

# REGIONAL TRAILS PLAN 2012

SALEM-MANCHESTER-CONCORD



As Adopted  
1/10/2013

## Regional Trails Coordinating Council

The primary goal of the Regional Trails Coordinating Council is to assist member organizations in the development and implementation of a comprehensive trail plan. The Regional Trails Coordinating Council strives to connect existing and planned trail networks in the region by providing a forum for cooperation and collaboration among trail organizations.

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# Regional Trails Plan 2012

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Regional Trails Plan documents a vision for a regional trails system along a Salem to Concord corridor. This plan defines a regional trail as a trail that provides non-motorized transportation and recreation opportunities, and connects communities to each other and to open spaces. Trails of this character are often referred to as shared-use paths or bike paths, and differ from common hiking or mountain biking trails.

### **This plan:**

- **Provides data and maps on existing trails**
- **Identifies and maps a planned regional trail network**
- **Catalogs existing trails and active trail groups in the region**
- **Roughly outlines funding opportunities for trails**
- **Recommends strategies for marketing trails and conducting outreach**
- **Recommends methods for continued coordination between trail groups**
- **Provides various recommendations to assist in implementation of the plan and the development of the regional trail network**
- **Describes the Regional Trail Coordinating Council's (RTCC's) origin, purpose, vision, mission, and goals**

This plan was assembled jointly by the Southern NH Planning Commission (SNHPC) and the Central NH Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) under direction from the Regional Trails Coordinating Council (RTCC). The RTCC consists of trail groups from multiple municipalities along the Salem to Concord corridor, roughly paralleling I-93. The RTCC's main mission is to develop and implement this plan, and to develop the regional trail network as a healthy non-motorized transportation system and recreational amenity for residents and visitors.

## As Adopted 1/10/2013

Below is a list of trail groups that participate in the RTCC and whose trails (or planned trails) make up this Regional Trails Plan. The vision described in this plan connects these local trails, creating a regional trail network.

Friends of the Salem Bike-Ped Corridor

Windham Rail Trail Alliance

Derry Rail Trail Alliance

Londonderry Trailways

Manchester Moves

Friends of the Goffstown Rail Trail

New Boston: Informal trail group

Hooksett: Informal trail group/Hooksett Kiwanis (includes Head's Pond Trail)

Allenstown: Informal trail group

Pembroke: Informal "Friends of the Pembroke Rail Trail" group

Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail (Concord)

Friends of the Northern Rail Trail Merrimack County

Friends of the Northern Rail Trail Grafton County

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# Regional Trails Plan 2012

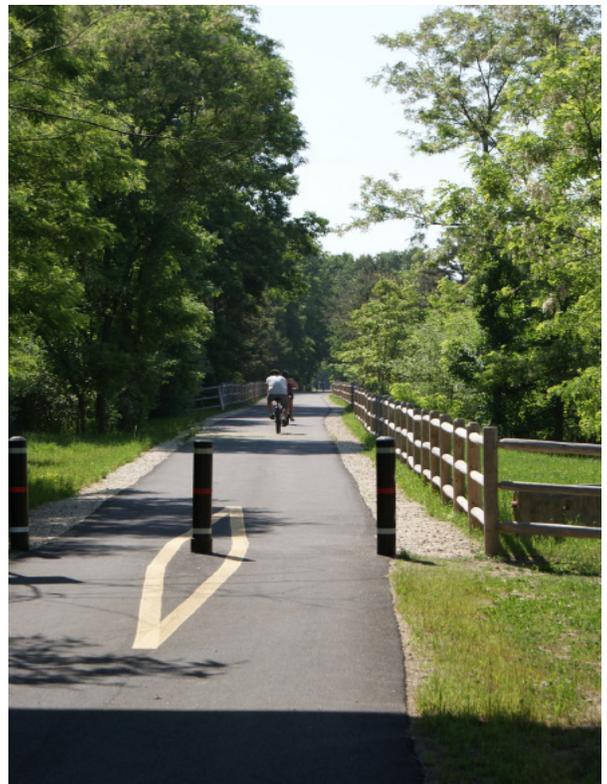
## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND PURPOSE OF REGIONAL TRAILS PLAN

The purpose of this Regional Trails Plan is to develop a common vision for a network of regional trails that serve transportation, recreation, and health purposes. The basis of the plan is a coordination of multiple local trail projects being combined into a regional vision. The plan identifies needs and individual trail projects and provides implementation tasks and assistance to help local groups develop their trails into a regional network. This plan also acts as a needs assessment. Historically, trail projects are completed piecemeal through various grants such as Transportation Enhancements and the Recreational Trails Program, without a comprehensive list of trail projects and needs region-wide or statewide.

In the past several years, active transportation and improved bicycling and walking infrastructure have been a common topic of discussion in New Hampshire and across the country. The planning and development of rail trails and shared use paths have coincided with this interest, and since 2001 many municipalities and organizations in New Hampshire have made individual efforts in creating trails for recreational and non-motorized transportation purposes. With a few notable exceptions, most non-motorized transportation projects in New Hampshire are developed locally. As a result, there have been various trail groups, municipalities, and agencies all working on similar tasks in their own jurisdictions. There have been several attempts at organizing and coordinating these trail groups, including the New Hampshire Rail Trail Coalition which is active today, a former trails alliance in the Manchester area, and the developers of this plan - the Regional Trails Coordinating Council (RTCC).



*Derry Rail Trail*

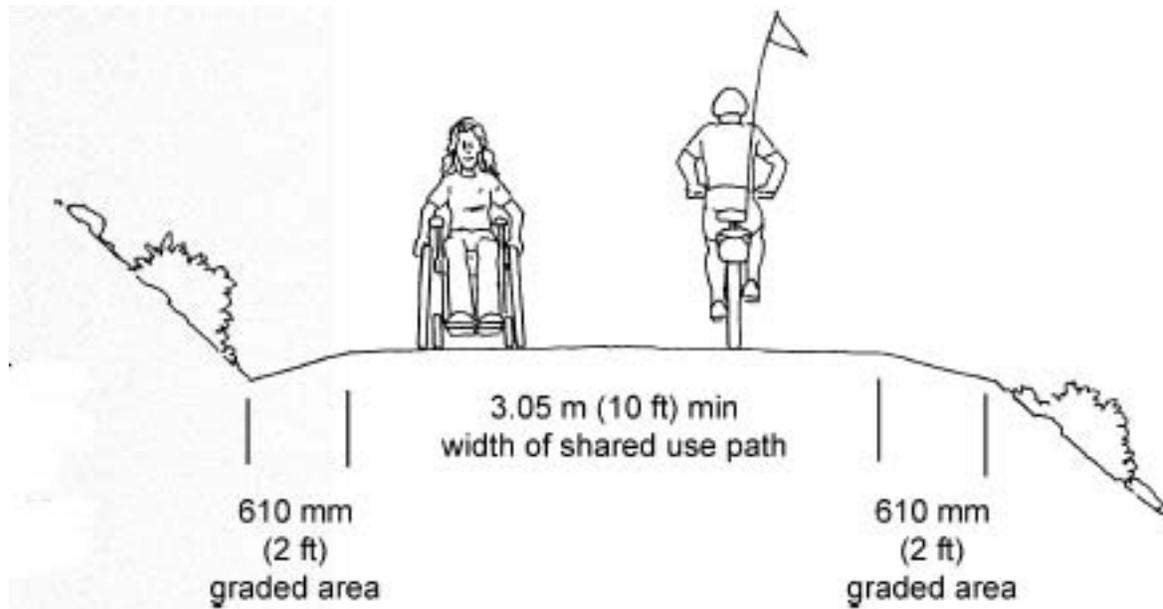


*Piscataquog Trail*

## ABOUT THE REGIONAL TRAILS COORDINATING COUNCIL (RTCC)

The RTCC is made up of trail groups, agencies, non-profits, and individuals who participate in RTCC meetings and share a common goal of developing a regional trails network. The mission of the Regional Trails Coordinating Council is to develop and assist in the development and implementation of this comprehensive trail plan.

In its vision, the RTCC states that it will act as a forum for cooperation and collaboration among both governmental and non-governmental organizations. These may include the Regional Planning Commissions, the NH Department of Transportation, the Department of Resources and Economic Development Trails Bureau, and private and public local trail organizations. Bringing these groups together will enable the RTCC to develop consensus on priorities for regional trails development. It will also act as an information clearinghouse for regional trails stakeholders, be an outlet to assist trail groups in identifying and pursuing sources of funding, and promote awareness of existing and developing trails.



A typical cross-section of a shared-use path or regional trail

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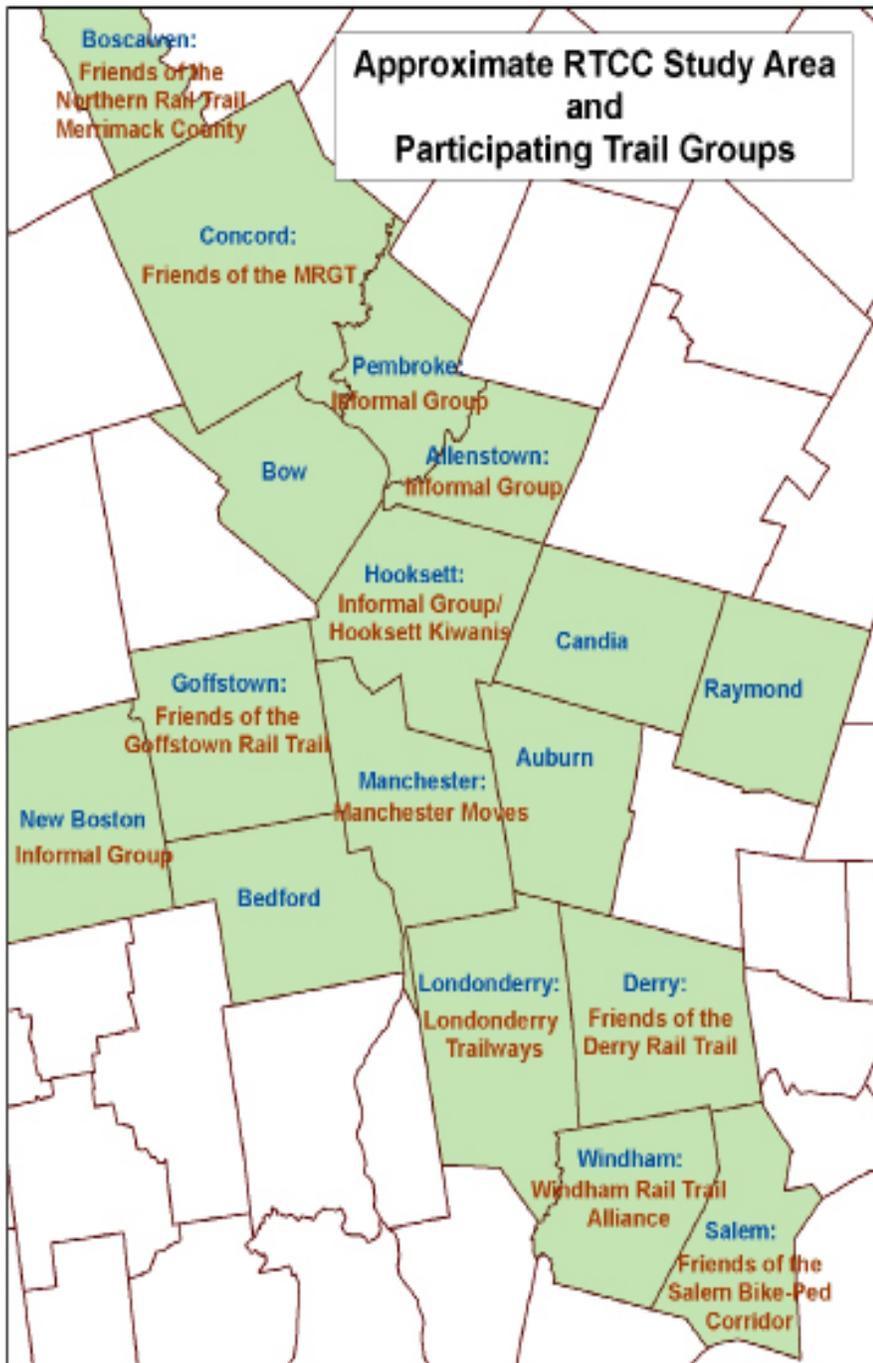
## RTCC DEFINITION OF “REGIONAL TRAIL”

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

A regional trail would provide non-motorized access to hiking and mountain biking trails, serving as a backbone to a larger trails network. Regional trails also provide non-motorized access to community centers and other developed areas as well as open space and other trails. Trails of this character offer a unique experience and purpose from the much more numerous hiking and mountain biking trails and class VI roads in the region.

## RTCC STUDY AREA

The RTCC region is not specifically defined, but is instead generally defined by the municipalities and trail groups that make up the RTCC. For the purposes of this plan, this general area extends from Concord through Manchester to Salem, with spurs to the east and west. The RTCC includes some non-participating communities on the map that the group feels have strong potential for regional trail development. This region aligns with the individual trails in the plan, and aligns with the study area for the Salem to Concord Bikeway Feasibility Study from 2003. It is likely the study area will be changed in future updates to the plan.



