

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Management Plan

September 2022



Executive Summary

The purpose of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) Management Plan is to articulate a cohesive, community defined vision for the completed trail system and identify strategies to support the management, maintenance, operations, community connections, and economic development opportunities along the trail. Through a public process, the strategies developed as part of the LVRT Management Plan aim to provide a cohesive set of guiding principles for the entirety of the 93-mile linear trail system. The development of the plan, concurrent with the completion of the trail and transfer of management responsibilities to VTrans, establishes a road map for LVRT management into the future and sets a framework for the other state-owned trail systems that are coming under the management of the VTrans Rail Trails Program.

To support the cohesive Vision and short- and long-term strategies for the trail, the LVRT Management Plan provides:

- › A review of the existing conditions of the trail corridor including historic context, inventory of corridor assets, previous management structure, existing regional and local plans related to the LVRT, and possible funding sources;
- › A summary of best practices for trail systems in regard to management, maintenance and operations, and economic development opportunities;
- › An overview of the public engagement process for the development of this community driven management plan;
- › A vision for the LVRT as defined by neighboring community members and the supporting outcomes articulated in goals and objectives; and,
- › A series of recommended strategies that advance the plan's goals organized into chapters that detail the actions and implementation as they relate to the management, maintenance and operations, and economic development and community connection opportunities for the LVRT.




The Vision for the LVRT, developed through engagement with the public and neighboring communities, is a concise statement that paints a picture of the desired future for the LVRT. The Vision is supported by Goals that lay out desired long-range outcomes to be achieved by the Management Plan and are detailed further by the Objectives that support their respective goals. The Vision, Goals, and Objectives for the LVRT are defined below.

VISION

The Vision for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is a **year-round, multi-use recreation** and **alternative transportation corridor** that is **well-maintained** and supports **economic vitality**, fosters **community connections**, and promotes **healthy lifestyles** across scenic, northern Vermont.

GOALS

OBJECTIVES

 <p>Support the Economic Vitality of Northern Vermont Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote LVRT locally and regionally to draw visitors to the trail and trailside communities• Improve connections to villages and town centers to encourage exploration of trailside communities• Complement existing economic development plans in trailside communities
 <p>Cultivate Community, Culture, and History along the Trail and in Trailside Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foster trail stewardship opportunities to promote sense of community pride• Encourage inclusive and respectful trail use• Promote rural heritage, history, and educational programming
 <p>Promote Healthy and Connected Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage healthy and active lifestyles• Provide meaningful opportunities for connection with the scenic, natural, and agricultural landscape• Promote development and improve connections to recreational opportunities proximate to the LVRT• Improve connections to alternative transportation networks and trail systems
 <p>Preserve the Corridor and Maintain Trail Condition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide for routine asset condition assessment, maintenance, and preservation activities• Support well-maintained facilities for health and safety• Provide convenient trail access points along the LVRT with clear directional signage and well-maintained parking areas
 <p>Establish a Well-Managed Trail System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support and coordinate proactive trail management, maintenance, and operations activities• Identify stable sources of funding for management, maintenance, operations, enhancements, and programming

The recommended strategies are the supporting actions aimed at advancing the Goals & Objectives and fall within three categories: management, maintenance & operations, and economic development & community connections. Each set of recommended strategies are listed with the goals they advance and noted by goal icons in color.

For the management category, the focus of the recommended strategies is on staffing the Rail Trails Program within VTrans and developing mechanisms to structure, coordinate, and engage volunteers. The management strategies are cross-cutting, advancing each of the goals defined for this process. Within the maintenance and operations category, the recommended strategies focus on the priorities of preserving trail resources through asset management, planning for seasonal maintenance, leveraging best management practices, establishing the operations manual, and employing a count and survey program for user feedback. The maintenance and operations strategies primarily advance the goals of preserving the corridor and maintaining the trail condition, as well as establishing a well-managed trail system.

Strategies that fall within the economic development and community connections category include advancing capital improvement projects by developing pause places, trail connections, and trailheads and amenities, assisting communities in their advancement of those capital improvements, developing an interpretive signage plan to highlight cultural resources, advancing tourism and marketing to encourage visitors to come use the trail and explore the trail towns, supporting educational and recreational programming and events, and establishing a cohesive trail identity. These strategies primarily advance the goals of supporting economic vitality in northern Vermont communities, cultivating community, culture, and history along the trail, and promoting healthy and connected communities.

Recommended Strategies

MANAGEMENT		GOALS ADVANCED
Human Resources/ Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a staffing structure to efficiently support continuity and strategic management, maintenance, and operations 	
Volunteer Staff Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish proposed regional trail councils to engage trail champions and coordinate local volunteers Develop training programs to engage volunteers and partnering organizations (e.g. trail ambassadors, condition assessments, adopt a segment or trailhead programs) 	
MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS		GOALS ADVANCED
Asset Management & Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct routine inspection of all trail assets (trail surface, culverts, bridge structure, bridge surface, trailheads, signs) Identify and prioritize system preservation projects 	
Seasonal Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop annual maintenance plan Identify contractors and procure services for annual seasonal maintenance activities (mowing, trail surface rehab, etc.) 	
Best Management Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt and adopt best management practices for trail specific maintenance activities including surface inspection, vegetation management, wildlife management, and flood mitigation 	
Operations Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish clear policies and procedures for: 1) Allowable uses and use permits, 2) Resolving user conflicts, 3) Mitigating encroachment & encampment issues, 4) Agreements supporting trail connections and amenities for the public good, 5) Trail access, crossing and right-of-way use agreements, and 6) Trail etiquette (incorporate in signage and promotional/educational materials) 	
User Count & Survey Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop count and survey program to gather visitor use and user feedback data 	

Recommended Strategies

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS		GOALS ADVANCED
Capital Improvements Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pause Places <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and support development of pause places • Trail Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of connecting or spur trail systems • Support promotion of regional or destination loops connecting to the LVRT • Trailheads & Amenities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish network of trailheads to provide trail access and trailside amenities at regular frequencies • Engage with local communities in the development and maintenance of trailheads and trailside amenities 	
Community Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support communities seeking funding for development or enhancement projects (e.g. trailheads, amenities, wayfinding, services, gateways, pathways to trailside communities) 	
Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with state and local historical organizations to identify historical site opportunities and develop interpretive signage plan 	
Tourism & Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build out LVRT visitor website and investigate integrating trip planning tools into the website • Coordinate with partner agencies and organizations to develop regional marketing campaign • Leverage recreational tourism opportunities through promotion of multisport synergies and coordinate with partner organizations (VAST, paddlers, Northern Forests, GMC, Velomont, local trail stewards/councils) • Encourage camping and lodging opportunities in trailside communities to support multiday tourism opportunities • Support development of trail friendly business program • Support development of visitor passport or quest program to encourage exploration • Identify funding and support research to quantify economic impact of the LVRT on trail communities and broader regional and state level economies 	
Educational & Recreational Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage local and regional trail based educational and recreational programming and events in coordination with schools, libraries, and other organizations or resources • Support bike, ski, snowshoe lending libraries and/or rental opportunities • Support working lands educational and promotional opportunities to highlight Vermont farms and forests as part of the LVRT identity 	
Trail Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a cohesive trail identity and incorporate into signage, wayfinding, guidance, amenities, and promotional materials 	

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Existing Conditions	4
Historic Context	4
Corridor Inventory.....	14
Previous Management of the LVRT.....	15
Existing Document Review.....	18
Funding Sources	24
Best Practices Review	28
Trail Management.....	29
Maintenance & Operations.....	31
Economic Development.....	33
Public Engagement	35
Overview.....	35
Stakeholder Group.....	37
Public Meetings	37
Stakeholder Interviews.....	39
Crowdsource Input Tool.....	42
Vision, Goals, and Objectives.....	44
Management.....	49



Overview.....	49
Staffing Structure.....	50
Volunteer Staff Management.....	54
Supporting Roles	56
Maintenance & Operations.....	58
Overview.....	58
Asset Management & Inspection.....	59
Seasonal Maintenance.....	63
Best Management Practices.....	74
User Count & Survey Program.....	78
Operations Manual.....	79
Economic Development & Community Connections	91
Overview.....	91
Trail Identity.....	91
Capital Improvement Projects.....	98
Cultural Resources	115
Educational & Recreational Programming.....	116
Community Assistance.....	119
Tourism & Marketing.....	120

1

Introduction

In conjunction with the completion of the full 93 miles of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) and the transition of trail management to VTrans, the LVRT Management Plan was developed through a public process engaging with stakeholders and neighboring communities. The purpose of the LVRT Management Plan is to articulate a cohesive, community defined vision for the completed trail system and identify strategies to support the management, maintenance, operations, community connections, and economic development opportunities along the trail. Through a public process, the strategies developed as part of the LVRT Management Plan aim to provide a road map for LVRT management into the future and set a framework for the other state-owned trail systems that are coming under the management of the VTrans Rail Trails Program.

In order to provide context for the cohesive Vision and short- and long-term strategies for the trail, the LVRT Management Plan includes the following sections:

- › A review of the existing conditions of the trail corridor including historic context, inventory of corridor assets, previous management structure, existing regional and local plans related to the LVRT, and possible funding sources;
- › A summary of best practices for trail systems in regards to management, maintenance and operations, and economic development opportunities;
- › An overview of the public engagement process for the development of this community driven management plan;
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2

Existing Conditions

The Existing Conditions section summarizes the current state of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT), providing background on the history of the corridor, a brief inventory of the corridor assets and features, a summary of the previous management structure, a review of relevant plans and policies, and a summary of existing and potential funding sources.

Historic Context

The LVRT has a unique history and has changed significantly since its original development in 1877. A brief history of the trail as an operational railroad transporting freight and passengers, the path taken to transition the corridor to a rail trail, and the trail today as it connects with local communities are summarized below.

Railroad History

The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail occupies the former railroad corridor from St. Johnsbury to Swanton. The initial development of the railroad was championed by Horace Fairbanks, one of Vermont's wealthiest citizens, who developed an interest in railroads and proposed the line as an attempt to capitalize on commercial development that neighboring railways were bringing into the area. Contracts were secured by December of 1869 and construction was completed by June 1877. The line was originally known as the Vermont Division of the Portland & Ogdensburg Railroad which connected Portland, Maine with Ogdensburg, New York and points west. There was also a connection to Burlington along the Burlington and Lamoille railroad at Cambridge Junction. Over the years, the railroad operated under various management and names. In 1880, the railroad faced financial struggles and the line was reorganized as the St. Johnsbury and Lake Champlain Railroad (St. J & L.C.). In 1892, a spur line called the Granite Branch was extended from Hardwick to Woodbury to serve the granite industry in that town.

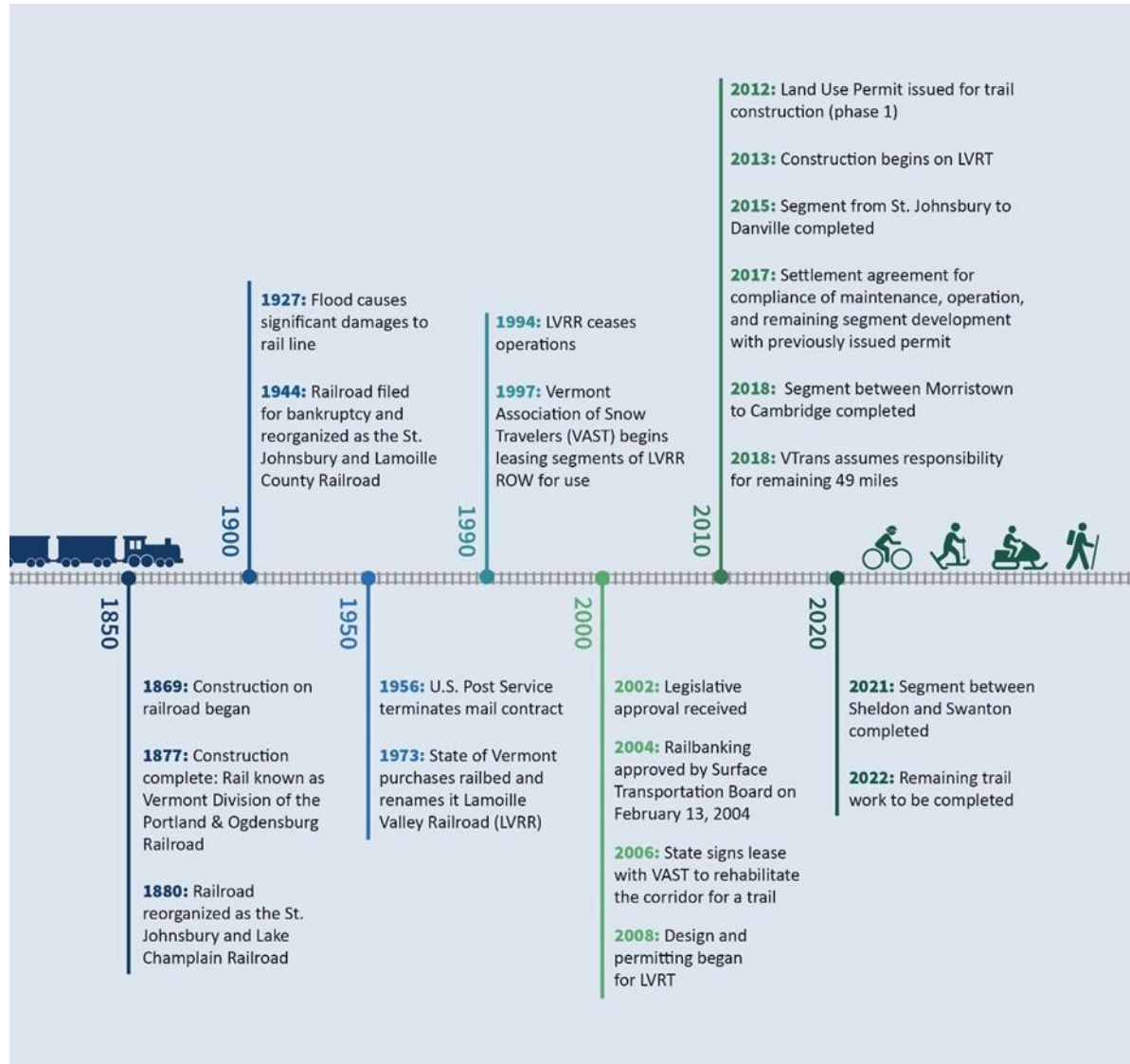
In the late 19th and early 20th century, freight and local passenger service sustained the rail line. Freight included asbestos, limestone, gravel, grain feed, lumber, and Christmas trees. Refrigerated rail cars allowed for the transport of milk and other

dairy products but was not enough to make the line profitable. In the early decades, the line also transported passengers including summer vacationers who traveled to their summer camps and the railroad hotels along the route.

With the advent of early automobiles, motor traffic became a more economical mode for the transport of freight and passengers and many railroads including the St. J & L.C. began to lose business. As the rail line was attempting to reorganize in an attempt to divest of unprofitable operations, the infamous flood of 1927 caused significant damage throughout the state as well as along the rail line. The flood caused over 160 washouts and destroyed over 2,000 feet of bridges and trestles, mostly along the more profitable 30-mile segment between Cambridge Junction and Hardwick. The rail was repaired through a grant from the state legislature, and it resumed operations until 1944 when it was unable to pay off its bonded indebtedness and filed for bankruptcy.

In 1944, the railroad was reorganized as the St. Johnsbury and Lamoille County Railroad. At this time, the conversion from steam to diesel required significant improvements to the track and bridges to support heavier locomotives. In the three decades that followed, the line struggled with declining business, aging equipment, deteriorating railbed, and a speed limit of ten miles per hour. In 1956, the U.S. Postal Service terminated a profitable mail contract and by 1961, milk trains had been replaced by trucks. In the 1970s, important businesses along the rail line closed including a talc plant in Johnson and feed plants in St. Johnsbury and Swanton. In 1973, the State of Vermont purchased the railroad, renaming it the Lamoille Valley Railroad (LVRR). By 1984, the line was only transporting tourists, but the track was not maintained. The LVRR ceased operation in 1994.

Figure 1 LVRT Timeline



Development of the Recreational Trail

Starting in 1997, the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers' (VAST) sought use of segments of the former LVRR corridor. A group of volunteers and early trail champions were assembled to form the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Committee (LVRTC) at the direction of the VAST Board of Directors. With the guidance of the LVRTC, VAST would respond to the State of Vermont's request for proposals for future uses of the corridor. The VAST proposal, which was ultimately selected, laid out a development plan for transforming the railroad right-of-way (ROW) into a four-season multi-use recreation destination.

After legislative approval to enter a lease agreement with VAST in 2002, the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail was coined. The railroad filed with the Surface Transportation Board and railbanking was authorized on February 13, 2004, allowing for the interim use as a trail while preserving the rail corridor for future use. In 2006, the State signed a lease with VAST, giving them permission and ultimate responsibility to rehabilitate the corridor to accommodate recreational uses. Through these early steps of establishing the trail and the many years of planning and construction to follow, the volunteer efforts of the LVRTC would support VAST's charge to rehabilitate the corridor into a multi-use recreational trail.

