

2025.7.14 Hanover Bike Walk Minutes

In attendance: Jennie Chamberlain (chair), Evan Gerson (vice chair), Matthew Kim (secretary), Robert Houseman (town manager), Jim Martin (chief of police), Hugh Mellert, Ra-Ching Yu, Bill Young, David Anderson, Scot Drysdale (zoom), Lara Acker (zoom), Kaitlin Clark (zoom)

Quick recap

The meeting covered discussions about trail systems, cycling events, and recent safety statistics, including pedestrian fatalities and New Hampshire's senior road safety initiatives. The board reviewed various infrastructure projects including paving, intersections, and lighting requirements, while also addressing traffic safety measures and speed limit adjustments. The group discussed several ongoing initiatives including a new public gathering space at Ledyard Park, the Girl Brook Path project's funding and easements, and plans for promoting accessibility through various rating tools and social media management.

Next steps

- Rob: Work with Liberty Utilities to determine electrical capacity and setup options for the Ledyard Park food truck area and stage
- Rob & Jim: Revisit and conduct data collection for speed limits on South Main and Lebanon Streets
- Conservation Commission: Conduct site visit for Girl Brook Path wetlands permit review
- Rob: Follow up with Dartmouth College regarding potential funding for the Girl Brook Path project
- Bill: Connect with Bruce Simpson regarding the \$50,000 grant application for Girl Brook Path
- Rob: Work with Advanced Transit regarding bus stop placement at the Dunster-Wyeth intersection
- Rob: Follow up with Carolyn regarding Complete Streets policy references
- Jennie: Create a spot for Roll Mobility tool on the website and promote it on Facebook
- Jennie: Contact Kiara about presenting findings from Dartmouth's personalized electric mobility survey
- Jennie: Reach out to Rai Ching about potential committee membership
- Jennie: Update the zoom meeting link time discrepancy in future meeting invitations

Summary

Cycling Trends and Safety Updates

The meeting began with a discussion about a trail system, including its potential for transportation and its gravel paths. The group then discussed recent cycling events and routes, including a ride on Route 5 in Vermont. They noted that the zoom link for the meeting had the wrong time, which was corrected. The group shared positive news about a decrease in pedestrian fatalities in the United States, though levels are still high compared to a decade ago. They also discussed New Hampshire's efforts to improve senior safety on the roads. Finally, they shared exciting news about London's cycling infrastructure, noting that biking has surpassed driving in popularity, with predictions that biking will become the most popular mode of transportation within two years.

Accessibility and Bike Path Planning

The committee welcomed new member Kaitlin, who represents Access Dartmouth and uses a wheelchair, emphasizing the importance of accessibility for people in wheelchairs with bike paths, so that safety for wheelchair users is not compromised. They reviewed past activities, including Earth Week, a bike skills clinic, and a feasibility study on WaHG Trail, while also discussing a survey conducted by Dartmouth on electric mobility. The group approved the June meeting minutes and considered a one-year appointment, deciding to wait for Rai Ching's availability before proceeding.

Shared Streets Vision Plan Survey

The board discussed the Shared Streets Vision Plan, which consultants are currently working on. They reviewed a presentation and survey available online, noting that 197 people have already completed the survey. The group plans to engage the community further in the fall, as summer turnout is typically low. They also discussed the potential for reconstructing Crosby Street and intersections, with feedback expected in September. The bike-walk committee is encouraged to promote the survey and gather more responses, with a goal of reaching more residents.

Traffic Safety Measures Discussion

The board discussed upcoming traffic safety measures, including a new stop sign installation in Etna Greensboro and Great Hollow, and the implementation of 25 mph speed limits on West Wheelock, South Main, and Lebanon Street. They addressed the need to collect data on speed limits for South Main and Lebanon streets, as this was part of a previous discussion. Kaitlin inquired about the legal jurisdiction to lower speed limits, and the board explained that within the urban compact area, speeds can be set at 25 mph, but outside this area, they need to work with the New Hampshire

Department of Transportation. The board also touched on paving projects and the importance of compliant signage, particularly on Buell Street, which is a designated bike route for high school students.