## PUBLIC INPUT

The basis for the plan consists of input from the local trail groups that make up the RTCC. Additional assistance and guidance for the plan comes from the Planning Commissions of both Central and Southern New Hampshire, as well as the NH Department of Transportation.

Please see the Recommendations and Implementation section to read about public outreach and community involvement in the future.

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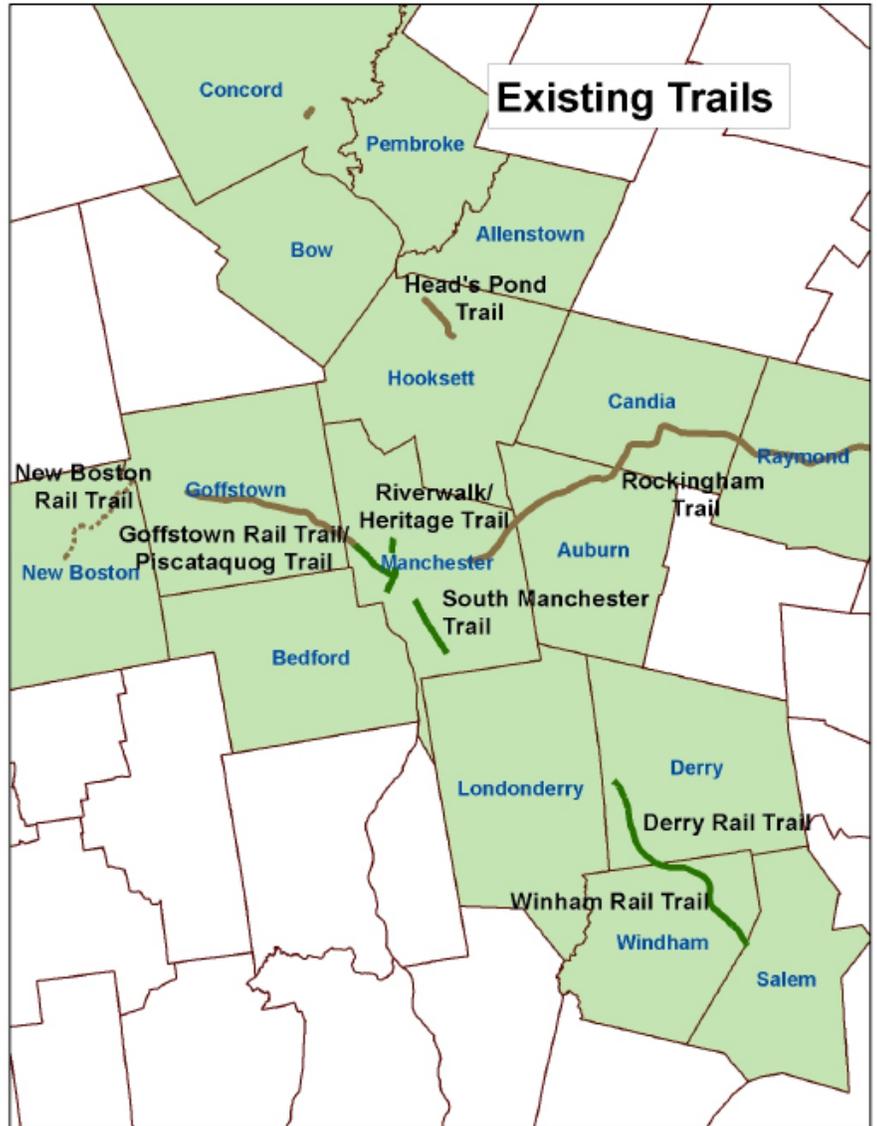
## EXISTING AND PLANNED TRAILS

### EXISTING TRAILS

As of 2012, the regional trails network is a patchwork of local trails that have not yet been connected. The longest paved trail includes the Windham and Derry Rail Trails with a continuous 8 miles of trail between the two towns. Manchester has three paved trails: the South Manchester Trail, the Piscataquog Trail, and the Riverwalk/Heritage Trail. These trails are no longer than two miles each in length, and not all connect. Unpaved trails include the Goffstown Rail Trail, and the Rockingham Trail, which is managed by DRED and continues to the Seacoast region of NH. The Head's Pond trail is a short trail with a smooth hard packed surface. This trail may someday become part of a Manchester to Concord connection.

Several small portions of trail exist in Concord, but do not merit individual mention here. Other trails in the region do not have formal access, or are not improved or accessible enough to serve a transportation purpose.

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



## PLANNED TRAIL SYSTEM



The RTCC and its participating bodies envision a regional trail network that consists of a trail serving as the “backbone” of the region from Salem to Concord as envisioned in the 2003 Salem to Concord Bikeway Study. This trail will connect to planned and existing trails in Methuen, Massachusetts, and connect to the planned extension of the Northern Rail Trail into Boscawen. This backbone Salem to Concord trail in combination with the Northern Rail Trail has been dubbed the “Granite State Rail Trail”, which will extend from Lebanon to the Methuen, MA line in Salem.

From the “Granite State Rail Trail” backbone, several branches will extend east and west. These spur trails will extend the reach of the trail system to additional communities.

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## **Salem to Manchester**

Trail groups have begun the work of connecting their trails with the successful connection of the Windham and Derry trails. Routes for further connections have been identified or are being identified. Trail groups plan to use the abandoned Manchester and Lawrence (M&L) railroad corridor used by Windham and Derry rail trails from Salem to downtown Manchester, as described in the Salem to Concord Feasibility Study in 2003. A major gap in this corridor exists at the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport, as a runway extension now extends across the former M&L.

## **Manchester to Concord**

A connection from Downtown Manchester to Concord is also planned. Along this route, the Head's Pond Trail in Hooksett is the only existing trail. A planned route has been identified for the northern half, but there is no planned route from downtown Manchester to the area of the Hooksett District Court. The logical route for a trail here would use the active railroad. A rail with trail scenario has been explored somewhat; however, administrative barriers may preclude trail development here. Possibilities for routing the trail further east using the Head's Pond trail are being explored.

## **Concord Northward**

The RTCC intends to connect to the Northern Rail Trail (NRT) in Boscawen. There are no abandoned railroad corridors available for use in Concord, and the local trail group intends to construct a trail from scratch in order to make this connection. A roughly drawn planned route has been identified by the Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail (FMRGT). This linkage to the NRT will complete a north-south connection from Methuen, MA to Lebanon, NH and possibly White River Junction, VT.

## **East-West Spurs**

The Rockingham Trail is a planned spur heading east from Manchester to the Seacoast. The Rockingham Trail is currently over 40 miles long; however, this trail ends in the outskirts of Manchester and does not reach downtown Manchester or connect to other trails. Manchester Moves is currently identifying a trail location to connect to the Rockingham Trail.

The Piscataquog and Goffstown Trails extend West from Manchester, and plans are underway for completing this connection. Further improvements to the now unpaved Goffstown Rail Trail are on-going.

The Rockingham Recreational Trail is an east-west running trail in Windham and Derry. There are no plans for improvement at this time; however these corridors should be maintained for future use.

### Bridges

There are several locations where bridges will be required over busy streets or waterways. A bridge over the Piscataquog River will connect the Piscataquog Trail to the Goffstown Rail Trail. Locations in Manchester at Queen City Ave, Londonderry at Mammoth Road and Rockingham Road, and Salem at Rockingham Park Blvd, and crossings of the Suncook, Soucook, and Merrimack Rivers are examples of locations that may require bridges.

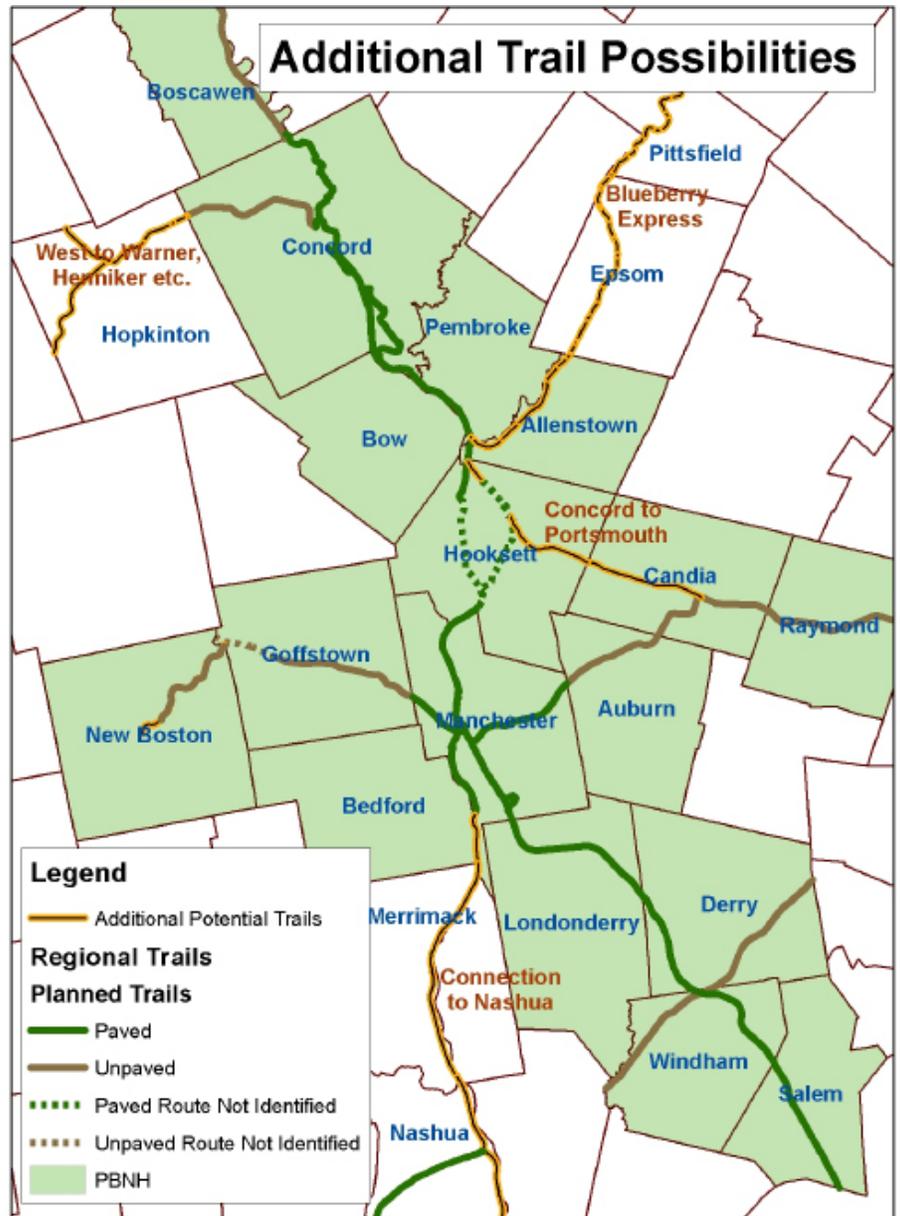
More details on the existing and planned trail system can be found in the Community Profiles in the Appendix.

### Planned Trail Surface and Character

The RTCC does not wish to dictate the character of trails in specific communities, but instead prefers for each community and trail group to determine specifics for its trail.

There is general agreement that a paved surface is highly desirable, especially in urban areas. Paved trails get more use from a wider variety of users than unpaved trails, and are also more suitable as transportation corridors.

It is agreed that a hard packed unpaved surface may be appropriate in remote rural areas where transportation use is less common. Unpaved trails should be developed and maintained to have a fairly smooth and packed surface to enable a wider variety of use than unimproved trails. Trails of this character offer a unique experience from the much more numerous hiking and mountain biking trails and class VI roads in the region.



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## INVENTORY OF ABANDONED RAILROAD CORRIDORS AND OTHER ROUTES

The RTCC recognizes the potential for additional trails in the region where there are currently no local trail groups to move the projects forward, or in places where the trail group is more focused on a primary target. The RTCC wishes to preserve these rights of way as much as possible and also act as a catalyst to bring new trail groups into action on new trails in their communities. A few examples of such locations include:

- A riverfront trail along the Merrimack River in Bedford, which could be continued south for a connection to Nashua. A trail here could have exceptional recreation and transportation value, and would be anchored by two large population centers.
- A trail along an abandoned railroad corridor from Suncook Village through Pittsfield and Barnstead, which once was the route for the “Blueberry Express” train.
- Development of a trail along the abandoned Portsmouth and Concord Railroad in Candia and Hooksett.
- Extension of the Goffstown Rail Trail on the abandoned corridor to connect to the developing New Boston Rail Trail.
- Development of the former Concord and Claremont Railroad through Hopkinton to Warner and beyond, or to Henniker and Hillsborough to the existing multi-use trail in Hillsborough and Deering.
- Further improvements to the Rockingham Recreational Trail east into Derry and beyond and west into Windham and beyond.



## PROJECT NEEDS LIST

The following is a table of needs and choke-points in the current trail system. Trail connections on the main trunk between the north and south points and hazardous crossings take priority. Next are the feeder trails that connect areas of population east and west of the main corridor. Finally, trail improvements and local access trails will be completed as funding and time allows.