Once state and federal approval was obtained, an engineering assessment was conducted of the 93-mile rail corridor. The assessment culminated in the development of the 2008 LVRT Assessment, which guided rehabilitation efforts along the rail corridor. Design and permitting of the LVRT began in 2008 and took several years to inventory and permit the entire length. The trail went through the Act 250 land use permitting process and required other necessary permits. VAST spent several years navigating the permitting process.

Land Use Permit #7C1321 was issued on October 25, 2012, applying to 44 miles of the trail to include construction of three non-contiguous segments (i.e. Phase 1). Supplemental phases of the trail development would be subject to the Land Use Permit. In 2017, VAST, VTrans, the State of Vermont, and the Natural Resources Board entered into a settlement agreement acknowledging VAST would pursue the development, maintenance, and operation of the remaining segments of trail in compliance with the previously issued permit. The lease agreement was amended with VTrans to reflect conditions from the permit primarily related to hours of operation, limitations on all-terrain vehicle use, vegetated buffers, noise, mitigation, and reroutes.

What is Railbanking?

An agreement that preserves a corridor for future rail use while allowing other interim uses. As an alternative to abandonment, a qualified organization or agency agreeing to maintain the corridor may negotiate for railbanking with acknowledgement that the railroad may reestablish rail service in the future. The Surface Transportation Board serves to oversee the negotiation process and agreement.

After obtaining the necessary permits, construction of the rail trail began in 2013 with the segment from St. Johnsbury to Danville, which was completed in 2015. The segment from Morristown to Cambridge was completed in 2018. In total VAST completed approximately 33 miles of trail with approximately \$5.2 million in funding it received from the Federal Highway Administration and match contributions of \$1.3 million from town assistance, private donations, VAST's own investment and in-kind support. With work on the Sheldon to Swanton segment underway in 2018, VTrans assumed responsibility for the remaining 49 miles of trail not yet designed and/or constructed.

In 2020, the corridor received an influx of funding from the Governor's allocation of \$2.8 million State funds and \$11.3 million in matching Federal funds. As a result of this funding, the project's timeline accelerated. In 2021, the segment between Sheldon and Swanton was completed resulting in a total of 45 miles of completed trail. The remaining work is anticipated to be completed by the Fall of 2022 and includes three sections of trail (Cambridge to Sheldon, Hardwick to Morristown, and Danville to Hardwick).

It is recognized that the efforts and contributions of many brought the nearly complete 93 miles of the LVRT to fruition. In particular, the commitment of early trail champions involved with the LVRTC, some of which are still consistently a presence on the trail, were fundamental in initiating the corridor rehabilitation process, ushering in the early construction of the trail, and establishing the foundation for trail management, maintenance, and operations. This along with countless other volunteer efforts and contributions from community members over the years, like those involved with the Friends of the LVRT, have set the stage for the next phase in the development of this vital recreation resource.

Figure 2 LRV 93-Mile Corridor & Construction Status (as of June 30, 2022)

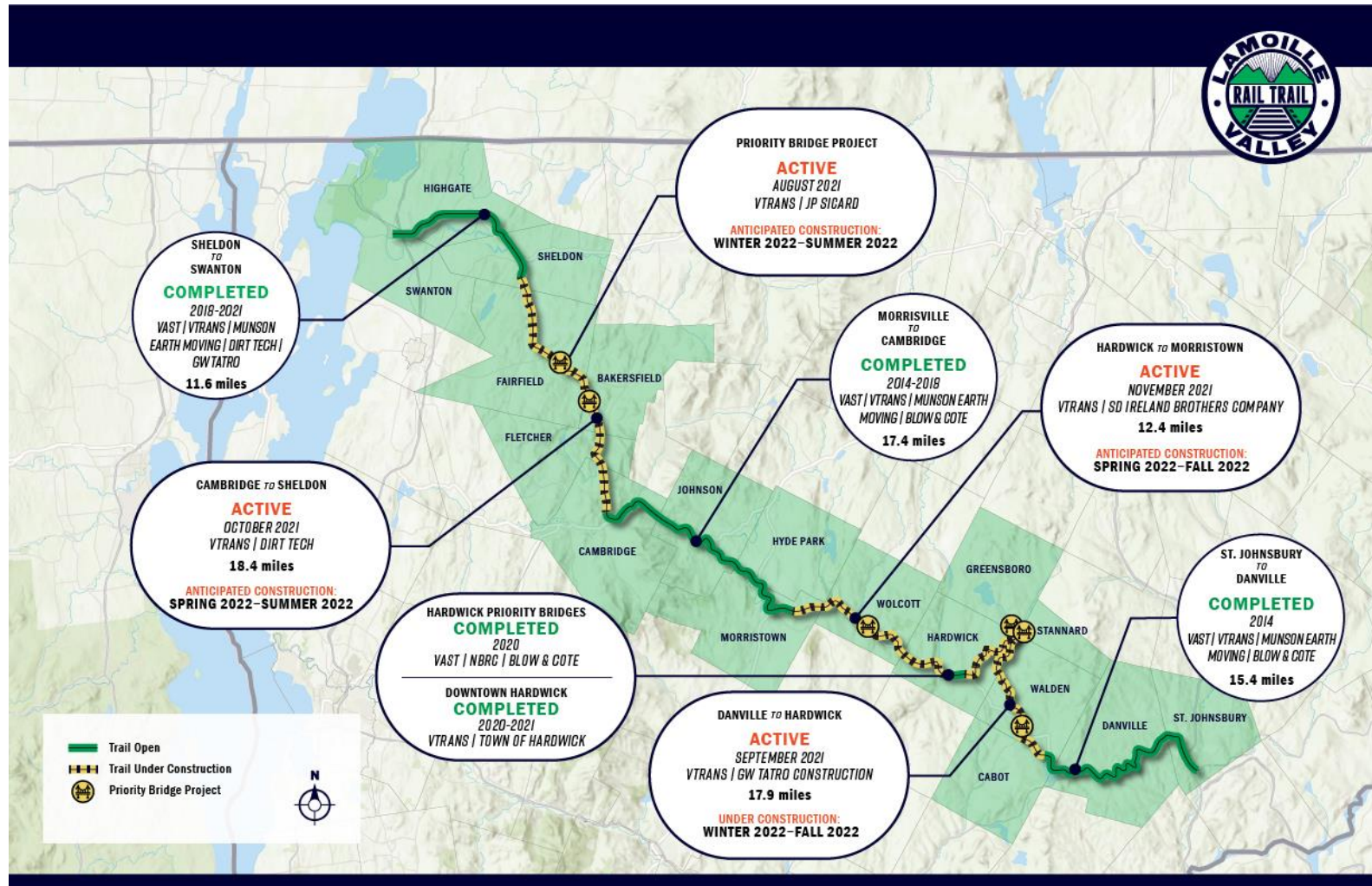


Figure 3 LVRT Bridge 68 in Jeffersonville



The LVRT Today

Nearly 100 miles long, the LVRT will be the longest rail trail in New England. The trail spans five counties and connects 18 towns including St. Johnsbury, Danville, Cabot, Walden, Stannard, Greensboro, Hardwick, Wolcott, Morristown, Hyde Park, Johnson, Cambridge, Fletcher, Bakersfield, Fairfield, Sheldon, Highgate, and Swanton. Once complete, the LVRT will provide important connections between recreational trails in Vermont and Canada including more regional trail systems like the VAST snowmobile trail network, Long Trail, Catamount Trail, Velomont, and Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, as well as local trail connectors like Three Rivers Bike Path and Cambridge Greenway.

As a four-season trail, the LVRT offers recreational opportunities for hikers, bikers, equestrians, snowmobilers, snowshoers, dog mushers, and cross-country skiers. The crushed stone trail surface is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with the intent of making the trail available to users of all abilities. Roadway crossings planned in the segments under construction are also ADA compliant. Although the trail designs have considered accessibility, it is anticipated that more work will be required to provide inclusive access to the trail and connect to amenities and services. Businesses and amenities proximate to open segments of trail offer limited hospitality and services for trail users including restrooms, dining, shopping, lodging, information kiosks, WiFi connections, bike repairs and rentals, drinking water, and camping. However, additional investments are needed to improve the trail connections to adjacent businesses and services.

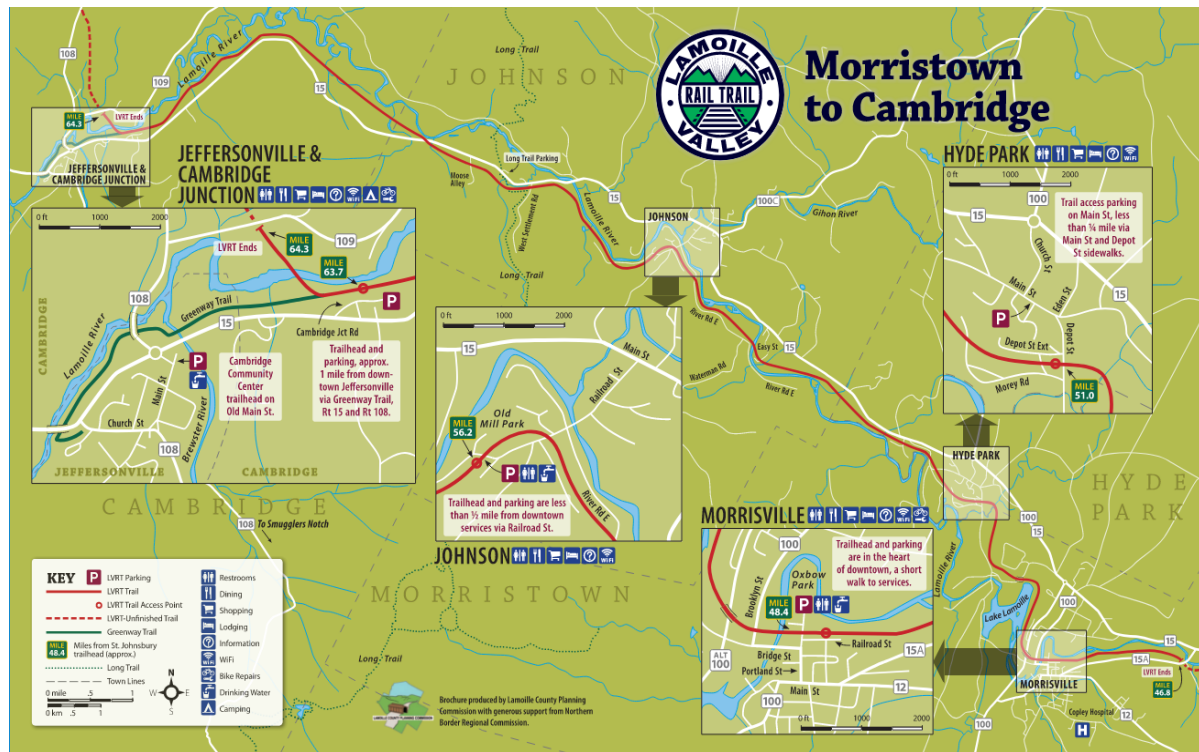
There have been numerous local initiatives to improve connections between the LVRT and communities. For example, Wolcott constructed a trailhead kiosk in 2016 to improve accessibility to the LVRT on Railroad Street. The trailhead includes parking, a picnic area, bicycle racks, and an information booth. The Town of Johnson has built a trailhead facility at the Old Mill Park, assisted in developing maps (Figure 4a and Figure 4b) and a brochure for the trail, and developed wayfinding signage highlighting the connection between downtown Johnson and the trail. Hyde Park plans to create a village gateway adjacent to

the LVRT crossing with a small park, a bike repair station, and landscaping. Some communities aim to revitalize or repurpose historical buildings along the rail trail including Danville which has plans to revitalize the former railroad depot on Peacham Road for public use. Several towns in the region are considering plans to build local trail networks that would connect town centers to the LVRT (see *Existing Document Review section below*).

Figure 4a Completed Segment Trail Maps – St. Johnsbury to West Danville

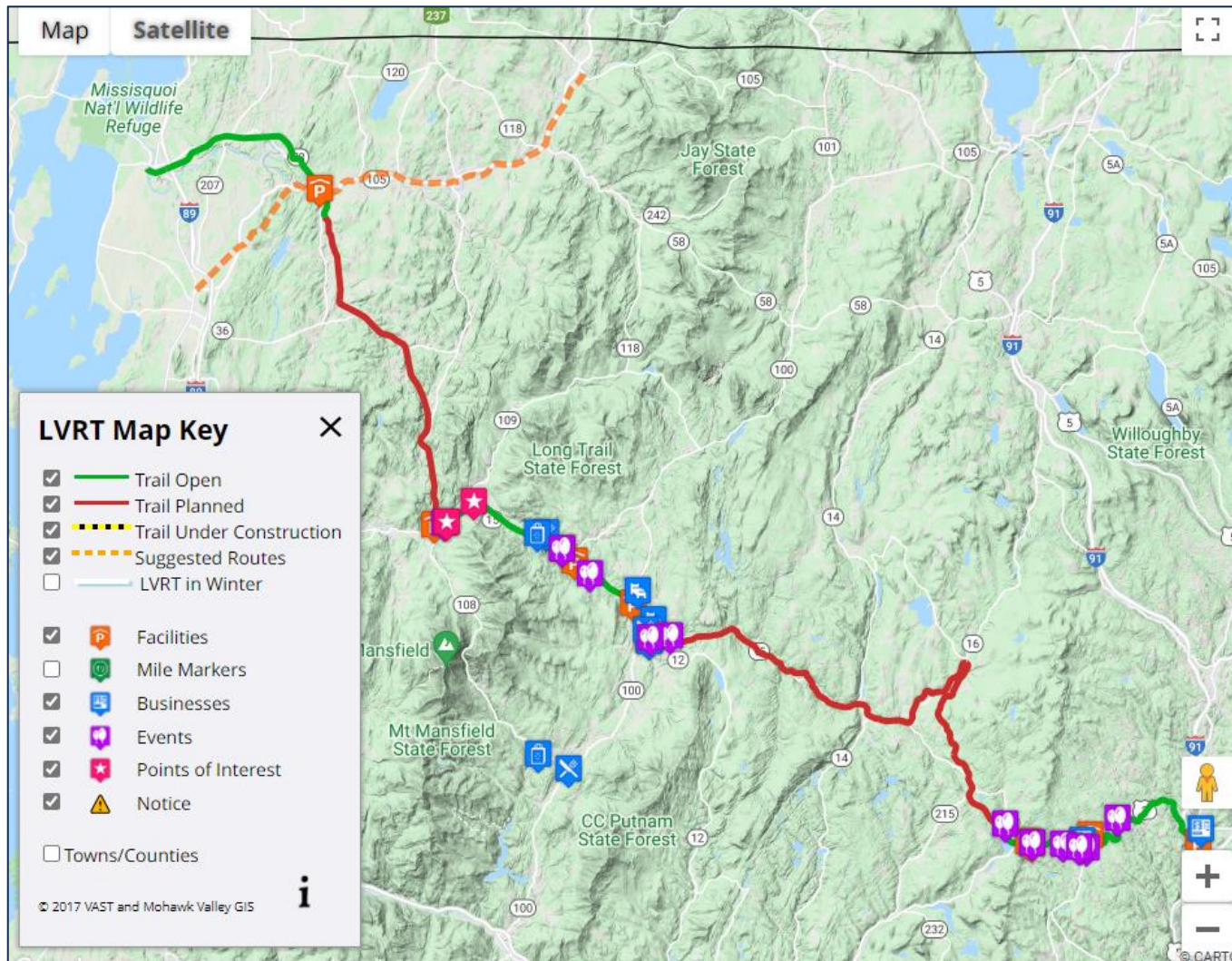


Figure 4b Completed Segment Trail Maps – Morristown to Cambridge



Businesses situated along and near the LVRT can attract trail-goers and create important economic linkages between the communities and the trail. Lost Nation Brewing in Morrisville sits adjacent to the trail and serves craft beer and food in their biergarten overlooking the trail. In Morrisville, the 10 Railroad Street Restaurant occupies a repurposed railroad depot and provides parking for snowmobilers coming off the trail. Many towns recognize the need to create connections from the trail to their town or village centers to attract trail-goers to restaurants and business. To assist with these linkages, the VAST-managed Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Interactive Trail Map (Figure 5) and Section Maps (Figure 4a and 4b) highlight points of interest and businesses along the trail.

