to maintain.
- Public outreach/advertisement
- No pavement!
- Don't pave it, just improve a few flooded areas and fix the bridges. Info on the history, wildlife would be nice. Otherwise, just let it be natural. No motors!
- Rec vehicle use for maintenance and fun
- Directional signage
- ATV USE: trail maintenance/patrol, club managed, rules outlined.
- A few well-placed benches would be GREAT!

- *Good horse trailer parking*
- *Enforcement/safety*
- *Keep ATVs out*
- *Horse accessible bridges: YES!*
- *Connections w/other trails/'Blue blazes' and points of interest including local businesses*
- *Unpaved, packed, self-correcting surface which keeps all rec. users with access to State owned land*
- *My dream trail is safe for families to be in the quiet nature of this beautiful land*
- *Do not pave. Large parking lot for trailers.*
- *Trail tourist info/events in print and online*
- *Bridge repair for horses and walkers! (Ashuelot/Winchester)*
- *Benches to sit on and enjoy the view*
- *Let ATV use a portion to access Pisgah Park.*
- *Trail maintenance guidelines to accommodate all users*
- *What a wonderful resource...love to bike and walk on the trail!*
- *No ATVs. They mess it up for skiing.*
- *Do not pave! I Agree!*
- *ATV Club Sponsorship*
- *Occasional gate opening so drivers (horse) can get through. Access to keys?*
- *History and natural history trail guides*
- *Don't pave*
- *Keep it dirt! But stable.*
- *No ATV's. We don't want noise!*
- *ATV usage. Brings more funds for trail maintenance. Brings more people to help with trail maintenance.*
- *Keep it unpaved!*
- *Adequate space to turn/park trailers with good sight distance*
- *ATV usage. Share the trails. ATVs on the Hinsdale, Winchester portion.*
- *Washrooms/Toilet Facilities*
- *Hitching posts and rails at parking lots*
- *Don't pave it ever!*
- *Need more brush clearing near brown farm for walking*
- *MAP BOARDS at trailheads*
- *Yes, map boards at trailheads*
- *Friends of the Trails club. Volunteers who engage in a coordinated effort to maintain and improve the trails. Eliminate need for funding from city and towns.*
- *Vehicles yield to horses. Non-paved sections for horses can be alongside pavement sections only if pavement is necessary*
- *Mounting block at bridges or other places a rider might get off*
- *More parking lots with restrooms like they have in national parks*
- *Mounting blocks/seating every 500-1000 ft or where there are gates or parking*
- *Improved dirt trail from Hinsdale to Keene*
- *No ATVS. NO ATVS!*
- *Regulated ATV use!*
- *Volunteer opportunities: "Adopt-a-trail."*
- *ATV use! With restrictions such as belonging to a club, volunteering for trail maintenance, responsible riding, etc.*
- *Happy to volunteer w/low branch clipping which I can do from my horse.*
- *Signage for mileage, off trail points of interest, don't pave it—improve drainage and improve overgrown areas*

- Signs that say or illustrate that all users yield to equestrians/horses
- NO PAVEMENT EVER
- ATV's please!
- Pave it!
- Please don't pave it!
- Understanding of shared use, better wayfinding, from for XC ski and snowmobile
- Need more horse and snowmobile trailer parking
- Trail heads
- Greater winter hiking – looking and reading animal tracks
- Regional marketing effort for greater economic development
- Signs and maps with distances clear. Organized rides of different lengths. Notes of how groups can help maintain.
- Mile markers!
- Don't ever pave it!
- Teach people how to share!
- Parking needed for more sections. Great trail!

Those participating in the mapping exercise registered a wide variety of location-specific comments (Figure 4). Participants were prompted to use orange arrows to identify trail challenges and green arrows to identify trail opportunities (Figure 5). Identified challenges included, among other items, drainage issues, needed bridge repairs, unstable trail conditions, dangerous road crossings, parking difficulties. Identified opportunities included potential connections with other trails, opportunities to highlight notable natural, historic and cultural features, and leveraging economic opportunities such as potential locations for food or retail businesses. SWRPC staff digitized input received during the exercise and published it as webmap, available for review at <https://arcg.is/0uDG5W>.