Town	Project/Trail	Trail Group	Scope - Difficulty	Est \$ (K)	Funding Required	Funding source	ROW Req?	Status
Boscawen	Northern Rail Trail Extension from Franklin to Concord border	FNRT Merrimack	Low		Low	RTP	N	Received RTP/ continue RTP applications
Concord	MRGT- Downtown north to NRT	FOMRGT	High		High		Y	Non-profit org starting
Concord	MRGT- Downtown south to Salem-Concord Bikeway	FOMRGT	High		High		Y	Engineering, fund raising
Concord to Manchester	Pembroke Rail Trail on abandoned ROW	Informal group	Med/High		Moderate		Y	"use agreements" with private landowners/ early stages
Concord to Manchester	Allenstown Rail Trail on abandoned ROW	Informal group	Med/High		Moderate		Y	Getting a trail group organized
Concord to Manchester	Hooksett Rail Trail on abandoned ROW	Hooksett Kiwanis	Med/High		Moderate		Y	Getting a trail group organized
Concord to Manchester	Hooksett Trail to Manchester (Rail w Trail or other)	Hooksett Kiwanis	Very High		Very High, unknown		Y	Getting a trail group organized/ exploring routes
Manchester	Heritage Trail north to Hooksett	MM	Very High		Very High, unknown		Y	
Manchester	Heritage Trail south to Bedford	MM	?		?		?	
Manchester	Rockingham Trail - East of Elliot Hospital	MM	Moderate		Moderate		N?	
Manchester	Rockingham Trail - West of Elliot Hospital to Downtown	MM	High?		High?		Y?	

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## PROJECT NEEDS LIST (CONTINUED)

Manchester	Piscataquog Trail- Maintain and promote existing	MM	Low		Low		N	
Manchester	Piscataquog Trail - Extend to Goffstown	MM	Moderate		Moderate		N	
Manchester/ Londonderry	South Manchester Trail (maintenance and continuation N/S)	MM	Moderate		Med/High (bridge over Queen City Ave)		N	
Goffstown	Goffstown RT- Construct finished surface on inimproved sections	FOGRT	Low		Moderate		N	
Goffstown	Goffstown RT- Repair slope and culvert failures	FOGRT	Moderate		Moderate		N	
Goffstown	Goffstown Rail Trail- Maintain and improve existing	FOGRT	Low/Mod		Low/Mod		N	
New Boston	Rail Trail in New Boston, eventually connecting to Goffstown RT	Formative						Fund Raising
Bedford	Heritage Trail along Merrimack River							
Londonderry/ Manchester	Airport Bypass	Londonderry Trailways	Very High		Very High, unknown		Y	
Londonderry	Londonderry Rail Trail	Londonderry Trailways	Moderate		Moderate to high (bridge?)		Y(part)	
Derry	Derry Rail Trail - Maintain and promote existing	DRTA	Low		Low		na	
Derry	Derry Rail Trail - Extend to Londonderry	DRTA	Moderate		Moderate		Y (part)	
Windham	Windham Rail Trail - Maintain and promote existing	WRTA	Low		Low		na	
Windham	Windham Rail Trail - Extend Development/ pavement to Salem	WRTA	Moderate	170	Moderate	TE/ Soft match	N	Clearing/ drainage ASAP
Windham	Windham Rail Trail - Mallard Rd access	WRTA	Low	10	Low	Private	N	Paving completed 2012

**PROJECT NEEDS LIST (CONTINUED)**

Windham	Windham Rail Trail - Rt 28 parking lot access to trail	WRTA	Low	20	Low	Private	N	
Windham	Rockingham Recreational Trail improvements?	WRTA	Low		TBD	TBD	N	
Salem	Salem Bike-Ped Corridor	Salem Bike-Ped	Moderate		Moderate		N?	
Salem	Bridge over Rockingham Park Blvd	Salem Bike-Ped	High		High		?	

**TRAIL FUNDING**

A variety of funding sources exist at the local, regional, state, and federal levels. Most trail projects described in this plan will require significant funds from a variety of sources. Most existing trails have used Federal Transportation dollars and developing trails will likely use these funds as well. In the past, this has taken the form of Transportation Enhancements (TE), Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) or Recreational Trails Program (RTP), all of which require a 20% local match. As of late 2012, a new transportation bill combines funding sources into Transportation Alternatives (TA) of which RTP is a part. RTP will continue to be managed by the Department of Economic Development (DRED), and TA through the Department of Transportation.

Funding levels in this new transportation legislation, MAP-21, are significantly lower than under the previous legislation. In addition, these reduced funds may be directed elsewhere if the State so chooses. As a result, there will be even more competition for funding for non-motorized trail use in the foreseeable future. Trail construction may need to rely even more on non-federal dollars than in years past.

At the time of this writing, it is too early to discuss details of TA as details are yet to be determined.

There are a number of funding and fund-raising options outside of federal funding. It takes some research to determine which funding sources are appropriate for each trail, depending on any specific goals of the grants and the amounts of funding that need to be raised. For most projects in the RTCC region, significant amounts of fund raising are required simply to provide match money for federal projects. The following three websites provide a primer on trail funding, and links to resources and ideas. As mentioned in the Rails-to-Trails website, funding often takes considerable ingenuity and research; informal funding ideas such as partnerships, events, and volunteer opportunities are also discussed.

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<http://www.americantrails.org/resources/funding/Funding.html>

[http://www.railstotrails.org/ourwork/trailbuilding/toolbox/informationsummaries/funding\\_financing.html](http://www.railstotrails.org/ourwork/trailbuilding/toolbox/informationsummaries/funding_financing.html)

[http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/resource\\_docs/tgc\\_secrets.pdf](http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/resource_docs/tgc_secrets.pdf)

An alternative to trail funding is to construct trails through volunteer time and labor, or as part of larger projects. The Windham Rail Trail, as an example, was begun by the developer of an adjacent housing development who recognized the value of a trail to his development. There may be opportunities for trails to be constructed as part of commercial, residential, or mixed use development. Given the benefits of trails, it is very possible developers will be amenable to the idea.

Ensuring ongoing funding for proper maintenance can be a challenge. Building the trail is just the beginning. Keeping it in good condition is a permanent job. Costs can be defrayed with the use of volunteers and donated materials. Municipal public works departments often contribute significantly to trail maintenance.

*Building the trail is just the beginning.  
Keeping it in good shape is a permanent job.*  
-Chris Gamache, NH Bureau of Trails, NHDRED-

## MAINTENANCE AND USER COUNTS

### MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

There are multiple models of trail maintenance and management, and ownership. Most trails in the RTCC Region are municipally owned and maintained; however, volunteer trail groups typically assist with trail maintenance. In cases where the trail is state owned, the State of NH through the Department of Economic Development and Resources (DRED) maintains the trail, again with assistance from the local groups.

Generally, volunteer trail groups create a formal agreement with the owners of the trail, whether that is the state or the city that outlines who is responsible for what tasks and allows volunteer groups to work on the trails. Typically, smaller items, such as: trash removal, removing fallen brush and graffiti removal, are most often done by the local trail group. More involved repairs, such as mowing, fallen trees, repaving, and fixing washouts are usually done by the town or state. Snow removal is not an issue because most trails in the region do not clear their paths during the winter months.



In the case of the Rockingham Trail and the Northern Rail Trail, both are owned and maintained by the State through DRED and local groups and snowmobile clubs assist with maintenance. Additional amenities such as signage are often done by local groups.

Water drainage is perhaps one of the most important design elements to consider for trails. Insufficient drainage can lead to erosion, washouts, and other costly regular maintenance issues. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials has a guide that can be referenced for best practices: <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/engineering/paths-details.cfm>

Fallen trees and brush is another common maintenance issue. During storm events brush and tree limbs may fall into the trail. Regular trimming and tree care along a trail can help reduce the amount of debris or severity of fallen tree occurrences on a trail. Sweeping the trail of dirt and gravel that trail users can slip on is important for trail safety.

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## ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE (ATV) ENFORCEMENT

While most trails are often self-policing in regard to illegal ATV use, enforcement is important in some cases. Both DRED and the local police departments help with enforcement in the RTCC region. Enforcement is particularly important early in the establishment of a trail, in more remote rural areas, and in a few isolated cases where there may be only one or two local violators. Illegal ATV use has generally not been an issue on urban trails.

## TRAIL USER COUNTS

Collecting trail user counts is a difficult task that can be automated or done manually.

Automated trail counting techniques can be expensive and each type of automated counter has serious flaws. It is difficult for an automated counter to get accurate counts of bicycles, pedestrians, and other users.

Automated bicycle and pedestrian counters vary in type. A popular method uses heat detection or another method that notifies the counter if something has passed the trail. These counters typically under-count due to people walking/bicycling side by side, and cannot distinguish between bicycles and pedestrians. Pneumatic tubes can be used to count bicycles, but these do not count pedestrians and can be a tripping hazard. Video recording methods are often time intensive or expensive, and depending on the type can raise privacy concerns. If used properly, these methods can produce valuable trail count data. There are currently no bike-ped specific counters in use in New Hampshire, partly because of these flaws as well as the cost.

Manual counts appear to be the most likely solution to getting accurate trail user counts. Very few counts have been conducted, and many are informal and without specific guidelines. As a result, this data has very limited value to planners. It is recommended that trail groups adopt a similar method for counting users in order to compare usage by location and by year.

Manual trail counts are typically conducted by volunteers with a pen and paper or a counting device. Counts should cover an entire day if enough volunteers are available, but it is more likely counters will need to take samples of different time periods of the day. Counts typically occur on weekdays for 2-5 hours in the morning during typical commuter times, and an additional 2-5 hours during evening commute times. Counts should be conducted in good weather (no precipitation and comfortable temperatures) preferably on a Tuesday through Thursday. Weekend count data should be kept separately.

Counters typically count bicycles and pedestrians separately, with other trail users being counted as deemed fit. The preferred time of year for conducting the counts is May, when school is still in session, and trail users are out for the spring season.

## OUTREACH AND MARKETING

The intent of connecting the trails is to increase their utility as a transportation corridor and its value as a recreational amenity. It will not be able to do this if people do not know it exists. Generating publicity for the trails will be important in building support for the trails. The resources and recommendations in this section will help build publicity for the GSRT through outreach events and physical promotional tools. A combination of both provides the best mix to reach a wide audience of potential trail users.

### BEST PRACTICES - HOW DO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS PROMOTE THEIR TRAILS?

The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy has a publication that outlines steps that should be taken when attempting to convert a railway into a trail.<sup>1</sup> A large part of this process includes how to raise awareness and build buy-in to the idea on both the community level and the government level. Below are some strategies the document recommends for trail advocates, followed by resources and lists of marketing ideas.

#### **Engage and inform community organizations about the GSRT effort.**

- **Give talks or presentations to community groups**
- **Set up resource tables at community events (brochures, surveys, etc.)**
- **Hold informative meetings at town hall or in a central location**
- **Meet with individual non-profit groups with an interest in the trail**

#### **Share the GSRT vision with officials and ask for letters of endorsement.**

- **Local parks and rec departments**
- **City, county, state departments**
- **Mayor, city councils, governor**
- **State department of natural resources**
- **City or county council members, state legislature or US Congress representatives**
- **The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy**

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1 [http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/resource\\_docs/tgc\\_secrets.pdf](http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/resource_docs/tgc_secrets.pdf)

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## WAYS TO REACH THE COMMUNITY:

Distribute flyers, posters, or brochures

- Everywhere in your community, along your trail, in shops downtown, chambers of commerce, library, and businesses near the route, schools, and community centers (YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Girls, Inc.).

Online

- Build a GSRT website, GSRT Facebook page, individual trail social media pages and websites, NH Department of Resources and Economic Development website, chambers of commerce websites, StayWorkPlay NH, etc.

Community Groups to connect with for presentations

- Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce events and office, Welcome Centers, PTAs, Garden Clubs, etc.

Community events to have a reference table

- Peoplefest, farmers markets, fairs, Old Home Days, festivals, etc.

Potential community trail allies

- Businesses or offices near the route (maybe they want to start a walking group, offer specials to people using the trail one day, participate in bike to work week, begin a green commute program, etc.)
- Those focusing on environmental, active living, recreation, youth, senior, people with disabilities or livable community issues
- Educators (high school and college professors in history, land scape architecture, land use planning, ecology and botany)

Event and programs Ideas for publicity

- Trail Count Days
- Trail Clean Up Days
- Family Trail Days - Family oriented events/activities/games
- Host community events on the trail - craft shows, charity or fundraising races
- Host a design competition - art on the trail (get public art onto the trail) or art from the trail (paintings, photos, etc. inspired by the trails)
- Encourage running clubs and exercise groups to use the trail
- Celebrate National Trails Day June 2

## ACTION PLAN

The following Goals, Objectives, and Tasks are intended to translate the RTCC's vision into results on the ground. To execute all the tasks identified below will require significant time, money, engineering, permitting, and actions by state and local government. Therefore, the RTCC has established the following Goals, Objectives and Tasks in priority order and has divided them into five categories to be pursued in parallel:

### **A) Trail Awareness, Marketing, and Public Support**

### **B) Trail Planning and Engineering**

### **C) Trail Establishment**

### **D) Trail Funding**

### **E) Regional Cooperation and Organization**

The RTCC should continually work to implement these recommendations and identify the appropriate individuals and organizations to take on each action item. Suggested Implementers are in parentheses.