Figure 5 VAST LVRT Trail Map including Off Trail Points of Interest and Businesses



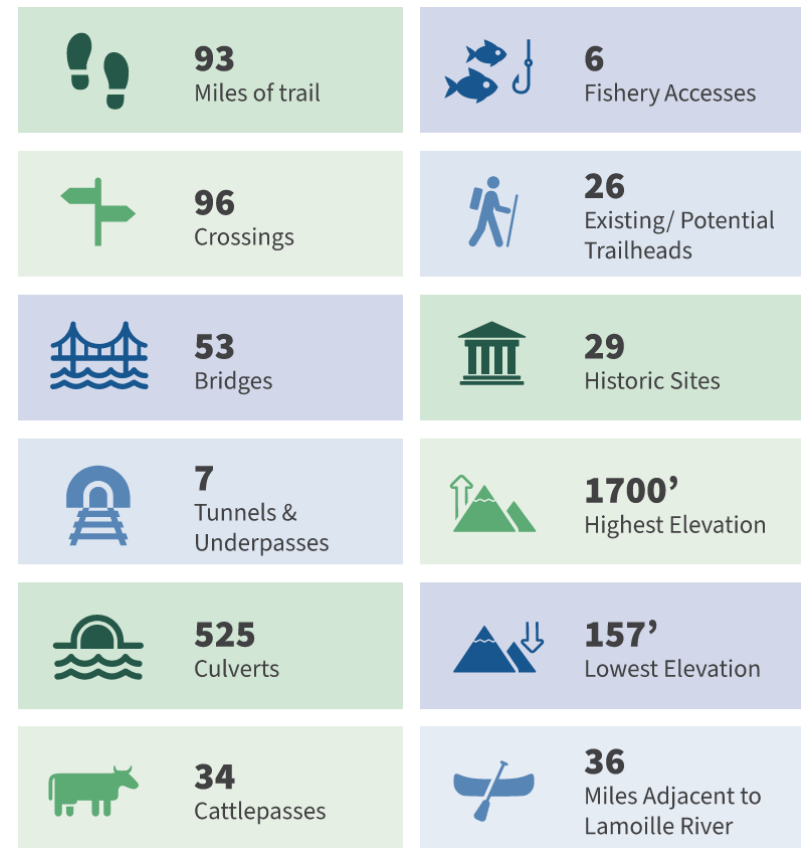
Corridor Inventory

The 93-mile LVRT corridor passes through 18 towns connecting community town centers regionally across northern Vermont, including Swanton, Highgate, Sheldon, Fairfield, Bakersfield, Fletcher, Cambridge, Jeffersonville, Johnson, Hyde Park, Morristown, Morrisville, Wolcott, Hardwick, Greensboro, Walden, Danville, and St. Johnsbury. The LVRT passes primarily through Franklin, Lamoille, and Caledonia counties while touching both Orleans and Washington counties.

In addition to providing connections between communities, the LVRT also provides access to natural areas and waterways along the trail. The majority of the trail follows river corridor, placing the trail adjacent to the Missisquoi River, Lamoille River, and Black Branch Brook along 82% of its length. Passumpic River, Joe's Pond, Hardwick Lake, Lake Lamoille, Dog's Head Falls, Black Creek, and connection to Lake Champlain are all made available via the LVRT. Both public and private crossings of the LVRT provide access to parcels adjacent to the trail and, in some areas, connect land area that is otherwise bound by waterways or other natural features.

Assessments have been conducted pertaining to existing trail assets including but not limited to signage, trailheads, parking areas, trail crossings, bridges, culverts, cattlepasses, fisheries access, historic sites, washouts, pause places, railings, and ditches. Natural resource assessments have also been compiled including waterways, floodways, wetland delineations, and rare, threatened, and endangered species. An ArcGIS online map was developed to gather and display these features along with the trail centerline, right-of-way, and natural resources. The inventory includes feature properties such as materials, dimensions, condition at the time, potential repairs, and photographs of the features. The inventory was used in conjunction with the design of other LVRT projects related to

Figure 6 Trail Assets and Feature Highlights



bridge and path reconstruction and the trail-wide signing plan. A summary of the LVRT existing assets and features of interest can be found in Figure 6.

Previous Management of the LVRT

In September 2006, VAST entered a lease agreement with the State of Vermont to convert the right-of-way along the former railroad from St. Johnsbury to Swanton to an alternative transportation facility and to manage the resulting year-round multiuse recreation facility. For nearly 16 years, VAST and its volunteers have led the effort to convert the rail-banked corridor to a recreational facility and served as the primary managing entity. As part of the lease agreement between VTrans and VAST, a management plan was adopted as the guiding document for development and management of the trail and evolved over time with multiple versions. It is important to note that the previously adopted Management Plan focused on the conversion of the corridor to a multiuse trail as well as the management, maintenance, operations, and enhancements required of completed segments. When conceptualizing a new Management Plan for the completed LVRT, many of the elements identified in the previous version of the Management Plan will need to be considered and are detailed below.

Approved in April 2016, the most recent Management Plan adopted under VAST management defined a comprehensive vision for the trail corridor and defined the purpose and need for the trail conversion project. Keys to developing the trail corridor included establishing the management structure and identifying critical partnerships. Early in the process, VAST established the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Committee (LVRTC) to provide guidance and oversight on the events, fundraising, outreach, and management efforts related to the conversion of the trail and maintenance and operations planning and activities. The 2016 Management Plan and earlier iterations outlined the LVRTC's authority, membership, officers, meetings, and rules. The 13-member committee was comprised of volunteer representatives from the various user communities, including motorized (5 members), non-motorized (5 members), and multiuse (3 members) user groups. The committee followed VAST policies and by-laws with the VAST Board of Directors overseeing its functions. The LVRTC, in collaboration with VAST, was responsible for producing an annual Development and Maintenance Plan identifying, outlining, and budgeting the planned construction, repair, and maintenance to take place in the coming year and a General Maintenance Plan on a five-year cycle.

Involvement with the LVRTC was one way in which the governing body could engage key partners in establishing, managing, and maintaining the trail system. Partnerships with the Regional Planning Commissions, municipalities, Friends of the LVRT, user groups, and many other stakeholders were also pursued outside of the committee membership. Opportunities for engagement through fundraising, event planning, maintenance planning and activities, management plan review (every two years), pursuit of enhancements to the trail, and connections to communities along the trail invited more membership and involvement from the

public and trail stakeholders. These champions of the trail have been involved in a wide range of activities from securing funding for large construction efforts to clearing downed trees after a storm. The LVRT.org website was established by VAST to create a forum for these layers of involvement from trail stakeholders and the public.

In addition to the governance structure and public involvement aligning with the vision for the trail, the 2016 Management Plan set guidelines for conflict and dispute resolution and citizen concerns, requests, complaints. For grievances, submission of a written grievance to VAST for review by the LVRTC required response within 14 days. The 2016 Management Plan outlined the process for holding a hearing with the VAST Board of Directors and the appeal process to bring a grievance before the Vermont Transportation Board. For concerns, complaints, or requests regarding the trail from users or the public, the 2016 Management Plan set the process for submitting these to the LVRTC for consideration and outlined the protocols for response, with the goal of responding within 30 days of the complaint.

The 2016 Management Plan also set guidelines for the trail uses (including recreational activities, seasonal restrictions, and special use permits), hours of operation, and law enforcement. The approach outlined in the 2016 Management Plan included education and enforcement. Outreach to user groups through partnerships, brochures, newsletters, signage, and other methods were part of the educational outreach approach, working to inform regular users, visitors, and the general public of the rules and regulations. Without jurisdictional authority, coordination with law enforcement was essential. The County Sheriffs were identified as the primary contact for law enforcement with VT State Police dispatch to VT Fish and Wildlife Wardens for each district as a secondary means of enforcement. VAST has a cooperative agreement with law enforcement referenced in the 2016 Management Plan that is renewed annually. Additionally, VAST outlined strategies for speed and noise management related to snowmobile use, including the installation of speed cameras for targeted enforcement purposes and in field tests for adherence to decibel level standards. It is

Vision Statement from the 2016 LVRT Management Plan

“... to produce and maintain a premier year-round multi-use recreation and alternative transportation facility that will have national and international recognition as one of the finest Rail-Trails in the US and Canada. We envision a rural alternative transportation facility that will allow all users to enjoy the natural, scenic Vermont landscape to its fullest...”



noted that in lieu of field testing for adherence to decibel level standards, state law now requires snowmobiles to have mufflers certified by Snowmobile Safety and Certification Committee.

The 2016 Management Plan outlined types of facilities and amenities that would enhance the corridor. The 2016 Management Plan recognized that towns along the corridor have public parking facilities, but as the need for more parking facilities arises, collaboration with municipalities to develop mutually beneficial parking areas to meet town and LVRT needs will be pursued through partnerships. Maps of currently available parking for completed sections were posted to the LVRT.org website.

Path connectivity was identified as essential to serve trail users and adjacent communities. The 2016 Management Plan identified the existing trail systems that would be connected to the LVRT, including the following:

- › Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail
- › Long Trail (Hiking Trail)
- › Catamount Trail (Cross Country Ski Trail)
- › Vermont Association of Snow Travelers Trail System (21 connecting trails)
- › Cambridge Greenway Trail
- › Swanton Fit & Healthy Trail
- › Cricket Hill Trails
- › Hardwick State Forest Trails
- › St. Johnsbury River Path
- › Three Rivers Recreation Trail

Many community-based recreational paths connecting to the LVRT, including constructed or planned paths in Morrisville, Johnson, and Jeffersonville were highlighted in the 2016 Management Plan. The Plan noted that the completed LVRT can serve as a catalyst for more local recreation paths to provide connections between villages or town centers and the corridor.

Proximity to the Missisquoi River, Lamoille River and Black Branch Brook lends the LVRT corridor to serve as fishing and canoeing access, encouraged through partnerships. Partnerships between VTrans, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Trout Unlimited, Northern Forest Canoe Trail, and other waterway touring, and fishing organizations were identified as crucial to this type of recreation access along the corridor.

The 2016 Management Plan also identified trailside amenities such as benches, pause places, picnic areas, and information kiosks that will enhance the user experience. Again, coordination with local communities, appropriate committees, chambers of commerce, and other stakeholders were critical to pursuing these enhancements. Particularly for information kiosks, these can serve as informational opportunities for connecting trail users with other off-trail amenities. It was noted that potential restoration of rail infrastructure like stations or sheds will require coordination with historical societies, State Historic Preservation Officers, and VTrans.

The 2016 Management Plan provided details on the trail conversion project as well as funding of the improvements. VAST committed to helping identify the 20% matching funds required of the Federal grants supporting the project through other grants, private foundations, capital campaigns, etc. The proposed alternative was described as the rail trail conversion along the existing ROW, developed according to the Vermont Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Vermont Pedestrian and Bicycle Policy Plan, Regional Planning Commissions, and Vermont General Assembly's intentions. The trail would be developed following guidance from the Transportation Enhancement Program, Americans with Disabilities Act, Vermont Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Planning and Design Manual, and VTrans standards.

Maintenance considerations for the winter (December to April) and summer seasons were considered in the 2016 Management Plan. Winter maintenance activities, including grooming, marking areas of mixed joint use (skiing and snowmobiling), enforcement, and others, were coordinated with VAST and local snowmobile clubs. Summer (or non-winter) maintenance was coordinated with towns to assist with activities such as mowing and vegetation clearing, making use of potential volunteer groups. The maintenance requirements were detailed in the annual development and maintenance plan.

Existing Document Review

The Existing Document Review section discusses previous documentation of the LVRT in various local and regional plans, as well as statewide plans and policies that influenced the corridor development. Many of the towns along the corridor recognize the opportunity to connect their town center activities with the trail as an economic development driver to enhance their local community. Additionally, many municipalities plan on using the trail as a way to encourage and improve outdoor recreation to benefit the health and lifestyle of their community members.

Regional Plans

- › The *Northeast Kingdom Region Plan* (2018) published by the Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) promotes the LVRT as an opportunity toward achieving the region's goals of expanding tourism, revitalizing the downtowns and village centers, and decreasing reliance on single occupancy vehicle trips and gas/diesel powered vehicles.
- › The *2015-2023 Lamoille County Regional Plan (2015)* acknowledged the history of the Lamoille Valley Railroad serving as an east-west transportation corridor through the region and the development of the corridor into a four-season recreational trail with the potential to connect communities within the region and beyond. There were specific LVRT related, long-term (beyond 8-years) action items outlined in the implementation plan, including taking an active participation role in the implementation of the LVRT, promoting the economic opportunities of the trail, and pursuing connections to the trail (both

on the existing transportation network and potential direct or off-highway connections). In addition, the section on Brownfield redevelopment noted assessment, remediation, and redevelopment projects that include sites to be utilized as trailheads for the LVRT.

- › The *Plan for the Northwest Region 2015-2023 (2015)* identified the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail and the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail as two significant recreation assets to the region. The plan acknowledged the call to further enhance bicycle connections in the region and promote “recreation-oriented tourism.” One goal in the plan supported establishment and inclusive use of recreational facilities while encouraging expansion of multiuse recreational trails in the region. The plan also acknowledged trails should be extended to connect to downtown and village areas and that heavily trafficked trail crossings may require crossing treatments like crosswalks or beacons, particularly within regional growth centers.

Municipal Plans

The LVRT is also featured in numerous town plans:

- › The *Danville Town Plan (2018)* seeks to capitalize on existing recreational resources, including the LVRT, by supporting businesses providing services to local and tourist users. The Plan also supports the restoration of the railroad depot station in Danville village to promote local goods and services as well as other noteworthy destinations along the Rail Trail.
- › The *Morristown Town Plan (2015)* identifies the LVRT as an opportunity to link downtown Morristown with local, regional and statewide recreational resources.
- › The *St. Johnsbury Town Plan (2017)* recognizes the recreational benefit of the LVRT and the need to connect recreation trail traffic to the downtown area.
- › The *Greensboro Town Plan (2018)* encourages the LVRT through Greensboro Bend and installation of an attractive “station”.
- › The *Hardwick Town Plan (2014)* recognizes Hardwick’s unique point along the LVRT, a transition point where the almost level river valley starts to climb over hills to the Connecticut River valley, making Hardwick an excellent location for starting or ending a trip along the four-season trail. The town identifies plans to connect the LVRT, Hardwick Trails, and Hardwick to Woodbury Rail Trail.
- › The *Wolcott Town Plan (2018)* cites a need to develop a comprehensive plan for amenities, facilities, and aesthetics for the LVRT. The Town Plan makes several specific recommendations to improve connection including amenities for rail trail users such as trailheads, parking and picnic areas, improved connectivity between the rail trail, Wolcott Village and Wolcott Elementary School, and improved recreational access to the Lamoille River. Wolcott notes that the Fisher Covered Railroad Bridge, the town’s only structure listed on the National Register of Historic places, is situated along the LVRT corridor.

Wolcott also seeks collaboration with the LVRT Committee, VAST, and others to secure funds and resources to accomplish the necessary bridge work along the trail.

- › The *Town and Village of Johnson Municipal Development Plan* (2016) recommends the Town design and implement solutions to better interconnect the LVRT and the Village Center to enable pedestrians, bicyclists and snowmobilers' access to downtown amenities and services. Solutions include new directional signs, placement of signs along Railroad Street, and signage promoting downtown Johnson at critical junctions of the Trail and town roads. The plan also encourages streetscape enhancements to Railroad Street to improve the appearance as a Village "Gateway" from the LVRT.
- › The *Cambridge Town Plan* (2018) outlines the town's vision to make the community a hub for activity originating on the trail and recommends that the Planning Commission should participate in efforts to tie the LVRT to other trails, villages, services, parking, and attractions in Cambridge. Cambridge also seeks to improve amenities along the trail including public Wi-Fi "hotspots" at trailheads. The town recognizes that the lack of a pedestrian crossing of VT Route 15 in Jeffersonville is a significant barrier to pedestrian circulation between the Village and the LVRT.
- › The *Fairfield Municipal Plan* (2021) encourages efforts to connect the LVRT with Fairfield Village to further the town's goal of providing safe and economical transportation network and maintaining existing pedestrian infrastructure.
- › The *Highgate Town Plan* (2015) recommends that the town work with VAST and Friends of the LVRT as the trail is developed to ensure the needs of the community are considered.
- › The *Swanton Town and Village Municipal Plan* (2015) recommends exploring opportunities for new bike paths, creating an outdoor gear rental program, and improving connection between the end of the LVRT and downtown by improving signage, mapping, and sidewalks.

Figure 7 Existing Trail Related Signage and Trailhead Kiosks in Hyde Park and St. Johnsbury



Other Studies

Several other local scoping projects and studies highlight and recommend enhancements along the LVRT.