Leonard Park Groundbreaking Ceremony

Groundbreaking took place for Ledyard Park, a new public gathering space in downtown Hanover, with Rob leading the fundraising efforts and a 20-year license agreement secured from Ledyard Bank. The park will feature accessible seating areas, a stage, a food truck area, and an Appalachian Trail mural, though the electrical infrastructure for food trucks and amplified sound remains an outstanding issue being worked out with the utility company. The project includes ADA-compliant seating areas and will incorporate community art elements, with the downtown business group taking a leadership role in the arts campaign.

Street Paving and Safety Improvements

The board discussed ongoing paving projects, including Lebanon Street and South Main Street, with bike lanes being added and parking space drops required. They reviewed plans for Crosby and Wheelock, and Crosby and Lebanon streets, emphasizing the intersection near Alumni Gym and Saint Dennis Church. The group also discussed improvements to Reservoir Road, a multi-use path under construction to the Dot Strong trail, and Maple Street reconstruction, along with the need for tip downs for accessibility, which is tied to a water project. They considered adding "except for bikes" signs on Hovey and Buell streets and discussed the need for a crosswalk and tip down for accessibility at the intersection of Maple and Pleasant streets.

Crosby and Dunster Intersection Updates

The board discussed the Crosby intersection project, confirming that Dartmouth College will rebuild it according to agreed plans based on the Shared Streets Vision work within an 18-month window. They reviewed proposed changes to the Dunster Wyeth intersection, which will include a new crosswalk north of Wyeth Street with warning signs, sidewalk extensions, and a rapid flashing beacon. The project has been reviewed by New Hampshire DOT and will involve relocating a catch basin and adjusting turning radii.

Crosswalk Lighting and Bus Stop Shelters

The board discussed lighting requirements for a crosswalk project, where DOT has approved the concept but raised concerns about the brightness of LED street lamps potentially obscuring rapid flashing beacons. They also discussed bus stop shelters, noting that Hanover has 47 bus stops, with particular attention to the need for a shelter at the second busiest stop in front of My Brigadero's,

though space constraints may pose a challenge. The board agreed to work with Advanced Transit to address bus stop concerns, and consider shelter placement during the reconstruction project.

Path Project Funding and Easements

The board discussed the Girl Brook Path project's funding and easements. Bruce Simpson is applying for a \$50,000 grant to cover cost gaps. Rob explained that Dartmouth College has committed to constructing the trail on their parcels, and the town has authorization from New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT). The project's construction cost estimate has been reduced to around \$67,000, with the wetlands permit impact decreased from 12,000 to 6,000 square feet. The Conservation Commission will conduct a site visit to provide feedback on the wetlands permit. The board agreed to wait before forming a fundraising committee, as the exact funding amount is still unknown until bids are awarded.

Trail Impact on Plant Habitats

The board discussed the positive impact of trail construction on plant habitats, particularly the Virginia waterleaf, which thrived after the trail's installation. They also addressed the installation of a split-rail fence to protect sensitive plants along a river trail.

Multi-modal metrics

The group reviewed a bike score rating system for Hanover, which showed areas needing improvement, and considered writing to the rating agency or adjusting speed limits to enhance scores.

Roll Mobility Promotion Strategy

The board discussed promoting Roll Mobility, an accessibility rating tool, by adding it to their website and Facebook. Kaitlin expressed concerns about the reliability of crowdsourced reviews, but agreed to support pushing the tool out. The group considered organizing a contest similar to one in New Orleans, with sponsors and a leaderboard system. They also discussed promoting the tool in conjunction with a shared streets vision survey to encourage more accessible places in the community.

Safety Meeting

Bill suggests meeting with Tom O'Donnell and other Dartmouth folks and Chief Martin about electric mobility safety.