## **A) Trail Awareness, Marketing & Public Support**

- o Develop a GSRT Logo (Entire RTCC)
  - Coordinate with and provide feedback to NHIA
  - Involve New Hampshire Rail Trail Coalition
- o Work with NHRTC to develop cohesive GSRT trailhead and trail signage (Entire RTCC or subcommittee)
- o Develop GSRT Promotional Materials (NHRTC and RTCC)
  - Determine material types (Facebook, website, maps, signs, t-shirts, brochures etc.)
  - Work on a regional trails website
- o Create a Public Relations Subcommittee (RTCC)
  - Press Releases
  - Organizing events
- o Develop a quarterly/bi-annual newsletter

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- o Encourage communities to adopt a trail section in their master plan if they don't already have one; strengthen and update existing trail sections of master plans (Local Trail Groups with assistance from RTCC)
- o Implement a trail user count program as described in this plan (RTCC, NHRTC, RPCs)

## **B)** Trail Planning & Engineering

- o Support "corridor" planning studies for sections of trails that do not have a well-defined "rail corridor". These would include identification of alternative routes, preliminary engineering for prime routes, cost estimates, and preliminary discussions with property owners (where needed) on feasibility of acquiring easements. These would be especially helpful in sections of high difficulty.
- o Corridor studies are recommended for the following locations:
  - Hooksett from Manchester line to Hooksett Village
  - Manchester:
    - North Manchester from Millyard to Hooksett
    - End of South Manchester rail trail to riverwalk
    - Around the airport runway 6/24 extension
  - Various locations in Concord
- o Easement access corridors- in certain instances, former rail lines are well defined but have been sold to private interests. Funding may be required to establish procedures for negotiating easements, legal fees, and surveying as may be required, as well as funding for acquiring easements as needed.
- o Likely locations for easement corridors:
  - Pembroke
  - Allenstown
  - Hooksett - north of the village
  - Londonderry - 2 sections, including Woodmont Orchards
  - Derry - north of Broadway
  - Concord - Garvin's Falls, other areas where trail pre-dates commercial development
- o Recommendation: provide guidance to groups on how to acquire rights of way

**C) Trail Establishment**

- Complete the Granite State Rail Trail (GSRT) from the Massachusetts border to the terminus of the Northern Rail Trail. This is intended to be a single, uninterrupted trail that follows rail beds over most of its course, with exceptions being made where a continuous rail right of way is not available.
- Complete the following Linking Trails. These trails are designed to link population centers to the GSRT and to link the GSRT to local trail networks and centers of both recreation and commerce.
  - The Rockingham Recreation Trail east towards the seacoast
  - The Goffstown Rail Trail into Goffstown and on to New Boston to the west
- Further build out local trail networks. These trails will connect to the Linking Trails and will, ideally, allow local residents to access any part of their town from any other part as well as access to natural areas. The role of the RTCC under this goal is limited to ensuring that the local networks are linked to adjoining networks.

**D) Trail Funding - Funding for the project will have to come from a variety of sources**

- o Federal/State
  - Ensuring that there are applications from the region for each funding opportunity (Entire RTCC)
  - Advocacy for continued funding at both the state and federal level
  - Early communication between communities on funding applications to ensure that they are aware of potential competing applications (local trail groups through the RTCC, NHRTC)
  - Encourage competing trail projects in the region to provide “mutual support” for applications (Local trail groups, RTCC)
  - The RTCC should consider writing letters of support for all trail project applications in the region (RTCC would authorize the chair to write letters)
- o Private and Foundation funding for match and special projects
  - Develop a database of potential funding sources, particularly foundations
  - Potential business or foundation support for a “regional” fund for trails, including planning and engineering (NH Charitable Foundation or big business sponsor, i.e. Timberland)

# Regional Trails Plan 2012

## **E)** Regional Trail Cooperation & Organization

- o Continue to improve on RTCC functions as they exist today
- o RTCC should retain its regional focus
- o RTCC should retain existing connections with the statewide New Hampshire Rail Trail Coalition
- o Trail groups/towns should apply for grants/corridor studies as a group when appropriate, using the RTCC to help with coordination
- o The RTCC should further engage the DOT
- o Search for opportunities to engage other parties such as DRED or SPNHF
- o Explore avenues that may bring a bigger role to the organization
- o Consider longer-term structural changes to the RTCC, including possible 501c3 status or hiring a part-time staff person/fundraising coordinator
- o Reach out to neighboring communities to incubate connecting trail projects

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## APPENDIX I

### REGIONAL TRAILS COORDINATING COUNCIL

#### VISION STATEMENT

The coordinated development of our communities' trail networks will create a safe, secure, efficient and appealing trail system that will enhance recreation and non-motorized modes of transportation throughout the region. The systematic connectivity of the trails network will improve quality of life and community health, provide transportation choices, enhance the sense of community for residents, and attract visitors from around the region and out of state, resulting in social, environmental and economic benefits for local communities and the state.

#### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Regional Trails Coordinating Council is to develop and assist in the implementation of a comprehensive regional trail plan. The Regional Trails Coordinating Council will:

1. Provide a forum for cooperation and collaboration among both governmental and non-governmental organizations;
2. Develop consensus on priorities for regional trails development;
3. Act as an information clearing house for regional trails stakeholders;
4. Identify and pursue sources of funding;
5. Promote awareness of existing and developing trails.

#### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the Regional Trails Coordinating Council is to assist member organizations in the development and implementation of a comprehensive trail plan. The Regional Trails Coordinating Council strives to connect existing and planned trail networks in the region by providing a forum for cooperation and collaboration among trail organizations. The Regional Trails Coordinating Council also serves as an information clearinghouse for regional trails stakeholders. Goals of the Regional Trails Coordinating Council include, but are not limited to the following:

- Assist in the development of individual trails to form a continuous network in the southern and central regions of the State of NH;
- Develop maps of the region's trail network, including completed as well as planned and missing segments, and their conditions;
- Identify and assist in obtaining available public funding (state, federal, etc.) for trail use;
- Identify and assist organizations in obtaining available private funding;
- Identify and prioritize trail segment development tasks;

## As Adopted 1/10/2013

- Provide forums and events to educate the public as to the importance of non-motorized multi-use trails in the health and quality of life of the regions;
- Combine and augment the passion of volunteer groups and the power of regional planning commissions to achieve common missions and values to accomplish common goals while, as necessary, overlapping jurisdictional boundaries.

## APPENDIX II: Resources and Contacts

Technical Assistance in Rails-to-Trails Conversions and Trail Development

Lelia Mellen

National Parks Service, Rivers and Trails Program

NH/VT Field Office

802 457-3368 x 14

[www.nps.gov/rtca](http://www.nps.gov/rtca)

Rails to Trails Conservancy <http://www.railstotrails.org>

Physical Trail Work Assistance

Army National Guard

State Conservation Corps

Student Conservation Corps

Local volunteer organizations

## APPENDIX III: Community Profiles

These community profiles explain in detail the trail plans each individual municipality and trail group has for its trails. Community profiles have been developed for all communities the RTCC feels play a significant role in the planning of a regional trails system.

Definition of trail categories:

- Paved: Completed trails
- Unpaved Improved Trails: These trails have been upgraded with a smoother hardpack surface. Some trail groups consider a trail done at this point, others who wish to pave their trails consider them partially completed.
- Undeveloped/Unimproved Trail: These are places where you can find and walk on the abandoned railroad corridor where the trail will be, but there are no improvements and the trail is probably not officially a trail yet. They may or may not be open to the public.
- Abandoned Corridor: These are abandoned railroad corridors that are out there but are not being used. They are on the map to show what future options for expanding the trail system might be. Little data has been collected on these trails and may not even encompass all of what exists. Most are in private ownership.
- Encroachment Locations: Places where something has been built on top of the rail and a trail route around is needed. (Example: The Manchester Regional Airport)
- Potential Trail/Proposed Route: Areas where the trail group has identified where they want the trail to go, but there is no existing trail and it is not a railroad bed. These are not technically rail trails.
- Active Rail: Corridor still being utilized.
- Potential Rail with Trail: In sections where the rail is active, there is an option to have a trail next to the rail separated by a fence. This has been done in the Lakes Region and in other parts of the country. The DOT and the railroad companies do not like this due to liability, but anecdotal evidence shows it is fairly safe. The RPC's could help facilitate this discussion if needed.

## ALLENSTOWN

Allenstown Summary of Current Conditions	
Trail Name	Unknown
Paved Trail	0 miles
Unpaved Improved Surface	0 miles
Unimproved Trail	.8 miles
Additional Miles Planned	.8 miles
Total Miles Completed	0 miles
Total Miles Planned	.8 miles
<b>Trail Group Information</b>	
Trail Group Name	Informal Group
Trail Group Website	NA
Contact Person	Craig Tufts
Contact Information	ctufts@cnhrpc.org
Trails included in Master Plan?	No
Primary Challenges	Organization, trail rights of way, funding
Current/Potential Funding Sources?	Private, volunteer work, RTP, TA

### The Trails:

The proposed piece of the Granite State Rail Trail (GSRT) that passes through Allenstown is a .8 mile abandoned railroad bed privately owned by one owner. There appears to be no significant physical hurdle to trail construction along this route, except for a bridge or possibly two over the Suncook River at the Pembroke border, and a possible bridge over a canal. It may be possible to use a nearby commercial driveway bridge over the canal.

The "Blueberry Express" or "Suncook Valley Rail Trail" would use an abandoned railroad bed that heads from Suncook Village in Allenstown up through Epsom, Pittsfield, and finally Barnstead. Portions of this trail have been destroyed from the expansion of Route 28 and other developments, while other segments are in use as snowmobile trails. There are no current plans to improve this stretch in Allenstown; however, there is interest further north in Pittsfield.

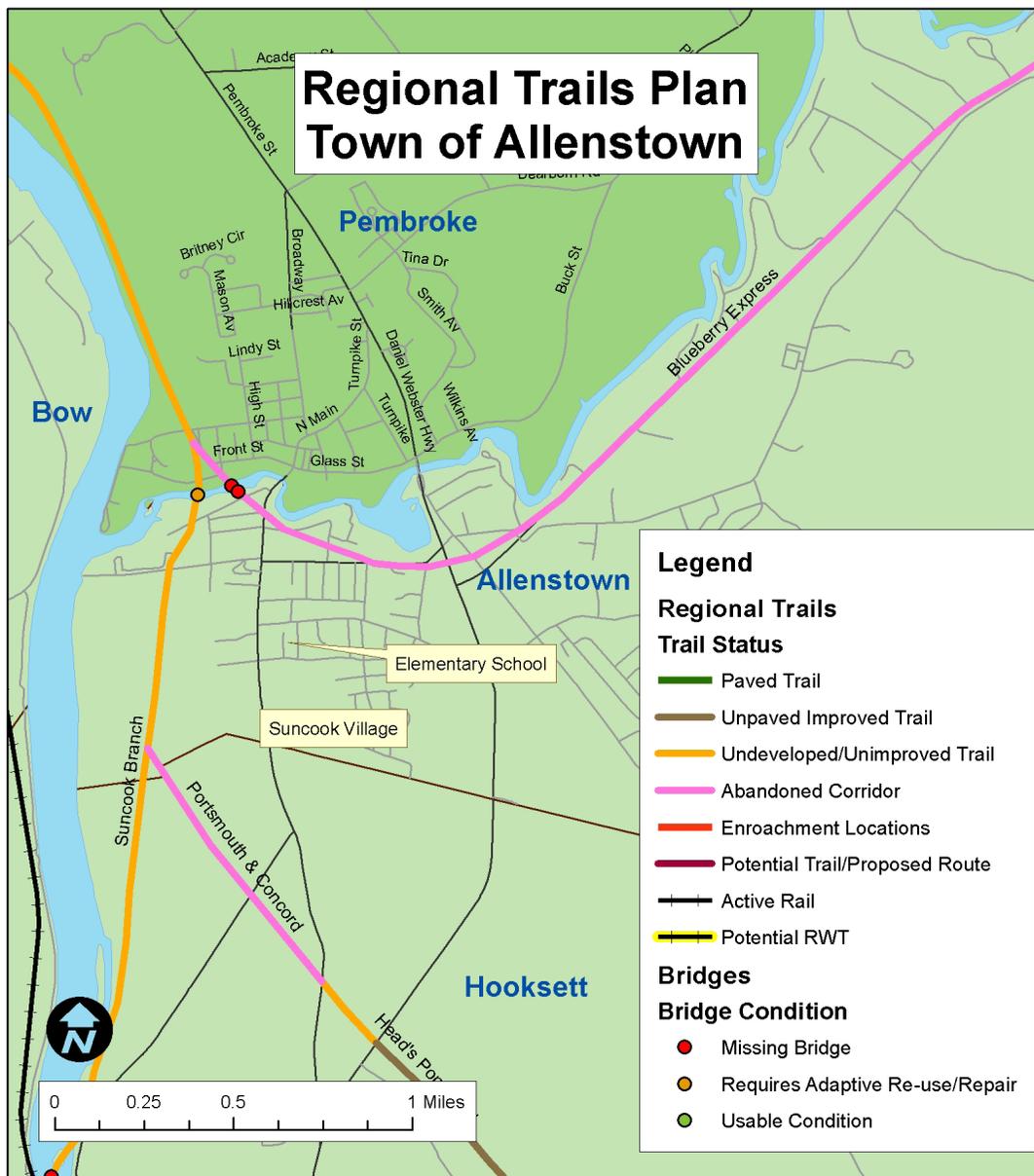
# As Adopted 1/10/2013

## Trail Group:

There is currently no trail group in Allenstown, and only one or two interested residents identified thus far. Slow progress is being made by residents of Pembroke and Hooksett who want to make a Manchester-Concord connection. Trail efforts have historically been difficult in Allenstown due to the lack of a conservation commission, as half of the town is Bear Brook State Park.