- › Through Danville’s 2019 *Village to Village Project Activity Center Master Plan*, the town developed a master plan that improves connections along the LVRT, supports interest in outdoor activity, builds a sense of place and encourages economic vitality. The project focused on the east-west Route 2 and LVRT corridor through Danville, from Parker Road on the east to the access of Joe’s Pond on VT 15 to the west. The plan proposed several wayfinding and infrastructure improvements to ease access from the LVRT to Danville and West Danville town centers and promote the economic growth of the towns. Infrastructure related improvements the Villages of Danville propose related to the LVRT include improving the US Route 2 trail crossings at Larrabee’s and Marty’s by upgrading to gated trail crossing warning signs and increasing the distances warning signs are located from the trail crossing. Currently Marty’s is used as a parking area for users to access the LVRT across US Route 2 via the sewage treatment plant driveway, therefore the crossing is unsigned. The town also aims to connect Danville Village to the LVRT trailhead at the old train station via restriping Peacham Rd with advisory shoulders and revitalizing the old train station as a welcome center with amenities for trail users. A Bicycle & Pedestrian Scoping Study further details these infrastructure improvements and many others in Danville and West Danville Villages. The Master Plan proposes wayfinding improvements including cohesive recreational and pedestrian directional signs, information boards, and trail, town, and destination maps. Kiosks with trail maps would be installed at the trail head at Joe’s Pond in West Danville and the old train station in Danville as well as town map and informational kiosks at the Park and Ride in West Danville, at Marty’s and in downtown Danville.
- › *Kingdom Roads: Safer Spaces for Walking and Biking in Craftsbury, Greensboro, Hardwick, and Barton Village* (2017) was prepared by Local Motion and recognizes the LVRT’s potential to bring health and economic benefits of biking to the region. The plan suggests that municipalities should leverage the LVRT through marketing and rail trail-area development, creating safer connections between the trail to nearby village centers. The plan outlines improvements for village centers in conjunction with using road and gravel bicycle routes as connections to village centers and other trail networks like the LVRT.
- › Hyde Park’s *Main Street Action Plan* (2020) identifies the LVRT as an asset that encourages activity and tourism for the Village of Hyde Park. A challenge of the village is providing reasons for people to leave the trail and come into the village. The plan dedicates a chapter to the discussion of the LVRT including crossing locations, trail volumes, planned improvements, and connections to other trail networks and recreational amenities.
- › Cabot’s *Hub + Spoke: Trail Network Master Plan and Implementation Program* plans to connect the Town of Cabot to both the LVRT and the Cross Vermont Trail.

- › The *St. Johnsbury Riverfront Conceptual Access Study* plans to connect the LVRT via the Three Rivers Recreation Trail to downtown on a combination of bike lanes and paths.
- › The *Village of Hyde Park Main Street Action Plan* proposed implementing wayfinding signs through the downtown corridor to the LVRT trailhead on Depot Street Extension and the trail crossing at Black Farm Road. In addition to the wayfinding signs, the town installed trail maps and information kiosks at the Depot Street Extension trailhead and Black Farm Road trail crossing. Examples of the installed signage are included in Figure 7 above. These signs follow a town wide design, outlined in *The Village of Hyde Park Pedestrian Master Plan*, which differs from other town's signage efforts. The action plan also proposed infrastructure changes that would improve access to the LVRT and encourage users to navigate off trail and into downtown. These plans include improving the VT 15 crossing from the Lamoille Union High School to Black Farm Road and creating a loop along the LVRT from the Depot Street Extension trailhead to the Black Farm Road crossing and then through downtown via Main Street and Depot Street back to the trailhead. The VT 15 crossing is already heavily used by students accessing the LVRT, particularly the cross-country ski team, and could be used by LVRT travelers to access the Cricket Hill trails behind the high school. Hyde Park has hosted an array of events to promote trail use including 5K runs, pop-up historic tours, ice cream socials, and more.
- › The *Greensboro Bend Revitalization Plan* identified priority projects to implement in the immediate vicinity of the LVRT within the Greensboro Bend community. Through a public process the plan set goals for the broader community revitalization efforts and recommended implementation. For the trail junction specifically, elements considered in the plan included development of a public parking facility on VTrans owned right-of-way, development of Depot Park to support trail activities and amenities like food trucks, enhancements to the intersection of the trail and Main Street, potential opportunities for the rehabilitation of the Depot, as well as opportunities for gateway signage and public art installations.

LVRT as a State Park

The Vermont General Assembly, as part of Act 139 of 2020 requested that the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR), in consultation with the Secretary of Administration, developed and submitted a plan to the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committee on Institutions on whether the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail may be developed into a linear State Park. The [submitted report](#) recognized that the FPR could be a good fit, given their experience in conducting stewardship activities on state-owned lands. However, a significant portion of VT State Parks' operating budget is supported by the sale of park services and entry fees and the LVRT was deemed not a good match for fee-controlled use and operations, requiring a different model for financial support. Rails to Trails Conservancy estimates the average cost per mile to

maintain a rail trail is approximately \$3,600 annually, amounting to approximately \$350,000 per year for the LVRT. Based on these findings, it was recognized that moving forward with an updated Management Plan will provide a framework to understand the maintenance and stewardship needs. The strengths and challenges of current and possible alternative management models should be considered.

Funding Sources

Existing Funding and Appropriations

In 2021, the Vermont General Assembly stipulated that VTrans shall incorporate funding for the maintenance of the LVRT each year in the annual Capital Program (H.433, Act 55, Section 13). The proposed authorization for maintenance of the LVRT should include the following actions:

- › Maintenance and repair or replacement of any bridges along the LVRT;
- › Maintenance and repair of the fencing along LVRT and any leased lines;
- › Maintenance and repair of the stormwater systems for the LVRT;
- › Any large-scale surface maintenance required due to dangerous conditions along the LVRT or compromise of the rail bed of the LVRT, or both;
- › Resolution of any unauthorized encroachments related to the rail bed, but not the recreational use of the LVRT; and,
- › Any other maintenance obligations required of the Agency under a memorandum of understanding entered into regarding the maintenance of the LVRT.

The capital programming outlined above focuses on the management, maintenance, and operations of the linear trail system that falls within the state-owned right-of-way. Previous to this legislative action and since 2014, a line item for maintenance of the state-owned rail trail facilities has appeared in the capital program and been level funded at about \$100,000. It is anticipated that as the trail manager, VTrans will program funding strategically to support the management, maintenance, and operations of the linear trail system within the right-of-way. It is also recognized that there are vital enhancements and connections to the trail system that will require additional capital funding and continued management and maintenance resources. VTrans will look to support the communities along the LVRT in their pursuit of funding to develop and maintain these enhancements and connections to the trail system.

In June 2021, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders submitted a congressionally directed spending request for fiscal year 2022 for \$2 million directed to VTrans to provide for essential user experience enhancements and community investments along the trail. The funding would be distributed as matching grants to communities along the trail to develop projects to improve its function as a means of transportation for the public, including but not limited to trail infrastructure, such as trailheads, picnic areas, kiosks, and connections to downtowns; signage; art and history installations; marketing efforts and ambassador programs.

It is worth noting that VAST, as a managing entity of the LVRT and a non-profit, was also able to garner steady support to supplement maintenance through private donations. There may be additional opportunities for fundraising through LVRT associated non-profit entities to support user experience enhancements to the trail system.

Potential Funding Sources

A number of federal, regional, state, and local funding sources are available for communities to assist with implementing the recommendations identified in this Management Plan. The table below highlights several of these grant funding opportunities targeted towards infrastructure, connectivity, and economic development enhancements. It is important to note that many of the funding resources listed are applicable for eligible municipalities and other potential partner organizations, emphasizing the importance of local, regional, and state collaboration in securing funds for future trail improvements or enhancements.

Table 1 Potential Funding Opportunities

Grant Program	Implementing Entity	Description	Eligible Applicants	Grant Range/Match Requirements
Vermont Placemaking Projects	AARP	Funding for small projects that will employ temporary or semi-permanent changes to enhance the livability of the community for people of all ages and abilities	Statewide, regional and local government entities, and non-profit organizations	Up to \$3,000
AARP Community Challenge	AARP	Funding for improvements that will kickstart community progress toward longer term livability initiatives supporting residents of all ages	Statewide, regional and local government entities, and non-profit organizations	Up to \$50,000
Community Development Program – Planning Grants	ACCD	Federal grants for community development planning, downtown planning studies, and project development to benefit people with low to moderate incomes and/or eliminate “slums and blight”	Municipalities and/or municipalities on behalf of organizations and private owners	\$3,000 - \$1,000,000

Grant Program	Implementing Entity	Description	Eligible Applicants	Grant Range/Match Requirements
Municipal Planning Grant Program	ACCD	State grants for a wide range of municipal planning projects including land use plans, bylaws, designated downtown, village and neighborhood planning	Municipalities with adopted plans confirmed by their regional planning commission	\$2,500 - \$20,000 with local match required
Better Places	ACCD	Non-competitive, community matching grant program empowering Vermonters to create inclusive and vibrant public places	Vermont municipalities with designated downtowns, village centers, new town centers, or neighborhood development areas	\$5,000 - \$40,000 with 33% local match required
Recreational Trails Grant Program	ANR	Matching state 80/20 grants for the maintenance, restoration, design and construction of recreational trails. Both motorized and non-motorized trail projects may qualify for RTP funds	Municipalities, non-profit organizations, and other governmental entities may apply	Maximum of \$50,000 with local match of 20%
Land and Water Conservation Fund	ANR	Assists in acquirements land for parks and public outdoor recreation, as well as the development of new facilities and/or renovations of existing facilities or outdoor recreation	Municipalities	Not specified, local match of 50%
Recreational Facilities Grants Program	BGS	State matching 50/50 grants for the development and creation of community recreational opportunities	Municipalities and non-profit organizations	\$1,000 - \$25,000
Regional Economic Development Grant Program	BGS	Matching state grants to stimulate the creation and development or retention of economic development of individual or regional Vermont communities	Municipalities and non-profit organizations	\$1,000 - \$25,000
Economic Infrastructure Grants	Northern Borders Regional Commission	A federal/state partnership that invests in economic and community development projects in Vermont	Participating member states, local governments (city and county), non-profit, and Native American entities	Grants up to \$250,000 with match of 20-50% of total project cost, depending on location
VHCB Local Conservation Projects	VHCB	Local conservation projects for agricultural and recreational land, town parks and forests, swimming holes, greenways, and historic buildings for public use	Municipalities, eligible non-profit organizations, and certain state agencies	Up to \$150,000 with match required, at least 33%

Grant Program	Implementing Entity	Description	Eligible Applicants	Grant Range/Match Requirements
Animating Infrastructure Grants	VT Arts Council	Animating Infrastructure Grants support community projects that integrate art with infrastructure improvements	Projects must engage an artist to develop community projects that integrate public art with infrastructure	\$1,000 - \$15,000, no match required
Vermont Community Foundation Grants	VT Community Foundation	Grants to improve environmental sustainability, cultural heritage, social justice, historic preservation, and vitality of Vermont communities	Municipalities, non-profit organizations, grant availability varies by geographic area	Up to \$25,000, no local match required
Transportation Alternatives Program	VTrans	State matching grants for the construction, planning, and design of bike and pedestrian facilities (on or off road), sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, lighting, and others	Municipalities, transit agencies, school districts, and regional planning commissions	\$50,000 - \$300,000, local match of 20% for construction and scoping studies
Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Grants	VTrans	State matching grants for the scoping, design, and construction of bike and pedestrian facilities, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, crosswalks, shared-use paths, and lighting	Municipalities, transit agencies, school districts, and regional planning commissions	Local match of 20% for construction, 50% for state-funded small scale construction grants, and 20% for scoping projects
Better Connections Program	VTrans/ACCD	State 90/10 matching grants for planning that align land use planning community revitalization with transportation investments	Municipalities, located outside of Chittenden County with a confirmed planning process	No minimum, maximum is \$67,500, 10% local match

3

Best Practices Review

A review of rail trail management guidance documents provided a wealth of information related to managing, maintaining, and operating a rail trail. Trail management plans from several trail systems were reviewed to identify common themes and keys to success for similar trail management plans across the country.

The Management Plans reviewed for these purposes include the following:

- The **Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department Trails Management Manual** focused on standards and guidelines for planning, design, construction and maintenance of the trail and track system in Maricopa County in Arizona (2018).
- **Trail Management Best Practices** were crafted by the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) for Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady metropolitan areas in New York to inspire future groups to take and create their own successful trail systems (2012).
- The **Final Comprehensive Trail Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement** for Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Ohio was created to develop a blueprint that will guide the expansion, restoration, management, operations and use of the trail system (2012).

- The **East Central Regional Rail Trail Management Plan** managed by Brevard and Volusia County in Florida was created to provide residents and visitors with viable transportation alternatives in addition to enjoyable recreation paths (2019).
- The **Maintenance Practices and Costs of Rail Trails** was a study done by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy to provide a comprehensive survey of trail maintenance costs throughout the United States (2015).
- The **Trail Management Plan for the Tahoe Rim Trail System** in California was created to protect and enhance the trail through long-range management objectives (2010).
- The **Tobacco Heritage Trail Management Plan** was implemented by Roanoke River Rails to Trails, Incorporated in Virginia to establish a management framework for the trail to provide guidance on future construction, maintenance, and operations (2009).
- The **Greenways and Trails Toolbox and Operations and Management Document** was created by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation to provide a guide to the maintenance and management of trails by providing useful tools and tactics (2011).

The guidance and keys to success from each of the Management Plans outlined above were grouped into one of the following three main categories: 1) trail management, 2) maintenance and operations, and 3) economic development opportunities and connections to communities.

Trail Management

Management activities common across trail systems include coordination of staff and volunteers, identifying and securing operational, maintenance, and enhancement funds, budgeting, managing uses and user conflicts, setting and implementing policies and procedures, planning for the trail into the future, and engaging in outreach and public relations. An operations and maintenance plan provides one mechanism to document policies, strategies, planning, budgets, and staff data in one place. The

Management Activity Prioritization

The **East Central Regional Rail Trail Management Plan (2019)** prioritized the management activities for the trail system as follows:

- Ensure safety of patrons;
- Provide equal access for patrons;
- Protect surrounding environment;
- Present a clean, comfortable, and enjoyable experience;
- Encourage user feedback;
- Provide maps and brochures;
- Promote a “share the trail” ethic;
- Celebrate our successes.

[Rails to Trails Conservancy Toolbox](#) and other management plans identify several additional management considerations, such as:

- Risk management and liability;
- Negotiating easements and agreements;
- Safe speed strategies including speed limits, calming devices, advanced warning signs, trail user right of way;
- E-Bike regulation;
- Trail use surveys and trail counts by user type; and,
- Trail equity.

Common across the management plans reviewed was consideration of policies regarding trail uses and user conflicts. Setting policy that identifies acceptable uses is just the first step. Educating users on allowable uses and trail user right of way are critical to minimizing conflicts and promoting safe trail use. Strategies to reach users include educational signage, promotional materials, and programming. The plan for Maricopa County trails points to signage as a mechanism of informing users of trail etiquette and encourages cooperation and safe use of the trail system. Strategies detailed by the *East Central Regional Rail Trail Management Plan* included development of “Share the Trail” brochures and installation of “wheels yield to heels” signage to promote trail etiquette. Some trail systems require more active management strategies, like those detailed in *the Tahoe Rim Trail Management Plan*, where popular segments of the trail system limit uses during certain periods of time to prevent conflicts and preserve user experience.

Planning for a variety of uses via different modes as well as a variety of users at varying abilities and with differing needs is essential to creating an inclusive user experience. As outlined in the *East Central Regional Trail Management Plan*, planning for accessibility with ADA accessible parking spaces and restroom facilities, detectable warning panels at roadway crossings, and adequate trail surfaces are important considerations, particularly at access points and trailheads. Beyond design standards, trailside amenities like rest areas, pause places, benches, water fountains, and areas with shade like pavilions can help limit barriers to trail use for users with varying abilities or mobility needs.

Essential Volunteer Involvement

The **Tobacco Heritage Trail Management Plan** identifies a myriad of ways volunteers can be involved in the trail system. Whether through day-to-day trail maintenance and operations activities like clean up, visitor service functions, and deterring criminal activity or through management or project work like planning enhancements, trail programming, and administrative tasks, volunteers play an essential role.

One key management element identified across the plans reviewed was coordination of the many partners involved in the trail system and orienting those involved towards advancing common goals. Coordination activities range from developing key partnerships with municipalities and local public works to organizing volunteer clean up days. The *Tobacco Heritage Trail Management Plan* details the role the Roanoke River Rails to Trails Board has in overseeing and coordinating administrative and operational tasks by local governments and volunteers. Similarly, the *Capital District Trails Plan* points to the importance of guidance from leadership and clear guidelines in coordinating stewardship programming at the regional, local, and volunteer levels to advance the goals of the trail system. The *Tahoe Rim Management Plan* points specifically to the relationship building and communications required to foster successful partnerships by articulating a goal to “maintain, promote, and enhance relationships – and communications – between management agencies, trail associations, and partnerships.”

Maintenance & Operations

Maintenance and operations considerations common for a trail corridor include coordination of:

- routine and remedial maintenance;
- conditions assessments and asset inventories;
- maintenance tasks;
- security and enforcement;
- safety and risk management; and,
- roles and responsibilities of state and local personnel, volunteers, and/or contractors.

The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy maintenance and management toolbox discusses important roles of municipalities and volunteers in maintaining and operating a rail trail. It is important to determine who manages and maintains the trail and how the work is funded early in the planning process for a trail to be successful. Responsibilities can be shared by municipalities, volunteers, and contractors, but to do so a cohesive plan must be developed.