Figure 4 – Detail from participatory mapping exercise

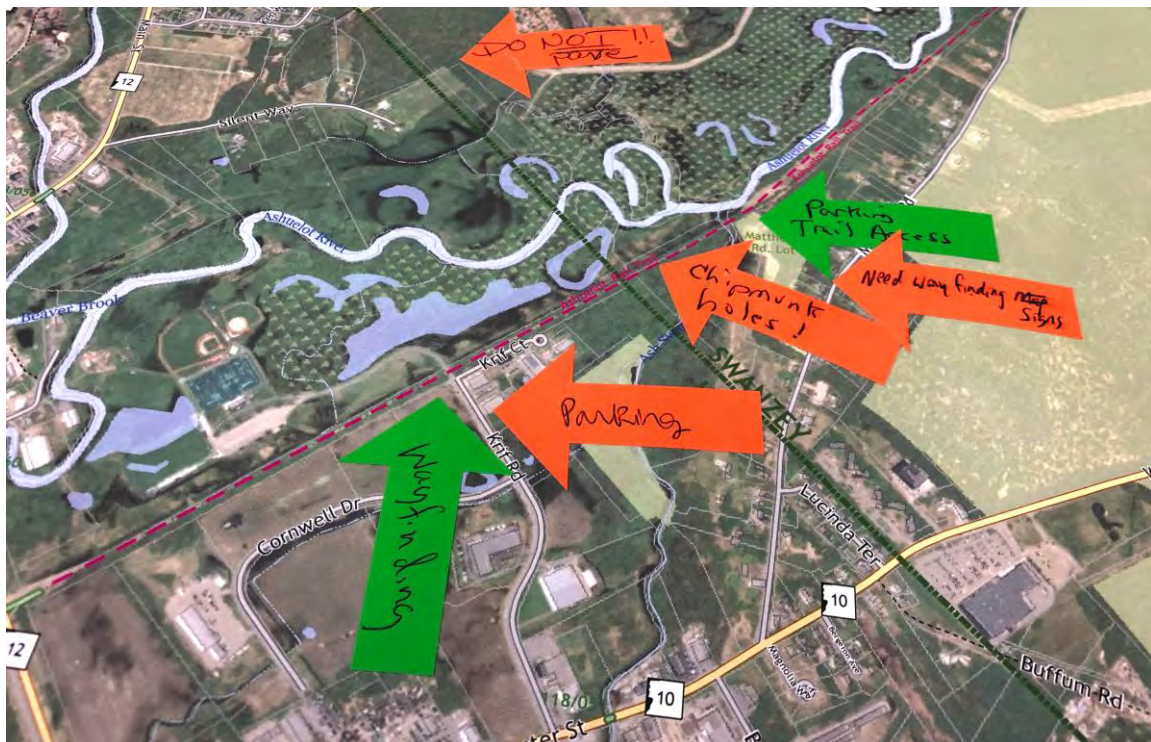
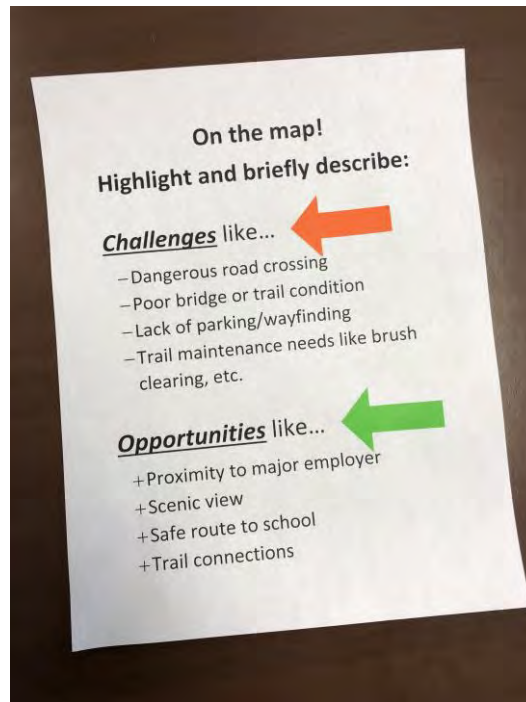


Figure 5 – Instructions for participatory mapping exercise



Findings

- Individuals from across the Monadnock Region and beyond attended the open house, indicating widespread interest in the Ashuelot Rail Trail and the Region's rail trails in general.
- As evidenced by input on the paper mural, attendees were more inclined to focus on specific challenges or concerns rather than a broad vision of the rail trail's future.
- Few open house attendees expressed interest in paving the trail. Equestrian users adamantly opposed trail paving while other users present seemed amenable to a packed gravel/stone dust surface. This finding aligns with online survey results, where respondents expressed little interest in trail paving.
- On the paper mural, some attendees indicated interest in opening the trail to ATV use, while others strongly opposed permitting ATVs. Some attendees who advocated for permitting ATV use qualified statements, stating that ATV use should be well regulated. Several attendees remarked that permitting ATVs on the trail could provide a source of maintenance funding and volunteer labor. It should be noted that ATVs are prohibited on the Ashuelot Rail Trail, per stipulations of the federal funding used by the state to acquire the railroad right-of-way.
- Most attendees were familiar with particular segments of the trail, but many communicated that they had not traveled the trail's entire corridor. The mapping exercise was an effective method in helping attendees visualize the trail's entire route.
- Comments from the mapping exercise tended to cluster around village centers and were less common along unimproved sections of trail. Comments were especially sparse along the trail segment from NH 10 to downtown Winchester. The lack of comments may

indicate the absence of challenge/opportunities or a general unfamiliarity with the trail segment.

Recommendations

- Explore the creation of a “Friends of the Trail” group that includes representation from different trail constituencies, e.g. bicyclists, equestrians, snowmobilers. Such a group could prove instrumental for developing understanding and trust among different trail user groups, building a foundation for joint fundraising, trail development, and maintenance efforts. Several open house attendees independently suggested that such a group is needed in order for trail user groups to identify and work towards realizing shared priorities. An e-mail distribution list created from the open house sign-in sheet and online survey responses could be a useful resource in beginning outreach regarding the creation of Friends of the Trail group.
- Consider whether particular tools, such as an online mapping application, may help different user groups coordinate trail maintenance and planning. Given the trail’s considerable length, various communication tools may help different groups coordinate efforts along the trail’s entire corridor.
- Since the open house conflicted with a statewide summit of snowmobile club trail masters, conduct additional outreach targeting members and leaders of snowmobile organizations. Snowmobilers constitute a significant segment of trail users and snowmobile clubs play a critical role maintaining the trails. Their participation in plan development will be important for producing a document that reflects the true diversity of trail interests and priorities.