## Municipal Assistance:

There has been little to no discussion regarding the trail with Allenstown officials.



## CONCORD

Concord Summary of Current Conditions		
Trail Name	Merrimack River Greenway Trail	Concord-Claremont
Paved Trail	0 miles	0
Unpaved Improved Surface	0	0
Unimproved Trail	2+-	4
Additional Miles Planned	14+	0
Total Miles Completed	0	4
Total Miles Planned	14+	0
<b>Trail Group Information</b>		
Trail Group Name	Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail	
Trail Group Website	<a href="http://www.mrgt.org/">http://www.mrgt.org/</a>	
Contact Person	Dick Lemieux	
Contact Information	info@mrgt.org	
Trails included in Master Plan?	Yes	
Primary Challenges	Funding, Right-of-Way	
Current/Potential Funding Sources?	Private, RTP, TA	

### Discussion

#### The Trails:

Concord is a critical link connecting the Northern Rail Trail that will end in Boscawen to the north and the Salem-to Concord Bikeway from Pembroke to the south. The Merrimack River Greenway Trail (MRGT) is intended to make this connection. There is also an abandoned railroad corridor in the northwest part of Concord that is unimproved and currently being used for recreation. There are no plans to improve this corridor at this time.

- 1.) The MRGT: Concord does not have access to abandoned railroad lines for this trail, so a planned route had to be mapped out from scratch. The proposed route roughly follows the Merrimack River. The exact trail location is in flux, and will be determined as the project moves forward. Property ownership of the proposed route varies from city, state, and private ownership. The first phase of the trail will be from Manchester Street to Loudon Road, and will serve as a stand-alone project with a boardwalk over wetlands before additional phases connect it to a larger trail system. The MRGT is a long term project, which compared to other trails in the region is relatively costly due to the lack of available railroad corridor.

- 2.) Concord to Claremont: This is an abandoned corridor to the west of the MRGT that extends to Contoocook Village in Hopkinton. This trail is currently being used for off-road recreational purposes, but there are no plans for improving this corridor in the immediate future. The City of Concord and FOMRGT hope to keep this corridor intact for current and future trail use.

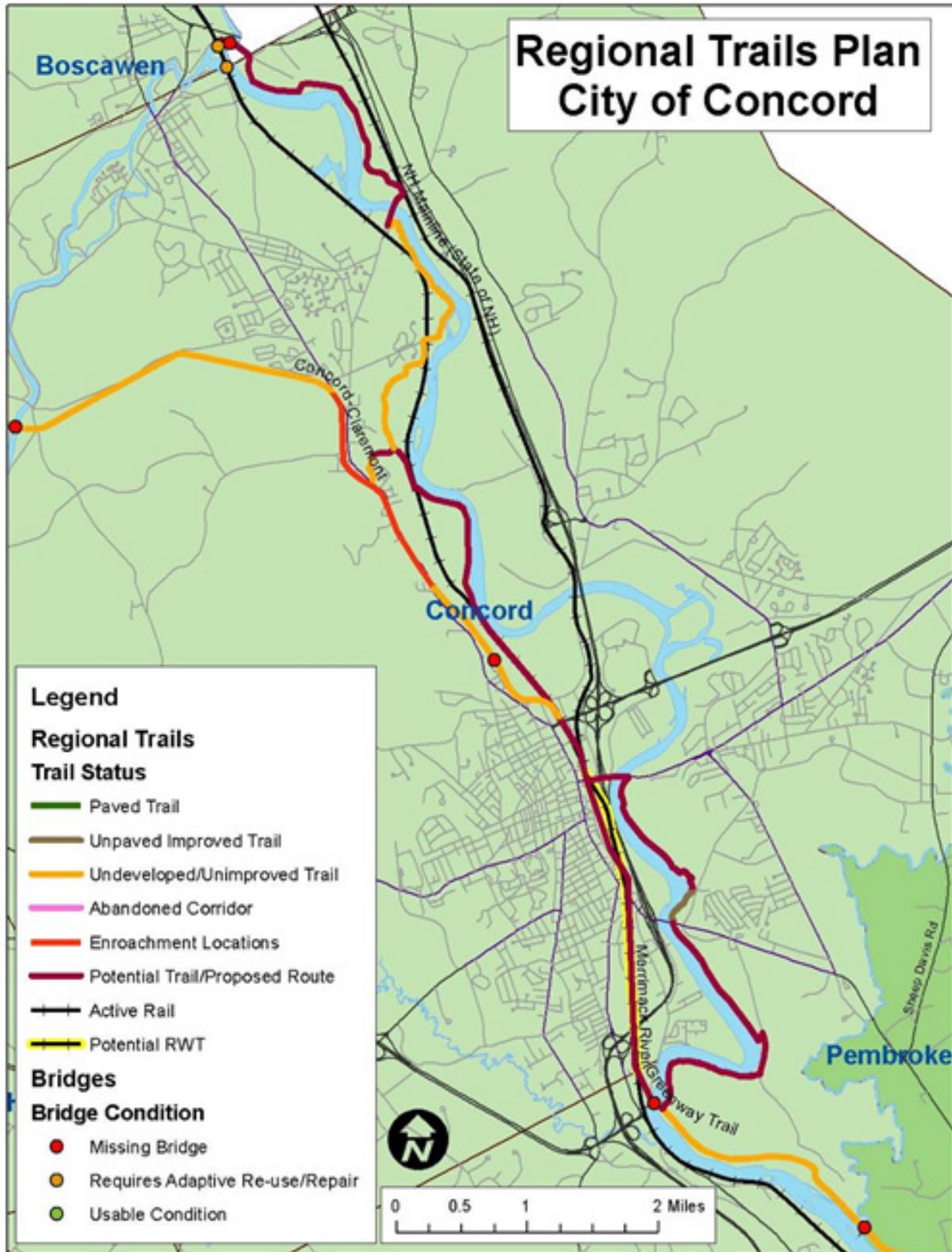
### The Trail Group:

The Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail (FOMRGT) are a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization. There is a board of directors of approximately 10 members who meet monthly, with several working subcommittees that meet monthly.

### Municipal Assistance:

The FOMRGT works closely with Concord City Staff on planning the trail. The City officially supports the project and dedicates limited staff time toward the project. Concord City Council has authorized staff to apply for funds for the trail, but has not committed any city funds for the project.

# Regional Trails Plan 2012



# DERRY

Summary of Current Conditions		
Trail Name	Derry Rail Trail (Salem to Concord line)	Rockingham Recreational Trail
Paved Trail	3.7 miles	0 miles
Unpaved Improved Surface	0 miles	0 miles
Unimproved Trail	0 miles	6 miles
Additional Miles Planned	0.7 miles	0 miles
Total Miles Completed	3.7 miles	6 miles
Total Miles Planned	4.4 miles	6 miles
<b>Trail Group Information</b>		
Trail Group Name	Derry Trail Alliance	
Trail Group Website	<a href="http://www.derryrailtrail.org/">http://www.derryrailtrail.org/</a>	
Contact Person	Erich Whitney, President	
Contact Information	info@derryrailtrail.org	
Trails included in Master Plan?	Yes	
Primary Challenges	Funding, Maintenance, Remaining ROW sold to private developer	
Current/Potential Funding Sources?	Private Fundraising, Grants, Land Developer	

**The Trails:**

Local Trail Group: Derry Rail Trail Alliance

Trails included in Master Plan: Yes

Primary Challenges: Funding, upkeep

**Discussion:**

**The Trails:**

Derry Rail Trail: The Derry Rail Trail is a nearly completed stretch of paved trail along the abandoned Manchester and Lawrence railroad corridor. To the south, the trail is connected to the Windham Rail Trail, forming the longest continuous stretch of paved trail between Salem and Concord. Beginning at Windham Depot, the trail parallels Interstate 93, running north for 3.2 miles before arriving in downtown Derry. After passing through Derry Depot, the paved trail continues north for another half mile before reaching its terminus at Hoods Pond. The final 0.7 miles to the Londonderry town line are undeveloped, though the trail remains traversable for hikers and mountain bikers.

# Regional Trails Plan 2012

## Rockingham Recreation Trail:

This trail is a section of the Windham to Fremont trail, which in turn is but one branch of the larger Rockingham Trail system, which stretches all the way to the seacoast. The Derry section begins at Windham Depot, intersecting the Derry Rail Trail before heading northeast for 3.7 miles, at which point it reaches the Hampstead town line. The trail bed is unpaved, but its hard-packed surface allows the passage of hikers, mountain bikers, and ATVs.

## The Trail Group:

The Derry Rail Trail Alliance (DRTA) was formed in 2007 and is composed of seven full-time members. The group is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization and is officially registered with the state of New Hampshire. The DRTA focuses exclusively on constructing the Derry Rail Trail, and upkeep of the Rockingham Recreational Trail is handled by other sources.

## Municipal Assistance:

In early 2008, the Derry Town Council arranged public hearings on the proposed rail trail route, and in March, the Council awarded the DRTA with \$225,000 for construction, provided the group raise \$150,000 in matching funds. Later in 2008 and 2009, the DRTA received funds from the Alexander Eastman Foundation, the New England Grassroots Environmental Fund, Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare, Bikes Belong, the Granite State Wheelmen, and the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development.

In May 2009, the Town Council voted to begin Phase 1 construction from Kendall Pond to Bowers Road. The following June, \$1.27 million in Transportation Enhancement funds was awarded for Phase 2 construction, which was completed in November 2011. During this time, the DRTA has worked with the Town of Derry and local civic groups to arrange several trail cleanup days, Bike-a-Thons, and fundraising drives.

## Future Goals:

1. It will be part of the Salem to Concord Bike Path
2. It will connect all of the B&M M&L rail corridor: Lawrence, Methuen, Salem, Windham, Derry, Londonderry, Manchester and connecting with other trails to Concord, Goffstown, and Hooksett.
3. In Derry it will be rural, forested, and paved.
4. In total, there will be approximately 5 miles in Derry and 20+ miles from Salem to Manchester.

## Upcoming Projects

Goal: Expand pocket park, add more benches, signs, and improve existing bike path, establish ongoing maintenance program with community volunteers.

Timeline: 2012-2013

Next Action Steps: Add more members, fundraising, work with the town

Person/Group Responsible: DRTA and Town of Derry

Goal: Extend trail through the Woodmont Development Project to Londonderry

Timeline: Unknown—depends on actions taken by the Woodmont developer

Next Action Steps: Negotiate with Developer and Town of Derry

Person/Group Responsible: DRTA, Town of Derry



## GOFFSTOWN

Summary of Current Conditions	
Trail Name	Goffstown Rail Trail
Paved Trail	0.4 miles
Unpaved Improved Surface	5.5 miles
Unimproved Trail	3 miles
Additional Miles Planned	0.6 miles
Total Miles Completed	1.5 miles
Total Miles Planned	5.5 miles
<b>Trail Group Information</b>	
Trail Group Name	Friends of the Goffstown Rail Trail
Trail Group Website	<a href="http://www.GoffstownRailTrail.org/">http://www.GoffstownRailTrail.org/</a>
Contact Person	Lowell Von Ruden
Contact Information	info@GoffstownRailTrail.org
Trails included in Master Plan?	Yes
Primary Challenges	Funding, missing bridge, Mast Road crossings, erosion damage
Current/Potential Funding Sources?	RTP, TE, town, FGRT

### The Trails:

The Goffstown Rail Trail is a partially completed trail that follows the former Boston & Maine railroad corridor 5.5 miles from the Piscataquog River in Goffstown Village, to the Manchester city line, where it connects to Manchester's Piscataquog Trail. It runs roughly parallel to Mast Road and the Piscataquog River. The trail corridor was purchased by the town of Goffstown from the Boston and Maine Railroad in 2004. The first construction project on the trail was completed in 2008. Currently, the trail is open to the public and improved portions are surfaced with "nitpack" gravel, which allows the passage of pedestrians and mountain or hybrid bikes, but is difficult for road bikes.

