

Hanover Bike Walk Meeting summary

Attendees: Jennie Chamberlain (chair), Evan Gerson (vice chair), Robert Houseman (town manager), Hugh Mellert, David Anderson, Bill Young

Quick recap

The committee reviewed progress on various transportation and trail projects, including updates on trail developments and shared streets network plans. They discussed legislation to allow for lower speed limits and considered safety measures for campus streets, while also addressing concerns about connecting river trails and implementing protected bike lanes. The group planned upcoming community events and discussed the organization of complete streets references.

Next steps

- Jennie to send a note to Carolyn (consultant) with the committee's priorities in thinking through the shared streets vision plan, including communication outreach, capital improvement, implementation plan, network considerations, and accessibility.
- Bill to recruit Dartmouth students to help with Walk Bike to School Day on October 8th.
- Bill to organize a meeting for those interested in discussing the future of Girl Brook Trail, including potential extension to Storrs Pond (with David, Jennie, town staff rep).
- Dave to review the complete streets references organization.
- Rob to draft a note to NHDOT regarding concerns about autonomous vehicles getting confused by wide shoulders and the importance of preserving safe space for non-vehicle users.
- Committee members to provide feedback on the WaHG Trail proposals by writing to wagtrail@gmail.com
- Committee members to attend the upcoming NHDOT 10-Year Plan meeting in Lebanon.

Summary

Pine Park Trail Development Update

The committee discussed the status of a new trail at Pine Park, which is nearly ready to open despite being soft despite recent rain. They are working on improving the trail's appearance by planting grass seed, cleaning up gravel, and adding trees and greenery at the entrance. The group also touched on a new housing development project, including concerns about accessibility and the

challenges of installing an elevator in a retaining wall. Lastly, they briefly mentioned a previous Blue to Green proposed path through the cemetery and a large forest clearing on private land near the water company property.

Shared Streets Vision Plan Discussion

The committee discussed various updates and upcoming events, including a presentation by Carolyn Radisch on the Shared Streets Vision Plan on October 13th, at the next Hanover Bike Walk meeting. They reflected on the importance of community education about street plans and discussed potential strategies for outreach. The group also touched on recent paving projects, rural mobility, city ratings, and a "Week without Driving" initiative. Technical difficulties with accessing the meeting platform were experienced, but the session continued with participants reflecting on their thoughts about the upcoming plan and its potential impact on the community.

Shared Streets Network Planning Discussion

The committee discussed the Shared Streets Vision Plan, focusing on forming a network, as well as shovel-ready projects and prioritization. They identified potential projects including Crosby Street, along with East Wheelock, and Lebanon Street intersections, with South Main Street improvements already in design phase, and Lebanon Street including intersections with S. Main and Park. The group emphasized the importance of creating a connected network of safe corridors to encourage mode shift and improve accessibility for all users. They were looking forward to more detailed information from Carolyn and other planners about existing plans and priorities at the upcoming October 13th presentation.

Speed Limit Legislation Support

The selectboard discussed legislation proposed by Bike Walk New Hampshire to allow for lower speed limits down from 25 to 20 miles per hour in municipalities, aligning with federal guidance to allow for slower speed limits based on context. (Federal guidance recommends 15 mph for shared streets). The committee agreed to support the legislation and to suggest that the Selectboard weigh in as in favor of the proposed legislation, as this is a bi-partisan safety initiative and is inline with best practices. They also considered the need to collaborate with the college and local authorities on safety measures for campus streets and discussed the process used to implement previous speed limit changes.

Trail Updates and Safety Improvements

The committee discussed updates on the WaHG Trail Open House, where 120 people attended and expressed excitement about potential routes. They reviewed proposed trail maps and discussed

concerns about connecting the River Trail to Wheelock Street, noting challenges with elevation and access. The committee also addressed updates on a new 5-foot northbound bike lane on South Main Street from the town compact to Dorrance Place, as a great interim step in creating a safer network, but emphasizing the need for protected lanes in the future due to safety concerns. The committee discussed the forward momentum of the WaHG Trail project, noting that David Dostal had been very involved in thinking about this area in the past, has signed on to support the WaHG Trail efforts but his current involvement was unclear.

Trail Project and Federal Approvals

They reviewed progress on the 25-mile-an-hour zones and updates on the Dunster Wyeth project, which is awaiting state approval. Regarding the Girl Brook Trail, the New Hampshire DOT project manager expressed surprise at the project's success in meeting federal requirements, and it was decided that if approved, bidding would begin in October, with construction expected to start in the spring. The committee also discussed the need for a trail builder who could work within federal wage and certification standards, and smaller equipment designed to build trails, without the need to build a road for the equipment.

Girl Brook Extension Planning Meeting

The committee discussed plans for extending the Girl Brook Path, including its potential extension to Storrs Pond and the need for a meeting with key stakeholders, such as the college, town staff, school, and Oak Hill people.

Upcoming Events

The committee also planned for upcoming events, including Fall Fest on September 26th and Walk Bike to School Day on October 8th, where they sought volunteers to engage with students.

Complete Streets Prioritization Strategy

The committee discussed the organization of complete streets references and had reordering them to prioritize accessibility, followed by network and pedestrian interventions. They noted a concern about NHDOT paving Route 120 near Jesse's and its lack of adequate facilities for bicycling, and its impact on autonomous vehicles, deciding to be more proactive in addressing this issue. The group also touched on upcoming events, including the NHDOT 10-year plan meeting and a solar energy promotion event, SUN DAY on Sept 21st, 10-11:30 AM at the Ledyard Bridge, and the need for volunteer bike marshalls.