Planning for a trail such as the LVRT includes asset management activities like routine infrastructure conditions assessments. A trail-wide condition inventory, kept as a map or spreadsheet, and regularly updated through yearly trail wide inspections and user reports, is a useful maintenance tool. A schedule should be kept with prioritized and yearly or seasonal maintenance tasks which are then assigned to the responsible party. The Tahoe Rim Trail suggests preparation of an annual maintenance plan

following field surveys and trail conditions assessments to identify level of maintenance for each trail segment and any specific maintenance concerns. The plan recommends collaboration in assessing trail asset conditions and developing maintenance plans and suggests holding an annual meeting with all trail maintenance partners to coordinate the upcoming season activities, issues, and projects. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation suggests maintenance plans cover routine and remedial activities, schedule how often maintenance tasks should be performed, identify who is the responsible party, and estimate costs associated with each task or incidence as well as annual budgeting costs. The Capital District Plan takes this approach one step further, suggesting maintenance plans consider life cycle costs to balance capital costs for materials with long-term maintenance implications. Prioritization of trail maintenance activities or projects may be made based on considerations like resource condition, monitoring, and usage, as outlined in the *Cuyahoga Valley Trail Management Plan*.

Routine preventative maintenance helps prolong trail life, reduces major repairs and potential accident liability, increases stewardship and pride in the community, and enhances relationships with adjacent landowners. Maintenance activities include vegetation clearing, surface and drainage repairs, and general cleaning of the trail and amenities. The Tobacco Heritage Trail emphasizes setting minimum maintenance standards for activities so that the entire trail corridor is maintained consistently. The plan recommended specifications for trail inspections, turf mowing, bank mowing, litter, graffiti removal, tree brush removal, trail survey, drainage and shoulder repair, signs, trail amenities, landscape areas, and trash pick-up. Maintenance activities can be shared by municipalities, volunteers, contractors, adopt-a-trail programs, and other resources with ongoing, regularly scheduled tasks and/or event-based programming. In Maricopa County, a training manual offers guidance on trail maintenance techniques. The *Capital District Management Plan* also emphasizes the importance of developing programs that keep people involved and create a sense of ownership, including maintenance events like litter and leaf pickup during spring cleanup events or trail cleaning work parties. Empowering individual users to keep the trail clean is another general maintenance approach. The East Central Regional Rail Trail plan highlights programming like “Pets in Parks” brochures to educate users about pet policies and “Doggie Bag” stations to remind users to clean up after pets.

Security and enforcement are operational considerations for any trail system, but the needs may vary based on trail type and context. For some trail systems, like specified in the *Capital District Trails Plan*, coordination with local police departments is a method for establishing security presence on the trail. Such partnerships may require agreements with state or local law enforcement. For other systems, like the *Eastern Central Regional Rail Trail*, trained volunteers or “trail rangers” provide a security presence on the trail.

Safety and risk management are other operational considerations that require sound management practices. The *Maricopa County Trails Plan* identifies a number of safety related and risk management activities, including the design and repair of trail elements to accepted standards, creation of a risk management team or program, development of effective sign and warning

systems, development of an emergency response plan, and development of a maintenance plan to limit safety risks from maintenance issues. Safety at trail crossings is an important operational consideration, especially for rail trails with a number of highway crossings. The *Capital District Trails Plan* stresses the importance of clarifying laws regulating safe navigation at highway crossings.

Economic Development

Fostering economic development opportunities in trail-adjacent communities generally involves creating or improving connections to communities, promoting existing services and amenities available, supporting improvements to services and amenities, and aligning with local and regional plans to amplify economic revitalization efforts already in motion. Getting more users on the trail and connecting those users to towns and village centers, or other locations with services and amenities off-trail, provides the greatest opportunity for stimulating the local economy. Support for this type of economic development requires marketing the trail to visitors from near and far and enticing visitors off the trail into local communities, while also empowering local communities to be engaged stewards of the trail and fostering a sense of inclusion and welcome.

The Rails to Trails Conservancy has aided in several Rail Trail projects across the country and hosts a variety of useful resources for trail planning, construction, and management. The Great Allegheny Passage Trail, as part of The Great American Rail Trail, has partnered with not only the Rails to Trails Conservancy, but also the Trail Town Program to enhance the trail experience by integrating the trail with the surrounding towns. The Progress Fund is a nonprofit community development financial institution that makes loans available to small and tourism-oriented businesses in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Maryland. The Trail Town Program, as part of the Progress Fund, has published multiple guides for developing trail towns within the rail trail corridor. The *Trail Town Guide: Revitalizing Rural Communities with Bike Trail Tourism* and *Trail Tours: Capturing Trail-Based Tourism* are both useful examples for creating a guide for towns when developing in conjunction with the LVRT. The Trail Town Guide stresses that there are five keys to a successful trail town: partnerships, assessment/research, connecting town to trail, development, and marketing.

Rails to Trails also has a series of toolboxes for managing and maintaining trails as well as prior steps in design, planning, funding, acquisition, and organization of the rail trail. For planning trail towns, the conservancy promotes a few basic objectives: improving trail to town connectivity, improving services and amenities, and promoting a culture of hospitality, stewardship, and inclusivity. In planning for trail towns, the RTC toolbox encourages regional planning instead of town based, assessment of visitor, community, and business needs, and continual tracking of progress through annual spending, jobs created, or new businesses opening. The *Capital District Trails Plan* points to food, drink, and public restrooms as being services in high demand

along the trail system. Existing and new businesses may help to fulfill the demand. The plan notes that businesses also incorporate their proximate location to the trail in business planning and marketing, further amplifying the positive impacts of trail activity on the local economy. Towns should encourage overnight stays by promoting other activities off the trail. This can be achieved by highlighting historic and cultural points of interest with interpretive signs, and including wayfinding signs at trailheads, in town, and on the trail that guide users to attractions and amenities within town centers.

The development of trailheads and wayfinding signs is expanded within design subsections of the toolbox. Trailheads are a gateway between trails and communities and are therefore vital in drawing users off the trail and into towns. Trailheads should include parking, signage, information kiosks, restrooms, water fountains, trash bins, bike racks, and bike repair stations at a minimum but could also include seating, historic markers, public art, landscaping, and pavilions or gazebos. Like the *Maricopa County Trails Plan* identifies, parking provided at trailheads should take into account the uses on the trail including considerations for pull through access for vehicles with trailers for equestrian use or trailheads near portages. The *Tobacco Heritage Trail Plan* outlines a rating system for indicating the amenities, types and quantity of facilities, and minimum requirements at trailheads and access points. Trailheads can also serve to host events such as farmer's markets and group rides or runs.

Interpretive signage could include trail maps, rules and regulations of the trail, warnings for poisonous plants, wild animals, weather conditions, or other hazards, community bulletin boards, information on the local environment and stewardship, history, attractions and amenities such as restrooms, food, campgrounds, and lodging, recognition of donors, and a maintenance contact. Additional wayfinding signs could include the towns name, mile markers, mileage to 3 to 4 towns in either direction, or other nearby trails. Most importantly, trail signs should be consistent across a network. The *Great Allegheny Passage Trail Graphic Identity & Signage Guidelines Manual* provides an example of a trail wide signage plan for towns to use. Additionally, plans for the Tahoe Rim Trail, Tobacco Heritage Trail, and Cuyahoga Valley Trail call for standardized signage with consistent formats for directional, informational, interpretative, and regulatory signs and kiosks.

Beyond static signage and wayfinding, the guidance for both the Maricopa County Trails and Cuyahoga Valley Trail point to interactive multimedia and emerging technologies for engaging users, residents, volunteers, and stakeholders. Tools like online mapping and information or mobile device applications can be leveraged for orienting users to the trail and providing information to visitors as well as engaging those more involved in trail activities through partnerships or volunteer activities.

4

Public Engagement

The development of the LVRT Management Plan included a robust community and stakeholder engagement process to gather a broad range of perspectives on the complete 93-mile corridor. Development of the Management Plan was a public process, where those engaged with the effort were able to provide their insight, thoughts, and concerns, helping to craft the Vision & Goals, and as such, setting the guiding principles to define and prioritize the objectives and strategies outlined in this plan. The public engagement process included the assembly of a Stakeholder Group to shepherd the planning process, group and individual interview sessions with participation from over 50 stakeholders, three hybrid public meetings attended by nearly 200 people, and online engagement through a project website, map-based crowdsourcing input tool, and online comment box.

Overview

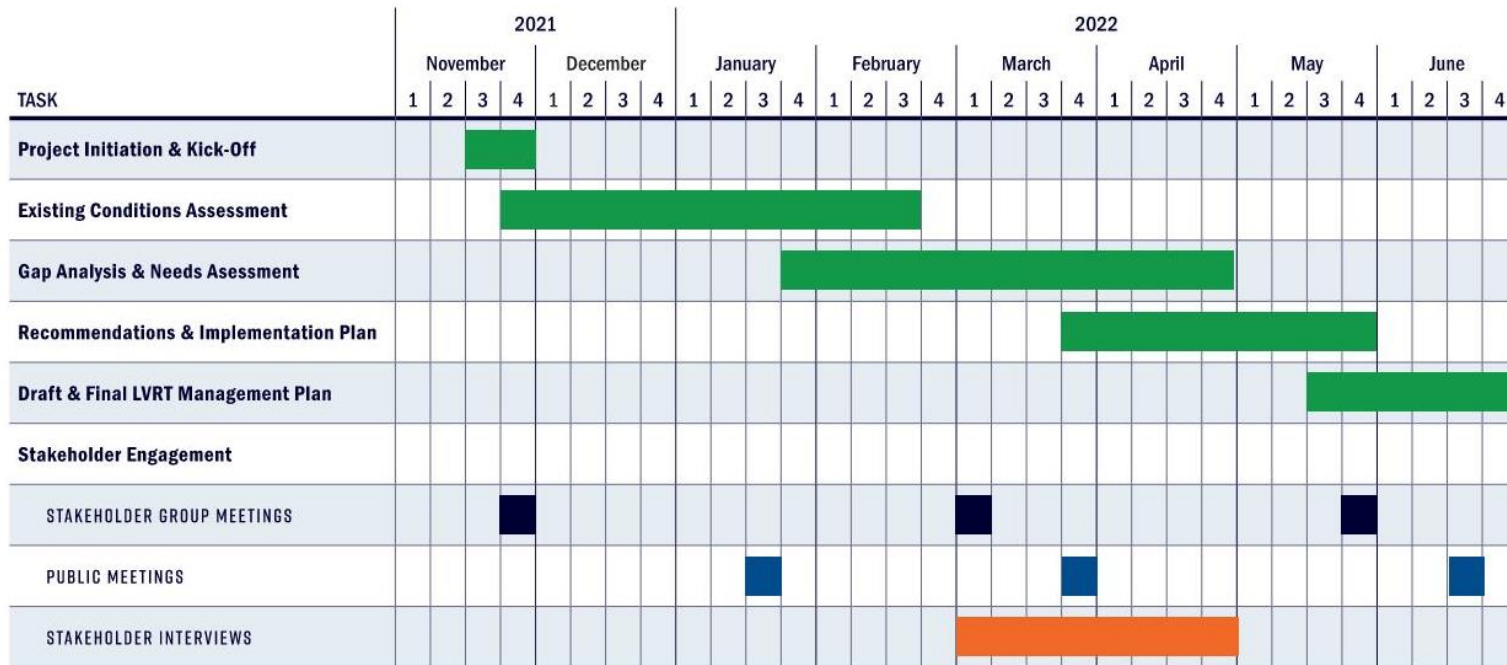
The Management Plan development process aimed to provide two-way communication between the project team and the public, facilitated through a variety of platforms. As such, there were a multitude of ways to engage with the process and contribute feedback. The public engagement period stretched from January through June of 2022.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP

- **Michele Boomhower**, VTrans Director of Policy and Planning
- **Jon Kaplan**, VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager
- **Joel Perrigo**, VTrans LVRT Construction Project Manager
- **Mark Fitzgerald**, VTrans Rail Property Management Section Chief
- **Ken Brown**, Vermont Association of Snow Travelers
- **Daniel Delabruere**, VTrans Rail and Aviation Bureau Director
- **Nate Formalarie**, Department of Tourism and Marketing
- **Rob Moore**, Lamoille County Planning Commission
- **David Snedeker**, Northern Vermont Development Association
- **Bethany Remmers**, Northwest Regional Planning Commission
- **Nancy Banks**, Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail

Figure 8 LVRT Management Plan Project Schedule

LVRT Management Plan Project Schedule



Stakeholder Group

The Stakeholder Group was formed to guide the Management Plan development process and provide feedback on the various project milestones. The group was comprised of members from VTrans, three Regional Planning Commissions, Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST), the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), and the Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. The Regional Planning Commission members provided representation of the communities and towns they support through their organization. The Stakeholder Group participated in three meetings hosted virtually, where they were asked for guidance on the materials developed for the plan and for the public. The meetings were hosted in November 2021, March 2022, and May 2022. These meetings yielded valuable information to support the strategies that will guide the management, maintenance and operations, and economic development and community connections of the LVRT into the future.

Public Meetings

Three hybrid public meetings were held during the development of the Management Plan, with one meeting held in each of the three regions along the trail: 1) centrally located in Lamoille County, 2) at the eastern trail terminus in Caledonia County, and 3) at the western trail terminus in Franklin County. These meetings were held in a hybrid environment to provide opportunity for in person engagement in each of the three regions throughout the course of the project as well as online engagement for the entirety of the corridor at each project milestone.

First Public Meeting

The first hybrid public meeting was held on January 25, 2022 in the Green Mountain Technology and Career Center in Hyde Park. There were 86 participants total at this meeting, with the majority joining virtually. In total, 119 comments were collected from the public during the session. This meeting provided an overview of the project background, construction update, existing conditions, and management plan development process. The primary purpose of the meeting was to solicit input from the community on the Vision and Goals for the completed LVRT corridor, while gathering information about the existing and anticipated issues and opportunities for the trail from a diverse range of perspectives.

One of the primary outcomes of the meeting was the findings of a visioning exercise, where the participants were prompted to provide a word or key phrase that comes to mind when they think about the completed LVRT. The most common words that appeared were connection, recreation, opportunity, and community. This first round of engagement helped to define the Vision & Goals for the LVRT following the trail's completion.

The areas that elicited the most excitement were around the connections to trail-adjacent communities and the opportunities to leverage the trail resource to spur economic development in those communities. Communities all along the trail system aspire to benefit from the recreation tourism opportunities the trail poses for the region, where trail users might visit their towns to patron businesses and check out local sights. Concerns were expressed regarding the different activities that trail users can engage in and the ongoing maintenance of the trail once it is completed. Clearer definition of who will be responsible for what tasks was sought as the management and maintenance shifts from VAST to VTrans. Meeting materials can be found in the Appendix.

Figure 9 Public Meeting #1 Word Cloud



Second Public Meeting

The second public meeting was held on March 29, 2022 at the St. Johnsbury Welcome Center. There were 60 people that participated in the hybrid meeting. The focus of this meeting was to review the draft vision and goals and further detail the development of strategies to guide the management, maintenance and operations, and economic development and community connections for the trail. This meeting provided participants the opportunity to engage using PolLEV, where regardless of whether they were participating in person or virtually, attendees could engage with the same set of questions. Questions specifically around trail access, amenities, and connections with trail communities were asked of participants, and there were 108 responses collected from the engaged user group through the polling. The top three amenities that community members would like to see are restrooms, trail maps, and water fountains. Additionally, participants were asked about community connections and what potential barriers exist to getting trail users in to trail adjacent towns. It was clear from the polling that

participants would prioritize getting information to trail users regarding the services and amenities available in nearby areas and wayfinding to guide the navigation to these areas. Meeting materials can be found in the Appendix.

Third Public Meeting

The third public meeting was held on June 21, 2022 at the Swanton Municipal Complex. There were 51 people that participated in the hybrid meeting. This was the final meeting for the public outreach component of the Management Plan, and the goal of the meeting was to share the draft strategies that are recommended for the management, maintenance and operations, and economic development and community connections for the LVRT in the short- and long-term. The presentation highlighted areas that are high priority as the linear trail construction is completed and the management, maintenance, and operations are turned over to VTrans. In particular, the topics of trail identity, trailhead development, and trailside amenities were detailed in the discussion. The development and maintenance planning for strategically located trailheads serving trail users with different levels of trailside amenities will require close collaboration between the Rail Trails Program staff, Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees, and municipalities. Trailheads will serve as the primary gateways to the trail and to trail towns, and as such the planning for these and other pause places and trail connections will become the next focus for capital improvement along the LVRT. Community members had the opportunity to ask questions either in person, through the Q&A feature, or verbally via Zoom. There were roughly 40 questions asked or comments made by participating community members online and in person that were responded to during the session. Questions ranged from when the segments currently under construction would be traversable to clarifications on who would be responsible for maintenance activities once VTrans is managing the trail and whether communities will be expected to assist with those activities. Overall, the sentiment was excitement for the completion of the trail and the anticipation of improvements to come. Meeting materials can be found in the Appendix.