Beginning at the Manchester town line in the Pinardville section of Goffstown, the rail trail follows a strip of land between Route 114A/114 and the Piscataquog River for approximately 2.3 miles. Pending trail reconstruction west of Henry Bridge Road forces a brief detour onto Route 114, after which the trail resumes for another 3 miles, passing Glen Lake and Goffstown Parks & Rec before arriving at Goffstown Village Center.

Current trail plans end at the Piscataquog River. There is potential for the trail to eventually pass through the village center, and reach the town of New Boston via the New Boston Rail Trail. However, land encroachment issues make such a passage difficult to achieve.

### The Trail Group:

The Friends of the Goffstown Rail Trail was incorporated in 2001. The group began holding trail cleanup sessions in 2003. The FGRT was selected to receive technical assistance from the National Park Service from 2006 to 2008. In 2009, the group was awarded 501(c)(3) federal tax-exempt status. The FGRT works with town departments and officials on grant applications, trail standards and maintenance. Additionally, the FGRT performs its own trail improvement projects, and promotes trail advocacy. Boy Scout Eagle projects on the trail are also coordinated by the FGRT. In 2011, the FGRT was named "Volunteer Organization of the Year" by the Goffstown Board of Selectmen, and in February 2012, it received the Robinson / Cullerot Volunteer Award from the Goffstown Parks & Recreation Commission.

### Municipal Assistance:

In 2001, the citizens of Goffstown authorized the town to spend \$390,000 for property acquisition, master plan development, and a trail study. Three years later, the rail corridor was purchased and a town Rail Trail Steering Committee was formed. In 2007, the town commissioned a full trail corridor survey and engineering design study. The Friends of the Goffstown Rail Trail helped the town to secure five NH Recreational Trails Program Grants between 2007 and 2011, allowing initial construction to proceed. In 2010, the town was selected to receive Transportation Enhancement (TE) funding for three major road crossings and a bridge replacement, construction of which is expected to begin in 2013.

### Future Goals:

The Town and the Friends of the Goffstown Rail Trail are working to transform a 5.5-mile-long abandoned railroad corridor into a multi-use trail. Multi-use will include pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchairs, baby carriages, skiers and snowshoe users, but no motorized vehicles. This project will transform not just a strip of land, but the community itself as described below.

- The trail corridor is 5.5 miles long, occupies 66 acres of town-owned land, and is within one-half mile (a ten-minute walk) via public roads of:
  - Five public facilities (Town Hall, Library, Police Station, County Administrative Complex, Post Office)
  - Four schools (Goffstown High School, Villa Augustina, Maple Avenue Elementary, Bartlett Elementary)
  - Numerous businesses (including over a dozen for dining or buying snacks)
- It connects five recreation areas:
  - Goffstown High School
  - Barnard Park
  - Little League Fields at the Villa Augustina School
  - Parks & Recreation Center
  - Sarette Recreation Complex
- The trail corridor borders Glen and Namaske Lakes, and the Piscataquog River
- The trail will provide a bicycle commute to and from Manchester of less than half an hour
- The trail will provide a non-motorized route to Goffstown Main Street events

# Regional Trails Plan 2012

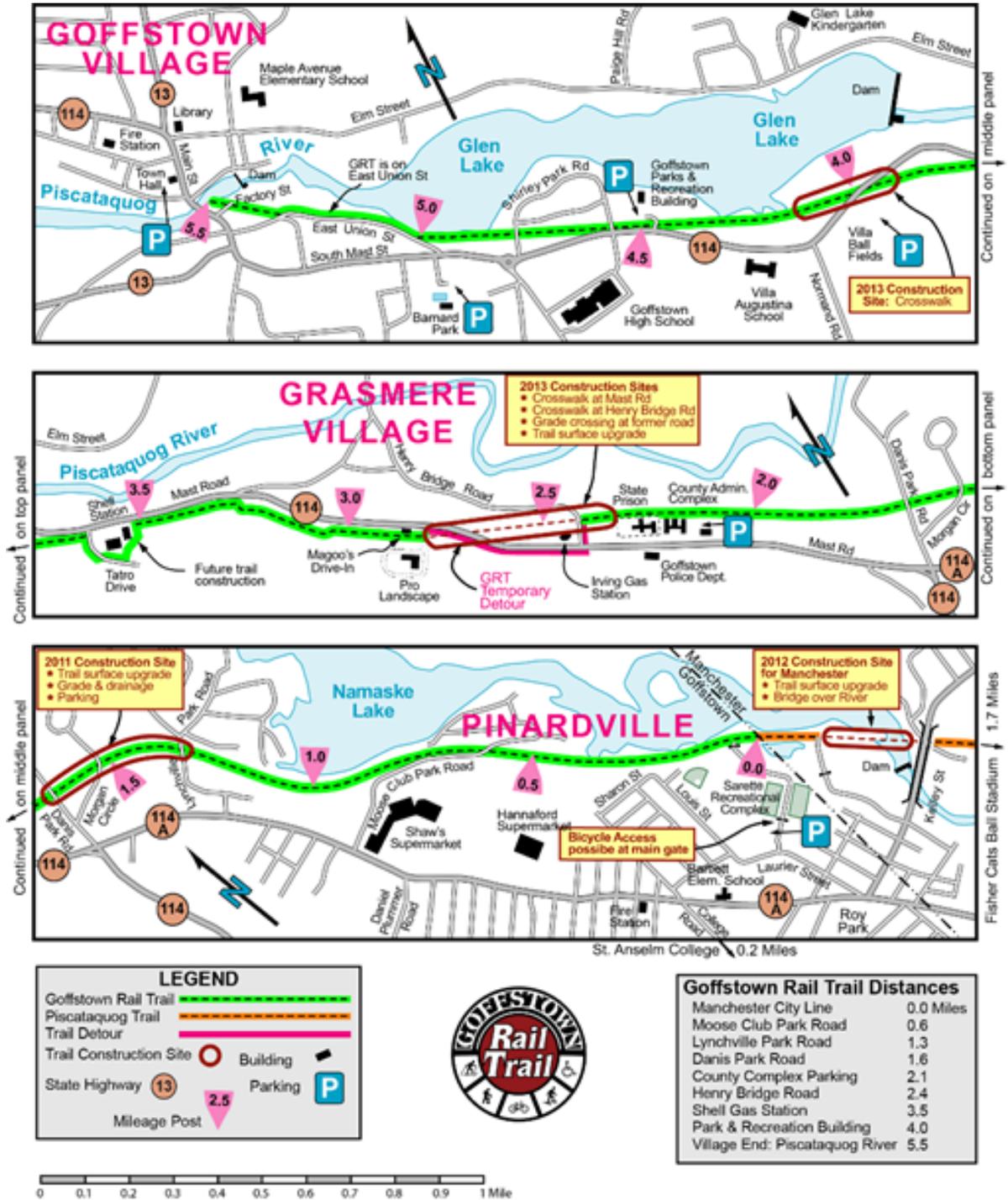
## Upcoming Projects:

### Goal:

2010 TE - Two Mast Road crossings, Henry Bridge Road crossing, bridge replacement  
 Timeline: Currently in design phase, expect construction in 2013  
 Next Action Steps: Complete design, hold public hearing, complete easement negotiations

### Person/Group

Responsible: Goffstown DPW



# HOOKSETT

Summary of Current Conditions	
Trail Name	Head's Pond Trail
Paved Trail	0 miles
Unpaved Improved Surface	1.4 miles
Unimproved Trail	.2 miles
Additional Miles Planned	0 miles
Total Miles Completed	0 miles
Total Miles Planned	0 miles
<b>Trail Group Information</b>	
Trail Group Name	Hooksett Kiwanis
Trail Group Website	
Contact Person	John Pieroni
Contact Information	JPieroni@CMC-NH.ORG
Trails included in Master Plan?	
Primary Challenges	Organization, engineering, funding
Current/Potential Funding Sources?	

## The Trails:

The Head's Pond Trail is an existing unpaved trail with a smooth, packed surface that is friendly to walkers and bicycles. It uses the old Concord-Portsmouth Branch Railroad. This trail may or may not become a portion of the Granite State Rail Trail, as a preferred route would follow the Merrimack River. Given the administrative challenge of sharing a right of way with the active Pan Am Railroad line, plus the engineering challenges and associated costs with constructing a trail along the river, an eastern route along this alignment may be the best alternative.

There is another railroad bed from the Merrimack County Courthouse north to Suncook Village in Pembroke and Allenstown. This route is a good candidate for a portion of the GSRT.

One possible connection through Hooksett is a route along the Merrimack River, which would combine a rail trail from Suncook to the courthouse, a bridge across the Merrimack River, and "rail with trail" where a trail would parallel the railroad southward into Manchester at Southern NH University (SNHU).

The other possibility is to connect a rail trail from Suncook to the Head's Pond Trail. There is an existing rail bed here, but it has been converted to private property and is developed with homes. This gap would need to be filled. The Head's Pond Trail could wrap through the Manchester Sand and

# Regional Trails Plan 2012

Gravel former mine area back to Route 3. From here, there is a gap to connect to Manchester at SNHU.

The Trail Group:

The Hooksett Kiwanis have supported the Head's Pond trail and have a trail committee that has worked towards a Manchester-Concord link through Hooksett. A committee with a specific purpose and additional volunteers may be needed in order to help move this difficult project forward.

Municipal Assistance:

Future Goals:



# LONDONDERRY

Summary of Current Conditions	
Trail Name	Londonderry Rail Trail
Paved Trail	0 miles
Unpaved Improved Surface	3 miles
Unimproved Trail	3.1 miles
Total Miles Completed	0 miles
Total Miles Planned	6.1 miles
<hr/>	
Trail Group Name	Londonderry Trailways
Trail Group Website	<a href="http://londonderrytrails.com/">http://londonderrytrails.com/</a>
Contact Person	Bob Rimol
Contact Information	bobrimol@gmail.com
Trails included in Master Plan?	Yes
Primary Challenges	Funding, Bridge repair, Manchester-Boston Regional Airport, Landowner
Current/Potential Funding Sources?	-

**The Trails:**

Envisioned as a paved path along the abandoned Manchester and Lawrence railroad corridor, the Londonderry Rail Trail is still largely undeveloped. The trail corridor crosses into Londonderry from the south just south of Rockingham Road and extends 2.5 miles before passing under Interstate 93. From there, it runs west for another 2.6 miles and crosses Rockingham Road once more before intersecting Harvey Road, at which point the trail path is blocked by the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport. From the Derry town line to the airport, the trail

# Regional Trails Plan 2012

path exists but is unimproved and not yet accessible to bicyclists. At the airport, the path disappears entirely and riders must travel the final mile towards Manchester along Harvey Road. The two crossings of Rockingham Road/Route 28 see heavy automobile traffic and may require bridges or other separated grade crossings. Of the 6.1 total miles of trail, approximately 4 are owned by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT).

## The Trail Group:

Londonderry Trailways is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1999. The group manages several hiking trails within the town in addition to the proposed rail trail, and is led by a seven-member Board of Directors. In 2010, Londonderry Trailways formed its Rail Trail Subcommittee, authorizing it to study all aspects of the corridor and report its findings to the Londonderry Town Council.

## Municipal Assistance:

In June of 2011, the Londonderry Town Council voted to support the rail trail concept and to support Londonderry Trailways' efforts to secure grant funding for the trail. On February 27, 2012, the Town Council also voted to approve the signing of a "Rail Trail Use Agreement" with the State of New Hampshire. Since the state owns most of the rail corridor, the use agreement is necessary to allow Londonderry Trailways to proceed with fundraising for a preliminary engineering study to determine the best path forward for construction of the trail.

## Future Goals:

Londonderry Trailways intends to pave the entire Londonderry Rail Trail, and connect it to the Derry Rail Trail in the south, and work around the airport to connect to the South Manchester Rail Trail in Manchester.

## Upcoming Projects

Goal: Raise funds for and complete engineering study of the corridor. The engineering study is almost complete and will be paid for with existing funds

Timeline:

Next Action Steps: Begin fundraising and grant process Fall 2012.

Person/Group Responsible: Londonderry Trailways

## Goal:

Timeline: Pave from the North School to Route 28 (about 3 miles) by 2015.

Next Action Steps:

Person/Group Responsible:

Goal: Clear brush and get Iron Horse to remove tracks on a 1 mile section south of the airport

Timeline: 2013

Next Action Steps:

Person/Group Responsible:





Summary of Current Conditions				
Trail Name	Piscataquog Trail	Rockingham Trail	Heritage Trail	South Manchester Trail
Paved Trail	1.7 miles	0	1.3	0.9
Unpaved Improved Surface	.1	1.7	0	1.0
Unimproved Trail	0	0	0	0
Additional Miles Planned	0	1.5	9.3	1.8
Total Miles Completed	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.9
Total Miles Planned	1.8	3.2	12.6	3.7
Trail Group Name	Manchester Moves			
Trail Group Website	<a href="http://manchestermoves.org">http://manchestermoves.org</a>			
Contact Person	Lori Nigl			
Contact Information	Lori@ManchesterMoves.org			
Trails included in Master Plan?	Yes			
Primary Challenges	Funding, Right-of-Way, Manchester-Boston Regional Airport			
Current/Potential Funding Sources?	Funding			

The Trails:

Manchester is a central hub for trails in the southern New Hampshire region, serving as an approximate midpoint along the envisioned Salem to Concord main line. Manchester is also home to several existing trails which radiate out to its surrounding towns, including Londonderry to the south, Auburn to the east and Goffstown to the west. As of 2012, Manchester recognizes four distinct trails within city limits, each in differing states of completion:

- The Piscataquog River Trail: This fully paved trail connects downtown Manchester to the outskirts of Goffstown, running along the north side of the scenic Piscataquog River. The trail originates directly east of the Merrimack River, near Fisher Cats Stadium, and crosses over into West Manchester on a pedestrian-and-bicycle-only bridge. It then runs northwest until the Piscataquog River Railroad Trestle, less than a tenth of a mile from the Goffstown town line. In October 2011, the city was awarded a

# Regional Trails Plan 2012

Transportation Enhancement (TE) Grant to help rebuild the crossing and connect the trail to Goffstown.

- The Rockingham Trail: This unpaved, gravel trail stretches across the entire eastern half of New Hampshire, emerging near the seacoast in Portsmouth. The Manchester portion of the trail runs from the Auburn town line north of Lake Massabesic to the Elliot Hospital on Tarrytown Road. From there, the rail corridor is undeveloped, passing through an area of dense commercial and residential property. Once completed, the Heritage Trail would connect to the South Manchester Trail, although several obstacles, including congestion and numerous street crossings, still pose difficulties.
- The Heritage Trail: Envisioned as a north-south connection between Hooksett and Bedford, the majority of the Heritage Trail has not yet been built. Unlike Manchester's other three rail trails, the Heritage Trail runs along an active railroad, and thus would require a "rail with trail" arrangement, meaning that rail and trail would exist simultaneously. Currently, right of way is owned by Pan Am and efforts to negotiate an agreement are ongoing. There are two small sections of completed, paved trail near the Manchester Mill Yard and at the eastern terminus of the Piscataquog Trail.
- The Southern Manchester Trail: This proposed trail would utilize the abandoned right of way of the Boston and Maine Railroad to connect Londonderry to downtown Manchester, serving as a vital link along the Salem to Concord mainline trail. This completed trail would also connect to both the Heritage and Rockingham Trails. Currently, there is a small paved section north of I-293/NH 101 and another undeveloped section extending north into downtown. The southern end of the trail abuts the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport, creating land encroachment issues that have yet to be resolved.

## Trail Group:

Manchester Moves is a non-profit organization formed in June of 2008. It received 501 (c)(3) status in October of that same year. The group is governed by a Board of Directors with nine full members and six advisory members, with a stated mission to "inspire and organize individuals, agencies and organizations to contribute time and resources to Manchester's urban trail network that will connect Manchester's neighborhoods to surrounding communities and improve the health, safety, vitality and quality of life for people of all ages and abilities."

## Municipal Assistance:

Manchester Moves works closely with Manchester city officials and with the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission. The group recently secured Federal Surface Transportation funds for construction of the "Hands Across the Merrimack Bridge," and in October 2011, it presented the city with a check worth \$74,000 to serve as a local TE match for the replacement of the Piscataquog River Railroad Trestle. Future efforts to work with city and regional officials are ongoing.

## Future Goals:

The trails in Manchester will actually be a system of trails radiating outward from downtown Manchester and connecting to surrounding communities. A total of 21.3 miles of forested and urban trails will encourage healthy outdoor activities and physical exercise, such as walking, jogging, and cycling on paved and hard-packed surfaces. All trails will lead to and from downtown, connecting people on both sides of the Merrimack River to well-known attractions, such as the Fisher Cats Stadium, Verizon Wireless Arena, and Gill Stadium; Manchester's well known dining and entertainment district; local public schools and several colleges; an extensive system of urban parks and recreational facilities; local

## As Adopted 1/10/2013

businesses and employment; and famous and historic destinations, particularly those in Manchester's Mill yard.

### Upcoming Projects -

Completion of Phase 4 of the Piscataquog Trail, including construction of a bridge over the Piscataquog River to unite Manchester to the Goffstown town line.

Goal: Raise funds-Initial funds, \$466,000 are already in place; however more funding may be needed as project matures.

Timeline: 2013

Next Action Steps: Bids submitted in spring and work to be completed during Summer 2013

Person/Group Responsible: City of Manchester and Manchester Moves

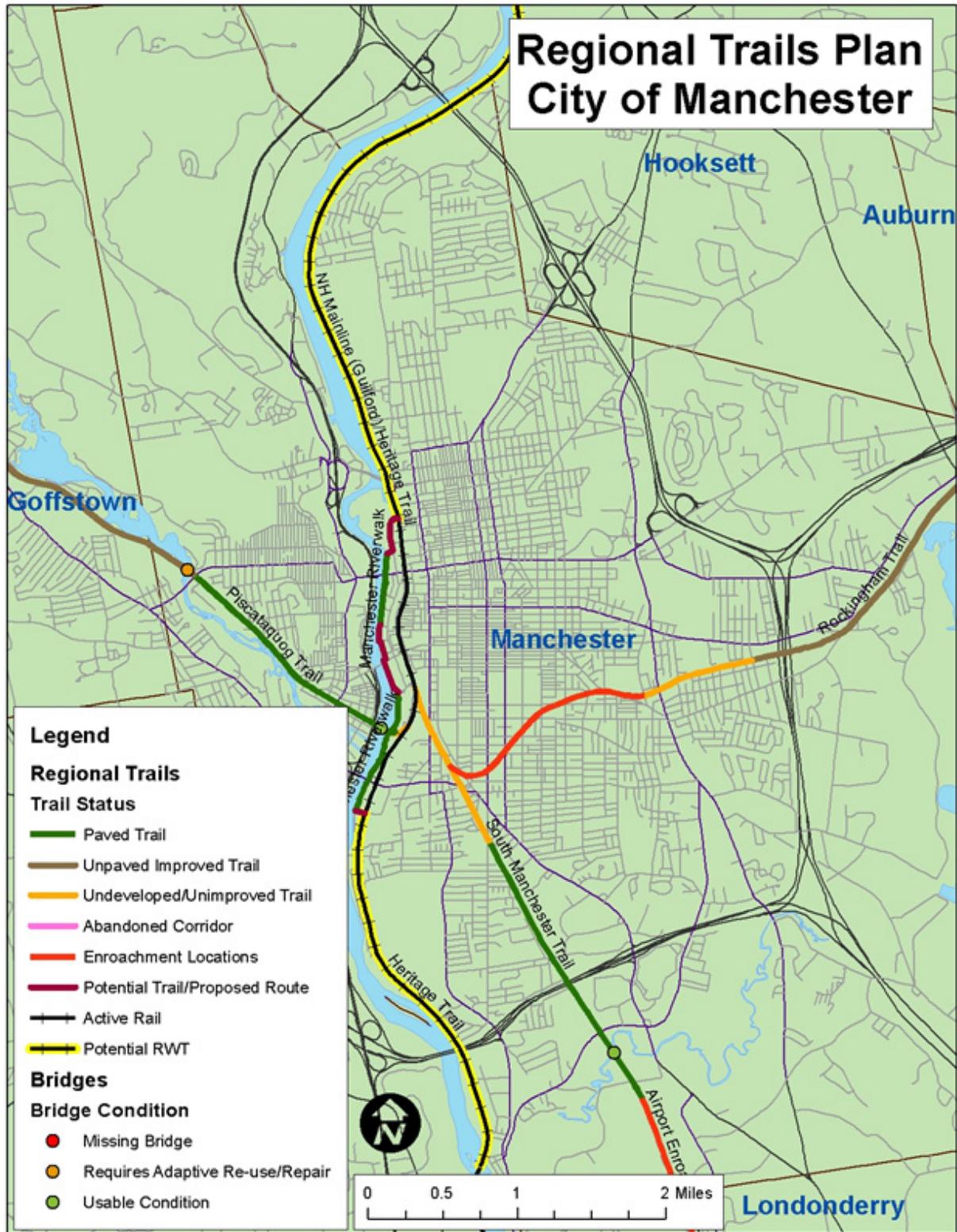
Goal: Completion of South Manchester Trail connecting Manchester to Londonderry, circumventing the Boston-Manchester Regional Airport

Timeline: 2013

Next Action Steps: funds are in place, need to complete engineering study

Person/Group Responsible: City of Manchester and Manchester Moves.

# Regional Trails Plan 2012



# NEW BOSTON

Summary of Current Conditions	
Trail Name	New Boston Rail Trail
Paved Trail	0 miles
Unpaved Improved Surface	0 miles
Unimproved Trail	Approximately 4 miles
Additional Miles Planned	0 miles
Total Miles Completed	0 miles
Total Miles Planned	3.9 miles
Trail Group Name	New Boston Rail Trail Team
Trail Group Website	None as yet
Contact Person	Burr Tupper
Contact Information	NHFlyAngler@gmail.com
Trails included in Town Master Plan?	Not yet, but planned
Primary Challenges	Replace culverts, remove roots/trees
Current/ Funding Sources?	Two fundraisers, HCCD

## The Trails:

The New Boston Rail Road was completed in January of 1893 and formally opened in June of that year. It ran five miles from Parker Station in Goffstown to just north of the New Boston town center. Seventy Italian stone masons blasted granite and built stone culverts. It cost \$84,000 to build, \$14,000 over budget.

The railroad was built so that J.R. Whipple could supply his three Boston hotels with his New Boston grown farm products. Two daily runs traveled from New Boston to Boston, with a flag stop at Lang Station near Gregg Mill Road. An 1894 news article stated that 12,000 barrels of apples were shipped from New Boston for export to Europe.

The original depot at its end of the railroad in New Boston cost \$10,000 to build. On the morning of February 2, 1895 the village people were awakened by the creamery fire whistle to find the depot afire. It started from a heater in the baggage department and nothing remained except the stone walls and part of the roof." The railroad used a combination car as a temporary depot until the building could be rebuilt.

The last trains to New Boston ran in the 1930s. Later, the railroad depot was used as a pre-school and

# Regional Trails Plan 2012

as a police station. It is now a private home. In the mid-1970s the Boston & Maine Railroad right of way was abandoned and the land was acquired by the Town of New Boston. Today, hikers, runners, mountain bikers, snowshoers and cross-country skiers enjoy the right of way where the New Boston R.R. once ran.

The trail is primarily a dirt trail on which trees have taken root, shrubs have encroached upon and roots cross to make it a challenging place to hike, bike and ski. Many areas are wet due to lack of updated culverts which should divert water beneath the trail to the river which flows alongside the trail. Rails have been removed but many ties are still in place. Many of these will remain as the plan is to build up the trail with quality subsurface and surface materials which will allow satisfactory drainage.

## The Trail Group:

The group formed in March of 2012 as a result of encouragement from the SNHPC John Stark Scenic Byway Commission to create a safe route to bicycle and walk from New Boston to Goffstown. The group is small, consisting of a building contractor, the chairman of the New Boston Conservation Commission, a New Boston historian, a representative of the Hillsborough County 4H Commission who also volunteers time and machinery to various organizations, a member of the town Planning Commission, a fundraiser and a marketing person. Meetings are called as needed. Conservation Commission members have attended meetings, worked at marking trail boundaries and identified abutters to the trail.

## Municipal Assistance:

The committee has received an initial monetary stimulus from the New Boston Conservation Commission, a donation from the 2012 Town Wide Yard Sale fundraiser and from the Hillsborough County Conservation District. Grants will be applied for in the future.

Currently the trail is kept "open" by the Conservation Commission, local Cub Scouts, town volunteers who see obstructions and a local mountain bike group. The town, including Selectmen, Planning Department, New Boston Police Department, New Boston Fire Department and other town committees fully supports this effort.

## Future Goals:

We are looking to complete the following sections of the trail in the noted time frames: 2013 - Beginning at the Hillsborough County 4H Foundation grounds and ending at Lang Station on Gregg Mill Road is the first goal.

2014 - The second section will begin at Gregg Mill Road, pass through Lang State Forest and end at Parker Road

2015 -The final section and most "obstructed" section will begin at Parker Road and end at Route 114.

It is visualized that one will be able to hike or bike from New Boston to Goffstown by taking the rail trail to Route 114, travel along the wide breakdown lane to Goffstown and connect to the Goffstown Rail Trail.

The committee is planning to have various groups "Adopt a Designated Section" (perhaps a tenth of a mile) of the trail that they would keep clear of encroaching vegetation, surfacing rocks and misuse of the trail. Gross problems will be reported to the Conservation Commission, which will take appropriate action to remedy.

## As Adopted 1/10/2013

Not in the plans at this time may be the ability to continue the original trail over Route 114 where the New Boston railroad ended and connected to the B&M trail that connected Goffstown to towns to the west.