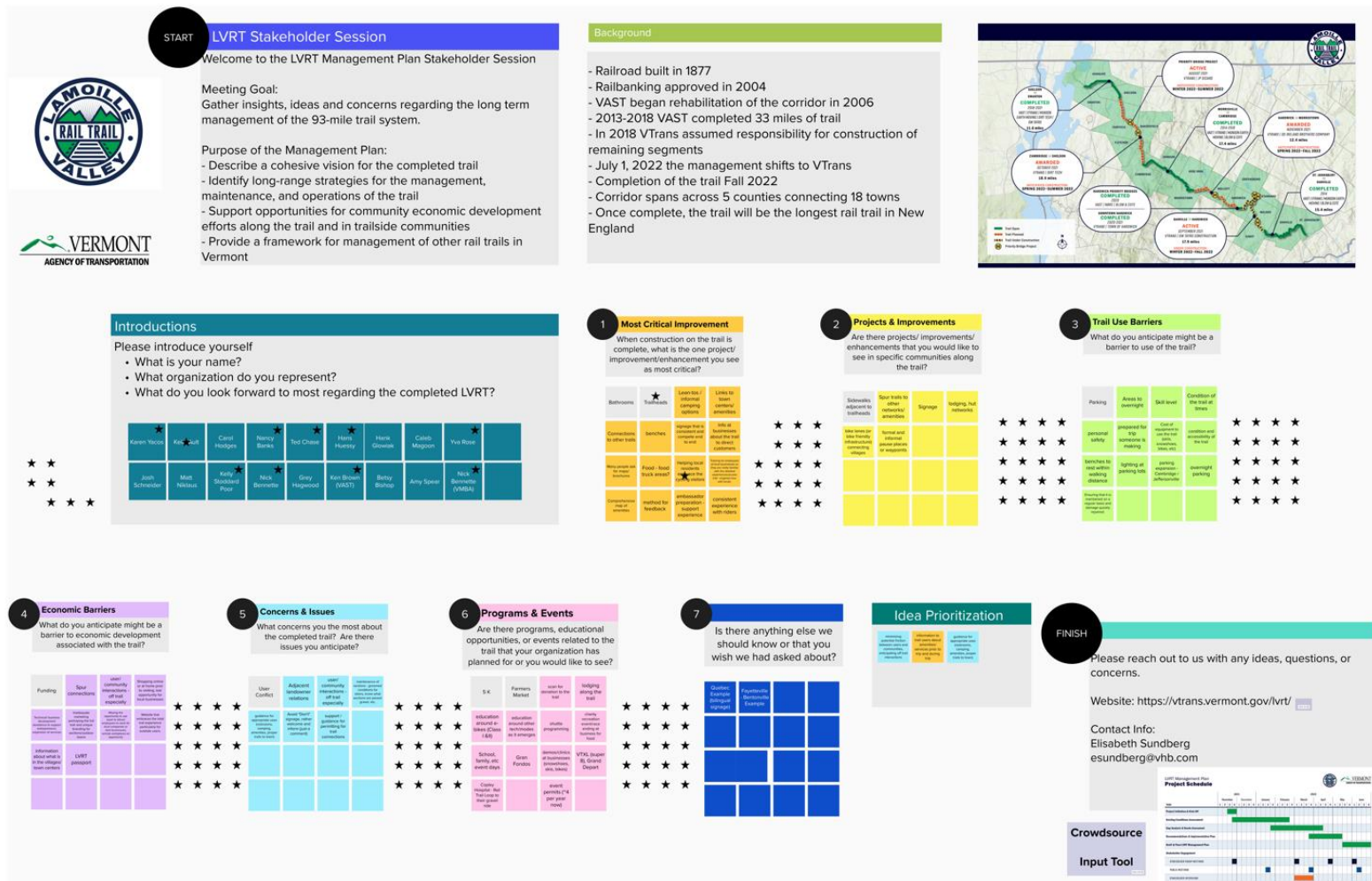
Stakeholder Interviews

Representatives from municipalities, schools, businesses, chambers of commerce, active transportation advocacy, recreation organizations, and regional planning commissions were assembled in group interview sessions. Five group interview sessions were held with a total of 54 representatives participating in the conversations. The meetings were conducted virtually and utilized the online whiteboard platform, Mural. Mural allowed the participants to engage on the “board” while others were speaking. A series of prompting questions on the board included the opportunity to add a sticky note with participant’s ideas, concerns, or insights. The platform was intended to capture information from the group of participants in multiple ways, allowing for dialogue simultaneous to active participation on the white board. A map-based data collection tool was also used during these discussions, where facilitators were able to highlight specific points or areas of interest along the trail and note the



significance as participants engaged in the discussion. The platform provided a means to collect more information in a condensed amount of time and serve the broad range of participants, from those eager to engage in the discussions to those that would prefer to listen, observe, and contribute in print. One of the archived Mural sessions is shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10 LVRT Mural Layout



Crowdsourcing Input Tool

The crowdsourcing input tool is a map-based data gathering platform that allowed users to identify a map location and describe the issue or opportunity located in that spot. Users of the tool were then able to up vote and/or respond to the comments and descriptions others had made previously. The tool was available to the public through much of the management plan development process, opening on January 25 and closing to new comments on June 1, 2022, while remaining available to users to review comments collected through the public engagement process. The online crowdsourcing input tool has gathered over 100 points mapped to the corridor, identifying areas of concern or points of interest. The range of issues and opportunities highlighted through this platform includes concerns at roadway crossings, identifying specific community or trail connections, or locating existing or potential points for trail parking, river access, and other interests.

The mapped input tended to be clustered around areas where the trail is already established and open for use. Active use of the trail in these locations likely provoked more input in these areas, as participants reflect their experiences. However, it is recognized that the lessons learned from the existing trail segments can help to build strategies in anticipation of the recurring issues or obstacles that might affect the newest trail segments as well. The top four categories for comments on the Crowdsourcing Input Tool included Safety, Services, Recreation, and Connected Communities. These categories are consistent with the visioning exercise from the first public meeting, demonstrating that the surrounding community is consistently aligned in their vision for the corridor. The Crowdsourcing Input Tool interface is demonstrated in Figure 11.

Figure 11 LVRT Crowdsourcing Input Tool Interface

LVRT Issues & Opportunities Feedback

Sign In

LVRT Comments

+ Add Comment

- With a rail trail of this length it will be a destination attraction for bic... 10 ♥
- It might be a good idea to stress the opportunity for cyclists to find ... 6 ♥
- The Sheldon junction connecting the MVRT and the LVRT has a mo... 6 ♥
- With all the varied users, it makes sense for safety that all dogs be ... 5 ♥
- As a lifelong VT resident and third year VASA member, it would be g... 4 ♥
- Ongoing efforts to control invasive Japanese Knotweed in this area. 3 ♥
- It would be wonderful to connect this to the Stowe Rec Path to mak... 2 ♥
- This is a dangerous crossing section. We live in the area and often ... 2 ♥
- This spot is extremely dangerous. There are Blindspots, with curve... 2 ♥
- I am hopeful that dirt tech uses a different surface material for the n... 2 ♥
- Public Bicycle Repair Station 1 ♥
- Highly suggest the trail be paved because it will be torn up in no tim... 1 ♥
- There needs to be some effort to better control ATVs. I have mostly ... 1 ♥
- I hope the beautiful stone lined bridge by the Rainville farm just bef... 1 ♥
- This is a wonderful project. We have used the available portions of t... 1 ♥
- The two crossings over Route 2 (near the junction of 2 and 15) is in... 1 ♥
- Hi- we wish the LVRT did not have to cross route 2 so our childr... 1 ♥
- Please consider designating a couple days each week on the LVRT ... 1 ♥

5

Vision, Goals, and Objectives

Providing the overarching and cohesive guiding principles for the entirety of the 93-mile linear trail system, the Vision & Goals sets the stage for the next chapter in the management, maintenance & operations, and economic development & community connections for the LVRT. The Vision & Goals, developed through engagement with the public and neighboring communities of the LVRT, are summarized herein. The Vision is a concise statement that paints a picture of the desired future for the LVRT. The Goals support the Vision and lay out desired long-range outcomes to be achieved by the Management Plan. Detailed further, the Objectives associated with each goal are defined outcomes that support their respective goal.

VISION

The Vision for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is a **year-round, multi-use recreation and alternative transportation corridor** that is **well-maintained** and supports **economic vitality**, fosters **community connections**, and promotes **healthy lifestyles** across scenic, northern Vermont.

GOALS

OBJECTIVES



**Support the Economic
Vitality of Northern Vermont
Communities**

- Promote LVRT locally and regionally to draw visitors to the trail and trailside communities
- Improve connections to villages and town centers to encourage exploration of trailside communities
- Complement existing economic development plans in trailside communities



**Cultivate Community,
Culture, and History along
the Trail and in Trailside
Communities**

- Foster trail stewardship opportunities to promote sense of community pride
- Encourage inclusive and respectful trail use
- Promote rural heritage, history, and educational programming



**Promote Healthy and
Connected Communities**

- Encourage healthy and active lifestyles
- Provide meaningful opportunities for connection with the scenic, natural, and agricultural landscape
- Promote development and improve connections to recreational opportunities proximate to the LVRT
- Improve connections to alternative transportation networks and trail systems



**Preserve the Corridor and
Maintain Trail Condition**

- Provide for routine asset condition assessment, maintenance, and preservation activities
- Support well-maintained facilities for health and safety
- Provide convenient trail access points along the LVRT with clear directional signage and well-maintained parking areas



**Establish a Well-Managed
Trail System**

- Support and coordinate proactive trail management, maintenance, and operations activities
- Identify stable sources of funding for management, maintenance, operations, enhancements, and programming

The recommended strategies are the supporting actions aimed at advancing the Goals & Objectives and fall within each of the three categories: management, maintenance & operations, and economic development & community connections. Each set of recommended strategies are listed with the goals they advance and noted by goal icons in color.

For the management of the trail, the focus of the recommended strategies is on staffing the Rail Trails Program within VTrans and developing mechanisms to structure, coordinate, and engage volunteers. The management strategies are cross-cutting, advancing each of the goals defined for this process.

Within the maintenance and operations category, the recommended strategies focus on the priorities of preserving trail resources through asset management, planning for seasonal maintenance, leveraging best management practices, establishing the operations manual, and employing a count and survey program for user feedback. The maintenance and operations strategies primarily advance the goals of preserving the corridor and maintaining the trail condition, as well as establishing a well-managed trail system.

Strategies that fall within the economic development and community connections category include advancing capital improvement projects by developing pause places, trail connections, and trailheads and amenities, assisting communities in their advancement of those capital improvements, developing an interpretive signage plan to highlight cultural resources, advancing tourism and marketing of the trail to encourage visitors come use the trail and explore the trail towns, supporting educational and recreational programming and events, and establishing a cohesive trail identity. These strategies primarily advance the goals of supporting economic vitality in northern Vermont communities, cultivating community, culture, and history along the trail, and promoting healthy and connected communities.

Recommended Strategies

MANAGEMENT		GOALS ADVANCED
Human Resources/ Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a staffing structure to efficiently support continuity and strategic management, maintenance, and operations 	
Volunteer Staff Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish proposed regional trail councils to engage trail champions and coordinate local volunteers Develop training programs to engage volunteers and partnering organizations (e.g. trail ambassadors, condition assessments, adopt a segment or trailhead programs) 	
MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS		GOALS ADVANCED
Asset Management & Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct routine inspection of all trail assets (trail surface, culverts, bridge structure, bridge surface, trailheads, signs) Identify and prioritize system preservation projects 	
Seasonal Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop annual maintenance plan Identify contractors and procure services for annual seasonal maintenance activities (mowing, trail surface rehab, etc.) 	
Best Management Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt and adopt best management practices for trail specific maintenance activities including surface inspection, vegetation management, wildlife management, and flood mitigation 	
Operations Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish clear policies and procedures for: 1) Allowable uses and use permits, 2) Resolving user conflicts, 3) Mitigating encroachment & encampment issues, 4) Agreements supporting trail connections and amenities for the public good, 5) Trail access, crossing and right-of-way use agreements, and 6) Trail etiquette (incorporate in signage and promotional/educational materials) 	
User Count & Survey Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop count and survey program to gather visitor use and user feedback data 	

Recommended Strategies

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS		GOALS ADVANCED
Capital Improvements Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pause Places <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and support development of pause places • Trail Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of connecting or spur trail systems • Support promotion of regional or destination loops connecting to the LVRT • Trailheads & Amenities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish network of trailheads to provide trail access and trailside amenities at regular frequencies • Engage with local communities in the development and maintenance of trailheads and trailside amenities 	
Community Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support communities seeking funding for development or enhancement projects (e.g. trailheads, amenities, wayfinding, services, gateways, pathways to trailside communities) 	
Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with state and local historical organizations to identify historical site opportunities and develop interpretive signage plan 	
Tourism & Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build out LVRT visitor website and investigate integrating trip planning tools into the website • Coordinate with partner agencies and organizations to develop regional marketing campaign • Leverage recreational tourism opportunities through promotion of multisport synergies and coordinate with partner organizations (VAST, paddlers, Northern Forests, GMC, Velomont, local trail stewards/councils) • Encourage camping and lodging opportunities in trailside communities to support multiday tourism opportunities • Support development of trail friendly business program • Support development of visitor passport or quest program to encourage exploration • Identify funding and support research to quantify economic impact of the LVRT on trail communities and broader regional and state level economies 	
Educational & Recreational Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage local and regional trail based educational and recreational programming and events in coordination with schools, libraries, and other organizations or resources • Support bike, ski, snowshoe lending libraries and/or rental opportunities • Support working lands educational and promotional opportunities to highlight Vermont farms and forests as part of the LVRT identity 	
Trail Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a cohesive trail identity and incorporate into signage, wayfinding, guidance, amenities, and promotional materials 	

6

Management

The management of the trail system entails coordinating staff and volunteer resources, identifying and securing operational, maintenance, and enhancement funds, setting and implementing policies and procedures, planning and budgeting for trail improvements, and engaging in stakeholder outreach and public relations. Many of these activities are cross-cutting and crucial to the basic function of the LVRT by supporting maintenance and operations activities, as well as fostering the desired community connections and leveraging the economic development opportunities the trail system presents to neighboring communities.

Overview

Coordination and communication are key to a well-managed trail system, as managing a 93-mile trail requires the efforts of many individuals. Essential to the effective management of the LVRT are the following:

- › Clear roles and responsibilities for the VTrans Rail Trail team as well as any supporting entities;
- › Operational plans in place for coordinating resources and communicating information between entities;
- › Broad communication of plans to align resources towards common goals; and,
- › Regular evaluation of progress towards the stated LVRT goals with adjustments as needed to more efficiently utilize both human and financial resources.

Staffing Structure

Establishing a Rail Trail Program within VTrans that is staffed appropriately to manage, maintain, and operate the LVRT while anticipating the needs of the program when other state-owned, railbanked rail trails come under VTrans management.

Recommended Strategy: Implement a staffing structure that efficiently supports continuity and strategic management, maintenance, and operations of VTrans' rail trail assets.