### Upcoming Projects

Goal: Raise funds

Timeline:

Next Action Steps:

Person/Group Responsible:

## PEMBROKE

Summary of Current Conditions	
Trail Name	Pembroke Rail Trail/Suncook Branch Rail Trail
Paved Trail	0 miles
Unpaved Improved Surface	0 miles
Unimproved Trail	3 miles
Additional Miles Planned	3 miles
Total Miles Completed	0 miles
Total Miles Planned	3
<b>Trail Group Information</b>	
Trail Group Name	Informal Group, Pembroke CC
Trail Group Website	NA
Contact Person	Craig Tufts
Contact Information	ctufts@cnhrpc.org
Trails included in Master Plan?	No
Primary Challenges	Organization, trail rights of way, funding
Current/Potential Funding Sources?	Private, volunteer work, RTP, TA

### Discussion

#### The Trails:

The Pembroke Rail Trail is a segment of the proposed Salem to Concord Bikeway, linking Allentown to the south and the Merrimack River Greenway Trail (MRGT) in Concord to the North. A preferred route has been identified as roughly following an abandoned railroad corridor (the Suncook Branch) through the town along the Merrimack River. The corridor is broken up and mostly in private ownership. Much of the trail co-exists with a PSNH electric utility line, which will likely require negotiations with PSNH. The trail is in usable condition today, and is often used by local residents; however, the trail is not officially open to the public and some segments are posted as no trespassing. Local supporters of the trail hope to open the trail to the public on an un-improved surface in the interim while raising support and funds to construct an improved trail.

A name for the trail has not been decided on at this point. "Pembroke Rail Trail" is most commonly used to describe the trail, and the "Suncook Branch Trail" has also been used.

The Trail Group:

There is no official trail group promoting the Pembroke Rail Trail. The project got started with assistance from the New Hampshire Rail Trail Coalition and CNHRPC. An unofficial coalition of Pembroke, Allenstown, and Hooksett residents have worked together on a Concord-Hooksett connection and in 2012 a group of Pembroke supporters have organized to promote their section. This group must continue to grow in order to make significant progress on the trail.

Municipal Assistance:

The Rail Trail concept is relatively new to the town, and is not currently in the municipal master plan. The town is officially open to the concept and encourages the trail group to make progress, but has not invested town resources on the project. The local Conservation Commission is in support but does not see the trail as one of its primary objectives.



## SALEM

Summary of Current Conditions	
Trail Name	Salem Bike-Ped Corridor
Paved Trail	0 miles
Unpaved Improved Surface	0 miles
Unimproved Trail	5.1 miles
Additional Miles Planned	5.1 miles
Total Miles Completed	0 miles
Total Miles Planned	5.1 miles
<b>Trail Group Information</b>	
Trail Group Name	Friends of the Salem Bike-Ped Corridor
Trail Group Website	<a href="http://www.fsbpc.org/">http://www.fsbpc.org/</a>
Contact Person	Dave Topham
Contact Information	<a href="mailto:info@fsbpc.org">info@fsbpc.org</a>
Trails included in Master Plan?	PENDING
Primary Challenges	Bridge over Rockingham Park Blvd.
Current/Potential Funding Sources?	Iron Horse Preservation Society for 2.5 miles, TE grant for 1.2 mile.

### The Trail:

This trail section is the southernmost portion of the envisioned Salem to Concord Bikeway. As of yet, no improvements have been made, though some funding has been secured and construction is expected to begin shortly. The northern portion of the proposed Salem Bike-Ped Corridor begins near Range Road at the Windham town line and runs south along the western shoulder of NH 28. The trail corridor then passes through downtown Salem, crossing Main Street and eventually reaching its southern terminus at the Massachusetts border. In Methuen, Massachusetts, work has been completed by Iron Horse Preservation Society (IHPS) and the Methuen Rail Trail Alliance to build a recycled asphalt trail the full length of 2.2 miles of the rail corridor in Methuen. This connects directly to the Salem trail at Hampshire Road to create an interstate bike-ped corridor.

### The Trail Group:

Friends of the Salem Bike-Ped Corridor (under BWA-NH)

### Municipal Assistance:

Salem Community Development Office, Bill Scott

## As Adopted 1/10/2013

### Future Goals:

The Salem-Bike Ped Corridor is planned to provide bike-ped access from Methuen, MA to Windham, NH with utilitarian use being the primary focus. While initially a recycled asphalt or stone-dust surface is expected, as funding allows it will be paved to meet the expectations of the Salem-Concord Bikeway. The corridor is the bike-ped "backbone" connecting to businesses, apartment complexes, residential neighborhoods, I-93 Exit 2 Park-and-Ride / bus terminal, and will relieve some congestion on Route 28. A 0.7 mile section north of Main Street to Old Rockingham Road past a wetland area is very scenic and will take bicyclists off a narrow section of Route 28.

The total corridor in Salem is 5.1 miles with 3.7 miles planned for construction under a TE grant (1.2 miles) and IHPS (2.5 miles). Negotiations with local businesses including Rockingham Race Track will be necessary to construct the "center section" from Main Street to Cluff Crossing. The Town of Salem will not allow the corridor to stop at or cross the Rockingham Park Boulevard which is nine lanes wide at the crossing point and has very heavy traffic to/from I-93 Exit 1 and the Mall at Rockingham Park. A bridge with ADA-compliant access ramps has been estimated at \$2M. Until such time as a bridge is built, bicyclists will use parallel public roads of Pleasant Street, South Policy, and Cluff Road to travel between Main Street and Cluff Crossing.

While promoted as a transportation corridor, the Salem project will serve all types of users since the areas covered are so diverse in nature. As such, the slogan used by the Friends of the Salem Bike-Ped Corridor and the Town of Salem is "For everyone, every day."

### Upcoming Projects:

Goal: Complete permitting and agreements with NHDOT to allow IHPS work.

Timeline: IHPS plans to start work in October 2012, complete spring 2013.

Next Action Steps: Approval of NHDOT agreements and installation of a silt barrier prior to work starting by IHPS. Estimated cost of silt barrier of \$30K must be raised from private donations to FSBPC, not the Town of Salem taxpayers or IHPS.

Person/Group Responsible: Town of Salem, NH-DOT, and FSBPC

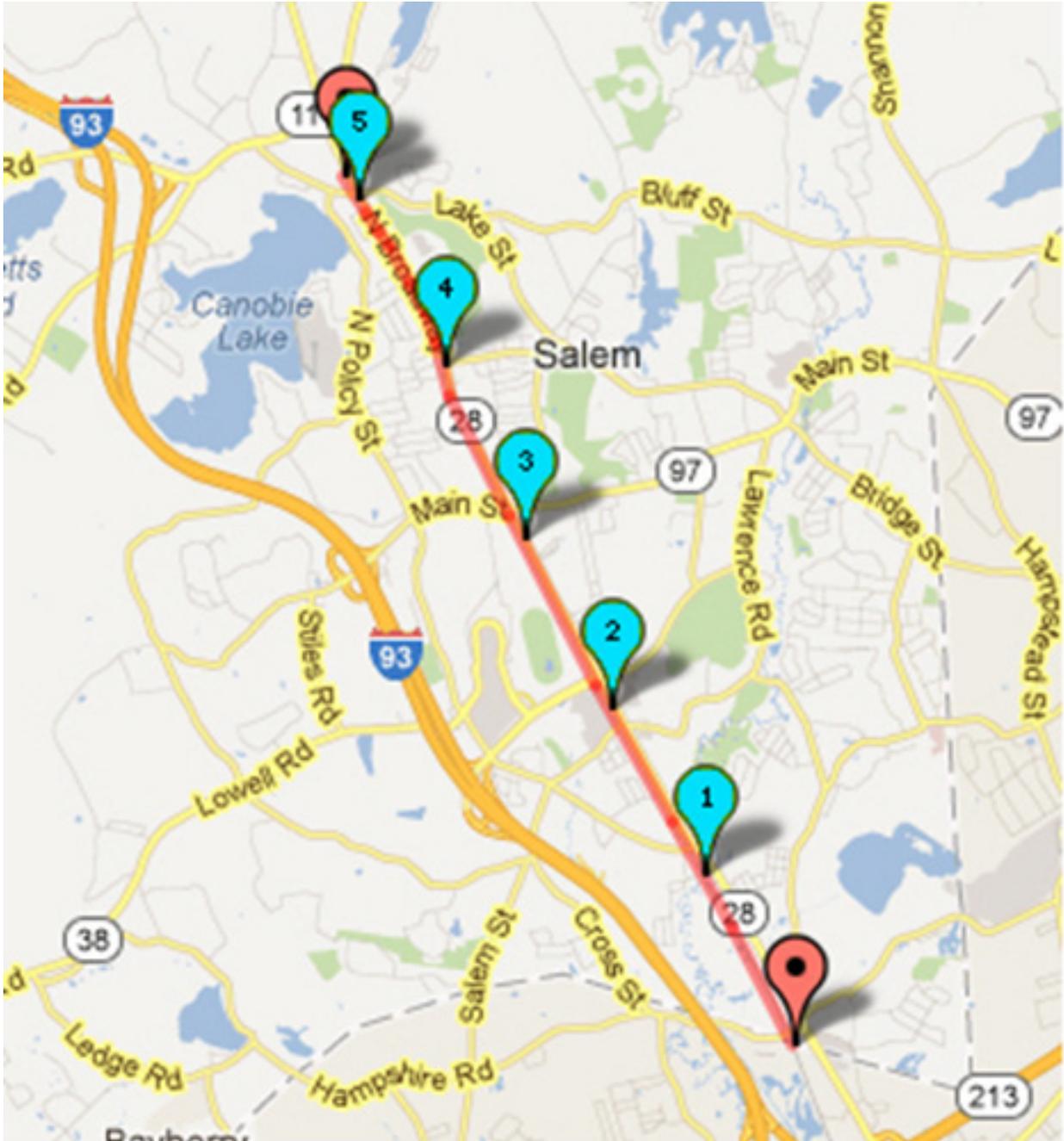
Goal: Complete preliminary engineering for the northern 1.2 mile section under the TE grant awarded in 2010.

Timeline: 2014 best case. Project is dated 2018 in the ten year plan.

Next Action Steps: Town of Salem is negotiating with NH-DOT for release of approved TE funds.

Person/Group Responsible: Town of Salem, Bill Scott, Community Development Office is working with NH-DOT Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance, William Rose.

# Regional Trails Plan 2012



Salem Bike-Ped Corridor, see Google map 107576  
<http://www.mappedometer.com/?maproute=107576>

# WINDHAM

Summary of Current Conditions		
Trail Name	Windham Rail Trail (Salem to Concord line)	Rockingham Recreational Trail
Paved Trail	3.6 miles	0 miles
Unpaved Improved Surface	0.5 miles	0 miles
Unimproved Trail	0 miles	6.4 miles
Additional Miles Planned	0 miles	0 miles
Total Miles Completed	4.1 miles	0 miles
Total Miles Planned	0 miles	0 miles
<b>Trail Group Information</b>		
Trail Group Name	Windham Rail Trail Alliance	
Trail Group Website	<a href="http://www.windhamrailtrail.org/">http://www.windhamrailtrail.org/</a>	
Contact Person	Mark Samsel	
Contact Information	msamsel@windhamrailtrail.org	
Trails included in Master Plan?	Yes	
Primary Challenges	Funding, Interstate 93	
Current/Potential Funding Sources?	We have a T/E Grant and private funding for our remaining .5 miles.	

## The Trails:

- Windham Rail Trail: This trail, which is located on the abandoned Manchester to Lawrence railroad line, extends from just north of Canobie Lake at the Salem town line to Windham Depot at the Derry town line. The southernmost 0.5 miles of trail are cleared but unpaved. After Roulston Road, the trail is paved all the way north to Derry, connecting to the Derry Rail Trail and forming an uninterrupted paved stretch of more than seven miles.
- Rockingham Recreation Trail: This section of the extensive Rockingham Trail system begins at the intersection of NH 111 and NH 28 near the Hudson town line and runs northeast for 4.1 miles to Windham Depot, where it intersects the Windham Rail Trail at the border of Windham and Derry. The mile of trail closest to Hudson is largely unimproved, while the next 2.3 miles offer a hard packed surface for trail users. The northeasterly portion of the trail is currently blocked by Interstate 93.

## The Trail Group:

The Windham Rail Trail Alliance (WRTA) was formed in 2004 and has been granted 501(c)(3) status. The group's long term goals are to develop, pave, and promote both the Windham Rail Trail and the Rockingham Recreational Trail, and connect those trails to others in the region. The WRTA has worked closely with the community,

# Regional Trails Plan 2012

sponsoring 8 trail-related Eagle Scout projects and hosting an annual 5K race to raise funds for the trail. According to the group's website, 401 member-hours were spent on trail maintenance and organizational activities in 2011.

## Municipal Assistance:

The 3.4 mile section of paved rail trail was officially opened in September 2006. Construction was able to proceed without the use of any state or federal funds. Instead, the WRTA relied on grants from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, New England Grassroots Environment Fund, Bikes Belong, and the Windham Conservation Committee. It has also worked with municipal officials to help arrange public fundraising events.

In 2010, Windham received \$144,000 in Transportation Enhancement funds that it plans to use for construction of the final 0.7 mile trail section from Roulston Road to the Salem Town Line. Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2012.

## Upcoming Projects:

Goal: Complete paving on the remaining .5 mile section.

Timeline: Starting Fall 2012; tentative completion Summer 2013

Next Action Steps: Planning in process

Person/Group Responsible: Windham Rail Trail Alliance