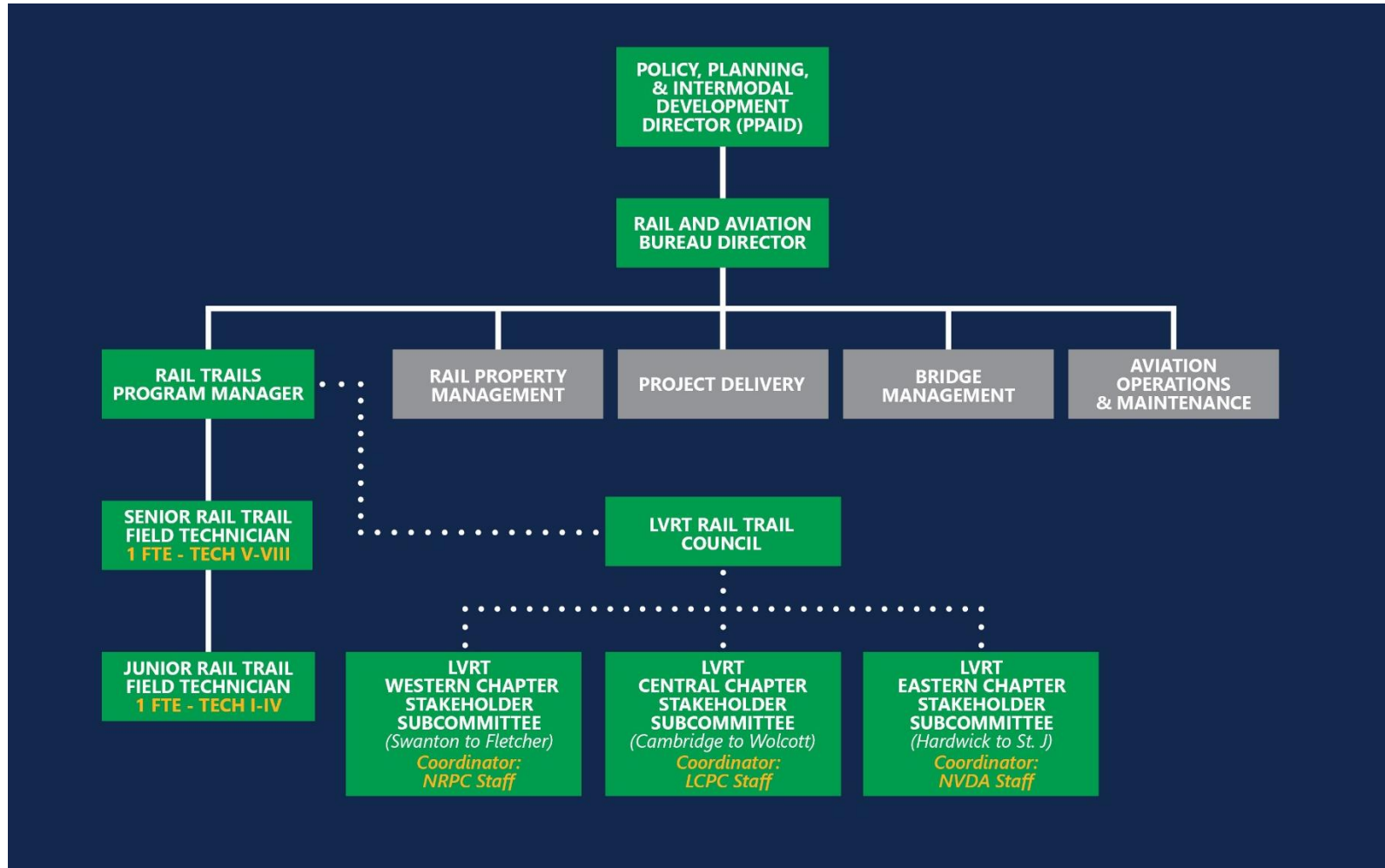
One of the key management policy recommendations identified in this plan is to ensure continuity in the rail trail program's staffing structure. The *VTrans 2040 Long Range Plan* acknowledges the potential risks to transportation assets without retention of a knowledgeable workforce. This applies to the rail trail system managed by VTrans, where retaining a knowledge base to support the management and operations of a functional trail system and its assets while also supporting the trail user experience will require a dedicated and versatile staff. Having this foundational knowledge base shared across multiple individuals provides the opportunity to transfer knowledge through staff training and job shadowing opportunities.

To achieve the goal of right-sizing the staffing for the State's rail trails, while ensuring continuity across the rail trail system, we recommend that a total of three Agency staff positions are dedicated to managing and operating the LVRT, including a Rail Trails Program Manager, a Senior Rail Trail Field Technician, and a Junior Rail Trail Field Technician. This three-person team will be supported by a number of other VTrans sections as well as outside professional consultants and contractors.

Rail Trail Program Staffing

In anticipation of just over 50 additional miles of rail trail coming under the VTrans management umbrella in the coming years, the distribution of Field Technicians should be revisited in 2 to 3 years at the program level. It is anticipated that the program will continue to need a minimum of two Field Technicians to cover the maintenance and operations of the LVRT, especially from a continuity standpoint. However, annual tracking, planning, and budgeting for the segments of the 93-mile trail may reveal potential efficiencies. Further, this 2-to-3-year period will allow VTrans staff to get comfortable managing the LVRT and provides sufficient time for enough data to be gathered to inform the needs of the trail in subsequent years. As additional rail trails come under VTrans' jurisdiction, additional staffing efficiencies may be realized through distribution of Field Technicians regionally, on a trail segment basis, or case-by-case based on availability, and should be evaluated regularly to determine the appropriate staff resource allocation.

Figure 12 Recommended Rail Trail Program Organizational Structure



Rail Trails Program Manager

The Rail Trails Program Manager (RTPM) serves as the primary liaison for trail related actions and decision-making. As the primary point person within VTrans for all rail trail related actions, the RTPM's role entails the following:

- › Coordinating supporting staff, other Agency resources, volunteers through LVRT Trail Council and Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee membership, as well as collaborating with the Regional Planning Commissions and local municipalities;
- › Supporting efforts to connect stakeholders to external funding for capital improvement projects;
- › Implementing policies and procedures regarding the trail system including advocating for adjustments to existing policies or new policies to address needs;
- › Developing short- and long-range plans and tracking tasks and budgets for prioritization of maintenance, operations, and capital projects;
- › Tracking progress towards the rail trail Vision & Goals with regular reporting;
- › Engaging adjacent parcel owners, community members, trail users, businesses, law enforcement, emergency service providers, and other stakeholders with regular presence on the trail and in support of various projects, initiatives, or response to issues;
- › Coordination with Agency outreach and ACCD to reach the public for status updates, service information, trail promotion, and user feedback.

Recognizing the need for this role as the LVRT comes under VTrans management, this RTPM position was recently added to the Rail and Aviation Bureau. The RTPM will focus primarily on managing the trail and facilitating the user experience through collaboration with the trail's many stakeholders and communities, while supporting the work of the Rail Trail Field Technicians in maintenance and operations along the trail.

LVRT Staffing Lessons Learned

Prior to July 1, 2022, management and operations of the 34 operational miles of the LVRT was staffed by a Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) staff member (approximately ½ FTE) and supported by a VTrans Field Technician (approximately ½ FTE). In this capacity, the focus of the trail manager was on maintaining a minimum standard of performance on the open trail segments primarily through remedial and seasonal maintenance activities, addressing operational issues or concerns as they arose, and supporting design and construction activities. Planning for asset management and preventative maintenance activities were largely absent from the duties. Extrapolating the 1 FTE that managed and maintained the 34 miles of LVRT prior to 2022 out to the full 93-mile system indicates a base need of 3 FTE to continue even the current level of service along the trail.

Rail Trail Field Technicians

The role of the Rail Trail Field Technicians (RTFT) is primarily focused on the maintenance and operational functions of the trail system, with additional oversight on projects that are within or connecting to the trail system. The RTFT role is responsible for:

- › Identifying preventative maintenance projects based on condition assessments and working knowledge of the trail assets;
- › Assisting with project prioritization and project development as needed;
- › Coordinating response to operational issues or remedial maintenance needs with support from the RTPM;
- › Updating the Job Order Contracting list and procuring services seasonally and as needed;
- › Establishing performance standards for trail assets and evaluating adherence to those standards;
- › Coordinating with RTPM on planning and budgeting;
- › Engaging adjacent parcel owners, community members, stakeholders, trail users, law enforcement, emergency service providers, and other stakeholders with regular presence on the trail and in support of various projects, initiatives, or response to issues.

It is anticipated that the RTPM and RTFT will work in close coordination to further the goals for the trail system. To meet the anticipated demands in the next few seasons as the LVRT is built out, it is anticipated that two field technicians will be required. Staffing a senior RTFT with a more junior RTFT would also provide for staffing continuity and alleviate a potential risk identified in the staffing structure.

Trail System Management Staffing Examples

The professional staffing of trail system management varies tremendously around the country. Entities responsible for the management of trails range from nonprofit volunteer-based organizations to municipalities and land conservancies to state or federal agencies. For some trails, like the 9-mile Zim Smith Trail near Round Lake, NY, there is one full time county level staff person focused on management and maintenance. For other systems, like the Erie Canalway Trail, there is a team of staff working for multiple organizations to realize the economic development opportunities of the system and manage and maintain the 360 miles of trail. This includes programmatic initiatives by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor under the umbrella of the National Park Service, maintenance and operations through the Canal Corporation, and the promotion and marketing of the trail through the Parks and Trails New York nonprofit. Beyond the professional staff, there are volunteer efforts through trail ambassador, adopt a segment, canal clean up, and annual bike tour programming.

Volunteer Staff Management

Recommended Strategy: Establish proposed Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees to engage trail champions and coordinate local volunteers.

A mechanism to engage communities, volunteers, and trail champions and coordinate efforts to create the desired user experience was recognized as a need for the LVRT. Drawing on the experiences in northwest Vermont with the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, the concept of a rail trail council is recommended for the LVRT.

An LVRT Trail Council will provide the overarching coordination for Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees. Made up of a diverse group of representatives, the membership within each Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee will include municipalities, businesses, outdoor recreation providers, economic development and chamber staff, and other trail champions. The membership should aim to involve a representative from each municipality and from each user group.

At the regional level, the Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees will meet every two months to coordinate volunteer initiatives, plan for programming and events, support local and regional programming (e.g. trail friendly business program), assist in marketing the trail, coordinate fundraising efforts, and support municipalities or consortiums to plan for development and maintenance trailheads, trailside amenities, and trail connections.

A Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee Coordinator will guide the regional efforts. Supported through funding from VTrans' Transportation Planning Initiative, the Coordinator role will be filled by a Regional Planning Commission staff person with a portion of their full-time effort dedicated to the TPI initiative and Stakeholder Subcommittee tasks. Their responsibilities will include coordination of bi-monthly meetings, volunteer initiatives, membership trail presence, regional programming, other membership activities, and liaison with the LVRT Trail Council and Agency Rail Trail Staff.

Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council Model

The Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council is a non-profit entity affiliated with the Northwest Regional Planning Commission and partially funded through the Transportation Planning Initiative. The primary functions of the council are to support engagement with trail communities, coordinate volunteers and initiatives, assist in trail promotion and outreach, support project development and implementation, encourage educational programming, and provide eyes and ears on the trail through its membership. The Council Coordinator currently reports maintenance and operations issues to VTrans, updates business directories and restocks kiosks, responds to trail and trip planning inquiries, updates trail specific website, coordinates council meetings, engages membership, coordinates volunteer efforts on trail clean up and trailhead maintenance, and supports nonprofit fundraising. The member responsibilities and by-laws should be used as a template and adapted for the LVRT Trail Council and Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee.

Supported by the Rail Trail Program Manager, coordinators and other members from each Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee will comprise the LVRT Trail Council. The LVRT Trail Council will provide a forum for cross pollination across the regions, coordination on trail wide efforts, and alignment with the overarching Vision & Goals for a holistic and consistent approach. The LVRT Trail Council should plan to convene as a group two times a year.

Recommended Strategy: Develop training programs to engage volunteers and partnering organizations (e.g. trail ambassadors, condition assessments, adopt a segment or trailhead programs).

Involving volunteers and partnering organizations is key to fostering the trail stewardship opportunities that will promote a sense of community pride along the trail system. Volunteer efforts have contributed to the realization of the present day LVRT and will continue to serve a critical role in managing a long, linear trail system. The Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees will play a key role in engaging with volunteers and community members to identify and support the activities that serve the needs of the trail and the community. Empowering volunteers and community members to help define their trail stewardship approach will be key to fostering trail champions. Providing relevant programming, training, and guidance will support volunteer endeavors while continuing to contribute to the sense of pride and ownership in the trail and community.

On the linear trail segments, volunteers can play a pivotal role as a tuned eye on the trail. With guidance through training and equipped with checklists and/or GPS enabled tools, volunteers can provide feedback to the Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee Coordinator and/or the Agency’s Rail Trail Program Staff, alerting the Agency to issues requiring response or documenting trail conditions. These activities could be coordinated as “adopt-a-segment” or trail condition assessment programs. For condition

Best Practice: Volunteer Coordination

Create clear guidance and roles for ways volunteers can get involved. Though much of this activity will happen at the local level through the Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee, opportunities for volunteers should be highlighted on the trail’s centralized website. As one example, the [Erie Canalway Trail](#) provides clear guidance on how volunteers can get involved and what each role entails.

Erie Canalway Trail Volunteer Information Page

Get Involved

Share your time and talent by volunteering with the Canalway Trail. From trail maintenance and cleanup each spring to serving as a trail ambassador for visitors, or helping promote New York’s Canalway Trail System, there are many ways to get involved. The links below explain several important volunteer opportunities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO DISCUSS VOLUNTEERING ON THE ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL:

Contact PTNY today at canaltrail@ptny.org or 518-434-1583.



Volunteer on the Annual Bike Tour

Each year, Parks & Trails New York hosts hundreds of riders on an eight-day ride across the Erie Canalway Trail. Volunteers play a critical role in making this event a success. Learn more about the volunteer opportunities on the Annual Bike Tour.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Adopt-a-Trail

Volunteers adopt a section of the trail during the season and agree to provide ongoing maintenance for that section. From removing brush to painting signs, our Adopt-a-Trail program is key to keeping the trail safe and enjoyable for everyone.

[LEARN MORE](#)

assessments, this could be general inspections of the trail on a regular basis, or more specialized like the assessment of culverts. For the latter, there are existing training programs that the Regional Planning Commissions make available to municipalities for local road asset assessments that could be adapted appropriately for volunteer inspectors.

In an effort to consistently maintain the linear segments of the trail and establish the baseline maintenance protocols and standards of performance, maintenance tasks along the trail segments involving heavy machinery or mechanical equipment will be reserved for those preapproved by VTrans Rail Trail Program Staff. This will also limit liability, where VTrans Rail Trail Program Staff can manage and validate insurance coverage for maintenance activities conducted by VTrans staff, procured by contractors, or conditioned in agreements with municipalities or organizations.

One area of need for volunteer efforts identified through this process is in the development and maintenance of trailheads and trailside amenities. Close coordination with the Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees, municipalities, and other engaged organizations will need volunteer support through the project development process as well as with maintenance. Training for maintenance activities specific to trailheads and trailside amenities may be coordinated and made available through the LVRT Trail Council with an eye towards consistency across the length of the trail. Other volunteer organizations, like local Rotary Clubs, may already be equipped for certain activities, like beautification efforts through plantings, and could be engaged for support or organized to adopt a trailhead or pause place.

Once trailheads and other programming are established, an opportunity for engaging volunteers as trail ambassadors may be a way to further the stewardship and economic development objectives. Ambassadors serve a role of presence on the trail, both as deterrent of unwanted behavior and education opportunity for desired behavior (see Trail Etiquette). Moreover, they can be very effective at helping folks navigate adventures off the trail to patron businesses or check out local attractions. They could also serve as liaison to trail features or interpretive elements as part of trail programming (see Cultural Resources). Staging Trail Ambassadors at busier trailheads on weekends or other peak use times has the potential to serve the greatest number of visitors. Trail ambassador programming should consider the current trail ambassadors and etiquette enforcement activities taken on by VAST affiliated snowmobile clubs during the winter season, while leveraging opportunities with new entities like Local Motion that may be able to help support or provide guidance and training on Ambassador Programs.

Supporting Roles

Discussed in more detail below, a number of supporting roles have been identified across the Agency and with partnering organizations. Many of these supporting roles will need to be formalized, whether the partnering entity is absorbing some particular task in support of the trail system, like bridge inspection activities, or they are a potential resource for occasional

support, like input on public outreach. The list below of supporting roles is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather illustrative of the cross-cutting nature of the trail system and the coordination required of the Rail Trail Program Staff to serve the trail's needs. Each entity is listed with an area where they may have direct tasks or serve as a resource to the Rail Trail Program.

› **Policy, Planning & Intermodal Development Bureau**

- Rail and Aviation Bureau Property Management | ROW Agreements including Crossings, Leases, Licenses, and Master License Agreements
- Rail and Aviation Bureau Bridge Management | Inactive or Railbanked Bridge and Structure Management Programming Support
- Rail and Aviation Bureau Project Delivery | GIS and Database Support for Asset Management and Maintenance Tracking
- Policy, Planning and Research | Planning Support, Transportation Planning Initiatives, and Research Needs (e.g. Economic Impact)
- Public Outreach | Trail Outreach and Marketing Support including Website, Social Media, and Marketing Plans

› **Highway Division**

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Program | Trail Connection Projects and Count Program Support
- Municipal Assistance Section | Pause Place, Trailhead, and Trail Connection Development Projects
- Structures Section | Bridge, Tunnel, Underpass, and Cattlepass Inspections
- Asset Management Bureau | Trail Asset Management Programming Support
- Environmental Section | Cultural Resource, Landscape, and Environmental Specialist Support with regard to Historic Resources, Vegetation, Natural Resources, Trailhead and Trail Connection Permitting, and others

› **Maintenance Division**

- Maintenance Districts | Emergency Maintenance Support (contingent on equipment and staff availability)

› **Regional Planning Commissions**

- LVRT Trail Council | Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee Coordination

7

Maintenance & Operations

Trail stakeholders, from VTrans and municipal staff to volunteers and trail users, all play a role in maintaining and operating the LVRT. Particularly for a rural, linear rail trail of this nature, having everyone that touches the trail engaged in some manner in its maintenance and operation is imperative to its success. Rail Trail Program staff are responsible for coordinating these efforts and setting a cohesive plan into action, while furthering the objectives of support for proactive trail maintenance and operations, stable sources of funding for maintenance and operations, routine asset condition assessment, maintenance, and preservation activities, and well-maintained facilities for health and safety. However, the work of the many individuals on the trail, including casual users that report an issue, cannot be understated. Each trail user, volunteer, neighbor that takes note, and all others that touch the trail are imperative to the broader objectives of fostering the sense of trail stewardship and community pride.

Overview

Generally speaking, the maintenance and operations of a trail system entails the following actions:

- › Asset management and system preservation;
- › Routine maintenance tasks;
- › Security and enforcement;
- › Safety and risk management; and,
- › Coordination of activities (i.e. maintenance, operations, user groups) on the trail system.

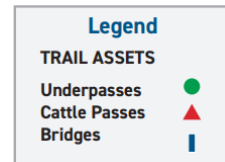
Asset Management & Inspection

Strategic management of the trail’s assets is critical to the longevity of the trail system and the efficiency with which limited funds are prioritized and disbursed. Regular preservation and preventative maintenance activities appropriately allocated to the system prolong the life cycle of infrastructure, saving the managing entity time and money, and spreading out the need for larger rehabilitation or replacement projects which can be disruptive to the intended uses of the system. Moreover, preservation and preventative maintenance activities demonstrate an effort to extend the life of the initial capital improvements, which in the case of the LVRT was a significant investment. This approach aligns with the overarching VTrans Transportation Asset Management Plan, most recently adopted in 2018, which emphasizes the importance of making timely small investments in strategic maintenance activities to delay the need for more expensive reconstruction or replacement activities. System preservation and preventative maintenance activities are fundamental to the asset management approach for the trail system and include inventorying all of the system’s assets, documenting asset conditions through regular inspections or condition assessments, identifying and planning routine maintenance activities, establishing performance targets appropriate for the assets and trail system, and identifying and prioritizing system preservation projects or projects for capital programming.

Bridge Asset Management

The VTrans Rail and Aviation Bureau developed guidance for the [Rail Bridge Management Program](#), with the most recent version adopted in 2014. The Rail Bridge Management Program should be referenced for establishing proper procedures for managing, inspecting, and maintaining bridge assets on the LVRT.

Decades of operation as a rail corridor and the subsequent permitting, design, and construction activities for the trail system have established much of the inventory of assets within the right-of-way. The major categories of assets along the trail corridor include bridges, tunnels and underpasses, cattlepasses, culverts, ditches, embankments, trail surface, crossings, signs, and amenities. The effort to establish a singular asset inventory data repository for the trail is underway. The bridges along the LVRT have already been adopted



into the repository of geographic information managed by the Rail and Aviation Bureau GIS and Database Technician. Other assets should be amended to this system and updated with current condition information on an ongoing basis. Having a singular database from which information about the assets along the corridor can be queried will support the Rail Trail Program staff in their efforts to plan in the short- and long-term for asset preservation.

Recommended Strategy: Conduct routine inspections of all trail assets (trail surface, culverts, bridge structure, bridge surface, trailheads, signs).

Routine field inspections identify the condition of assets and inform prioritization of repair, rehabilitation, and replacement needs. The responsibility for inspection and condition reporting of each set of assets will fall to different entities. Some assets are already included in formal inspection processes like the tunnels and underpasses that currently provide grade separated crossings of roadways. The inspection and condition assessment processes for other assets should be formalized. This can range from formal inspection processes by licensed professionals for bridge structure conditions to providing checklists for trained volunteers to assess trail surface or amenity conditions. Documentation of asset condition and steps taken to address issues or minimize hazards are key not only for prioritization of maintenance activities, projects, and funding, but also imperative to limiting liability. The asset types, frequency of inspection or condition assessment activities, responsible parties, and supporting parties are included in Table 2. Coordination within the Rail Trail Program and collaboration with the Rail and Aviation Bureau GIS and Database Technician to archive the inspection reports or condition assessments and incorporate them into the GIS-based trail database will serve to streamline the asset data to a single repository.

Table 2 LVRT Asset Inspection and Condition Assessment Schedule

Asset	Process	Frequency	Responsibility	Coordinating or Supporting Partners
Bridges	Structural Inspection	Every 2 Years	Highway Division - Structures Section (Inspection)	Rail and Aviation Bureau (Review, Inventory, Program)
	Deck and Surface Condition Assessment	Annually in Spring Annually in Summer/Fall	VAST (Spring) Rail and Aviation Bureau	Rail and Aviation Bureau (Review, Inventory, Program)
Tunnels & Underpasses	Structural Inspection	Every 2 Years	Highway Division - Structures Section	Rail and Aviation Bureau (Review)
Cattlepasses	Structural Inspection	Every 2 Years	Rail and Aviation Bureau	Rail and Aviation Bureau (Review, Inventory, Program)
Culverts	Structural Inspection	Every 5 Years (Every 2 Years if Deficient)	Rail and Aviation Bureau	Rail and Aviation Bureau (Review, Inventory, Program)
	Drainage and Condition Assessment	Annually in Spring Following Major Storm Events As Needed	Rail and Aviation Bureau	Regional Planning Commissions and/or Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees
Ditches	Condition Assessment	Annually (or as needed)	Rail and Aviation Bureau	Regional Planning Commissions and/or Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees
Embankments	Condition Assessment	Annually (or as needed)	Rail and Aviation Bureau	Regional Planning Commissions and/or Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees
Fencing	Condition Assessment	Annually (or as needed)	Rail and Aviation Bureau	Regional Planning Commissions and/or Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees
Trail Surface	Condition Assessment	Annually (or as needed)	Rail and Aviation Bureau	Regional Planning Commissions and/or Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees
Signage	Regulatory and MM Signage Condition Assessment	Annually (or as needed)	Rail and Aviation Bureau	Regional Planning Commissions and/or Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees
	Informational or Wayfinding Signage Condition Assessment	Annually (or as needed)	Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees and/or Municipalities VAST (Winter)	Rail and Aviation Bureau
Trailheads	Condition Assessment	Annually (or as needed)	Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees and/or Municipalities VAST (Winter)	Rail and Aviation Bureau
Amenities	Condition Assessment	Annually (or as needed)	Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees and/or Municipalities VAST (Winter)	Rail and Aviation Bureau

Recommended Strategy: Identify and prioritize system preservation projects.

In the short-term, it will be important to establish the acceptable standard of performance for each type of asset on the trail system. For some assets, like bridge structures, inspection, management, and maintenance approaches have been established and should be adapted appropriately for trail assets. Although the railbanked corridor is inactive from a rail use perspective, the bridge management approach utilized for active rail and documented in the Rail Bridge Management Program should be leveraged and adapted as necessary. For other assets, an understanding of the anticipated asset life-cycle coupled with initial inspection reports or condition assessments will provide the framework for establishing performance targets and should be adjusted as lessons are learned from actual preventative maintenance, rehabilitation, and reconstruction activities. This standard of performance should be documented to inform the annual maintenance planning activities as well as the longer-term planning for preventative maintenance and preservation activity schedules.

With the completion of the remaining trail segments in 2022, the assets within the LVRT corridor have been largely rehabilitated and/or reconstructed within the last eight years. Starting from this baseline, and as the need for larger capital projects for asset rehabilitation and reconstruction grows over time, a prioritization framework will need to be established. It is recognized that there may be future opportunities to program capital projects for trails through the VTrans Project Selection and Project Prioritization Process (VPSP2). Looking to this

Table 3 Approximate LVRT Life Cycle Improvement Frequency

Asset	Life Cycle Improvement	Typical Improvement Frequency
Bridges	Deck and Railing Reconstruction	8-10 Years
	Major Preventative Maintenance	15 Years
	Rehabilitation	60 Years
	Reconstruction	80 Years
Tunnels & Underpasses	Major Preventative Maintenance	15 Years
	Rehabilitation	60 Years
	Reconstruction	80 Years
Cattlepasses	Rehabilitation	60 Years
	Reconstruction	80 Years
Culverts	Clearing of Debris, Sediment	As needed
	Rehabilitation	60 Years
	Reconstruction	80 Years
Ditches	Clearing of Debris, Sediment	As needed
	Reconstruction	As needed
Embankments	Stabilization	As needed
Trail Surface	Repair (i.e. pothole filling)	As needed
	Regrading	Recurring as needed
	Resurfacing	10 years
Fencing	Repair	As needed
	Replacement	20 years
Signage	Repair	As needed
	Replacement	15 years
Amenities	Repair	As needed
	Replacement	20 years (average)

prioritization framework and others, like the “Project Pipeline” that Forests, Parks, and Recreation employs, can help to frame the asset preservation and other capital project priorities for the LVRT in the shorter term. These frameworks often consider asset condition and performance standards as well as other factors like safety, connectivity, economic access, resiliency, community, environment, and health. For projects on the LVRT, setting priorities based on criteria specific to the trail system and in alignment with the Vision & Goals will help inform how and when projects are programmed. Having these projects and priorities clearly articulated for the LVRT will allow for versatility, where perhaps a preventative maintenance priority gets plugged into the annual maintenance plan or multiple asset rehabilitation projects get bundled into the capital program.

Seasonal Maintenance

Recommended Strategy: Develop annual maintenance plan.

An annual maintenance plan will detail the maintenance priorities for the upcoming year, including anticipated seasonal and recurring maintenance activities as well as identifying any areas of emphasis or projects of significance. The annual maintenance plan should spell out the inspections and/or condition assessments programmed for the season, maintenance priorities or areas of emphasis, schedule of maintenance tasks, expected frequency of tasks, anticipated costs, responsible parties, contracting needs, reference to performance standards or evaluation criteria, and budget. In drafting an annual maintenance plan, the Rail Trail Program staff will be able to communicate the plan to all involved parties and lay the foundation for the upcoming season’s prioritized activities. Table 4 provides a starting point for the annual maintenance plan, identifying the tasks or activities required, the entity responsible for coordination, the responding party or labor resource, season in which those activities are to be conducted, and frequency with which those activities are to be conducted.

Remedial Maintenance

Common issues requiring remedial maintenance actions:

- Flooding, Washouts, or Sink Holes
- Wildlife Activities (Primarily Beavers)
- Trail Surface Issues
- Downed Trees
- Trail Obstructions or Other Safety Hazards
- Trash or Litter
- Vandalism or Graffiti

Table 4 General Seasonal Maintenance Activities

Activity	Coordination	Response / Labor	Season				Frequency				
			Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Annually	Monthly	Weekly	After Storm	As Needed
General											
Safety Issue or Hazard Mitigation	VTrans Rail Trails	VTrans Rail Trails (minor) Maintenance Districts (*emergency only) Contractor VAST (maintenance agreement for minor - moderate) Municipalities (maintenance agreement for minor - moderate)	X	X	X	X					X
Trash and Litter Removal	VTrans Rail Trails Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee VAST (Winter)	VTrans Rail Trails or Volunteer (minor - moderate collection) Contractor (moderate - substantial collection) Contractor (hauling) VAST (Winter)	X	X	X	X		X			X
Natural Debris Removal	VTrans Rail Trails VAST (Winter)	VTrans Rail Trails (minor) Contractor VAST (maintenance agreement for minor - moderate) Municipalities (maintenance agreement for minor - moderate)	X	X	X	X				X	X
Vandalism	VTrans Rail Trails	VTrans Rail Trails (minor) Contractor	X	X	X	X					X
Signage Maintenance and Repair	VTrans Rail Trails	VTrans Rail Trails (minor) Maintenance Districts (*emergency only) Contractor VAST (Winter)	X	X	X	X					X
Encroachments	VTrans Rail Trails	VTrans Rail Trails Law Enforcement	X	X	X	X					X

Table 5 Trail Surface Seasonal Maintenance Activities

Activity	Coordination	Response / Labor	Season				Frequency				
			Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Annually	Monthly	Weekly	After Storm	As Needed
Trail Surface											
Patching and Remedial Repairs (ADA Accessible Surface Maintenance)	VTrans Rail Trails	VTrans Rail Trails (minor) Maintenance Districts (*emergency only) Contractor	X	X	X	X					X
Regrading and Compaction (ADA Accessible Surface Maintenance)	VTrans Rail Trails	Contractor	X	X	X		X				X
Shoulder Stabilization	VTrans Rail Trails	VTrans Rail Trails (minor) Maintenance Districts (*emergency only) Contractor	X								X
Bridge Deck & Railing Repair	VTrans Rail Trails VAST (Winter)	VTrans Rail Trails (minor) Maintenance Districts (*emergency only) Contractor VAST	X								X
Grooming	VAST	VAST VAST Snowmobile Clubs				X			X	X	X

Table 6 Drainage Seasonal Maintenance Activities

Activity	Coordination	Response / Labor	Season				Frequency				
			Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Annually	Monthly	Weekly	After Storm	As Needed
Drainage											
Erosion Repair / Slope Stabilization	VTrans Rail Trails	VTrans Rail Trails (minor) Maintenance Districts (*emergency only) Contractor	X	X	X					X	X
Culvert Clearing	VTrans Rail Trails	VTrans Rail Trails (minor) Maintenance Districts (*emergency only) Contractor	X	X	X		2 X			X	X
Ditch Clearing	VTrans Rail Trails	VTrans Rail Trails (minor) Maintenance Districts (*emergency only) Contractor	X	X	X		X			X	X
Flood / Standing Water / Ice Jam Mitigation	VTrans Rail Trails	VTrans Rail Trails (minor) Maintenance Districts (*emergency only) Contractor	X			X					
Beaver Management	VTrans Rail Trails VT Fish & Wildlife	VT Fish & Wildlife Contractor	X	X	X						X

Table 7 **Vegetation Management Seasonal Maintenance Activities**

Activity	Coordination	Response / Labor	Season				Frequency				
			Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Annually	Monthly	Weekly	After Storm	As Needed
Vegetation Management											
Mowing	VTrans Rail Trails	Contractor		X			AT LEAST 2 X				
Crossing / Sight Line Trimming	VTrans Rail Trails	Contractor		X			3 X				
Invasive Species Management	VTrans Rail Trails Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee	Volunteer Contractor (disposal)		X				X			
Hazardous Tree Removal	VTrans Rail Trails	Contractor		X			X				
Tree Pruning / Trimming	VTrans Rail Trails	VTrans Rail Trails (minor) Contractor	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Tree Blowdown Removal	VTrans Rail Trails VAST (Winter)	VTrans Rail Trails (minor) Maintenance Districts (*emergency only) VAST (Winter) Contractor	X	X	X	X				X	X
Brush Cutting	VTrans Rail Trails	VTrans Rail Trails (minor) Contractor	X	X	X		X				X
Leaf Clearing / Blowing	VTrans Rail Trails	VTrans Rail Trails (minor) Contractor			X		2 X				X
Plantings / Pollinator Seeding	VTrans Rail Trails	VTrans Rail Trails Contractor Volunteers	X	X			X				

Table 8 Trailheads and Trailside Amenities Seasonal Maintenance Activities

Activity	Coordination	Response / Labor	Season				Frequency				
			Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Annually	Monthly	Weekly	After Storm	As Needed
Trailheads and Trailside Amenities											
Mowing	VTrans Rail Trails Municipal Agreements Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee	Municipal Staff Volunteers Contractor		X				X			
Trimming / Edging			X				X				
Landscape Maintenance (weeding, mulching, planting, etc.)		Municipal Staff Volunteers	X	X	X			X			
Water Utility (on/off if present)			X		X		X				
Plowing Trailhead Parking		Municipal Staff Volunteers Contractor				X			X	X	X
Litter Removal			X	X	X	X			X		
Trash / Recycling Receptacle Emptying			X	X	X	X			X		
Restroom Maintenance			X	X	X	X			X		
Pet Waste Station Emptying and Restocking			X	X	X	X			X		
Information Kiosk Material Restocking			X	X	X	X			X		
Information Kiosk Updates							X				

It is important to note that for the maintenance activities outlined in the tables above, coordination will primarily fall to the Rail Trail Program staff. This includes setting up and executing contracts and agreements with other parties, which will largely take place in winter for the upcoming season. Even when agreements are in place for other entities to have some role in coordination of maintenance activities, like VAST in winter or municipalities and Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees at trailheads, Rail Trail Program staff will continue to be the primary, year-round coordinating entity. This role includes oversight and inspection to verify contracts and agreements are being executed appropriately.

Much like with the preventative maintenance approach to the trail system, where setting an acceptable performance standard will help to frame and prioritize the preventative maintenance activities, setting benchmarks for each of the seasonal maintenance tasks will be critical to maintaining the trail to an acceptable standard. Rail Trail Program staff will be responsible for inspection and oversight of activities to confirm contract specifications, agreement terms, and performance standards are being met. This becomes even more imperative as the program aims for consistency in maintenance along the linear trail system and requires coordination of many different entities responsible for the maintenance tasks. The annual maintenance planning and coordination on upcoming agreements and contracts will also provide the opportunity for Rail Trail Program staff to review and assess the previous season’s contracts and activities and adjust as

Figure 13 LVRT Vegetation Management Setbacks with Visual Aid



Figure 14 LVRT Vegetation Management with One Side Mowed



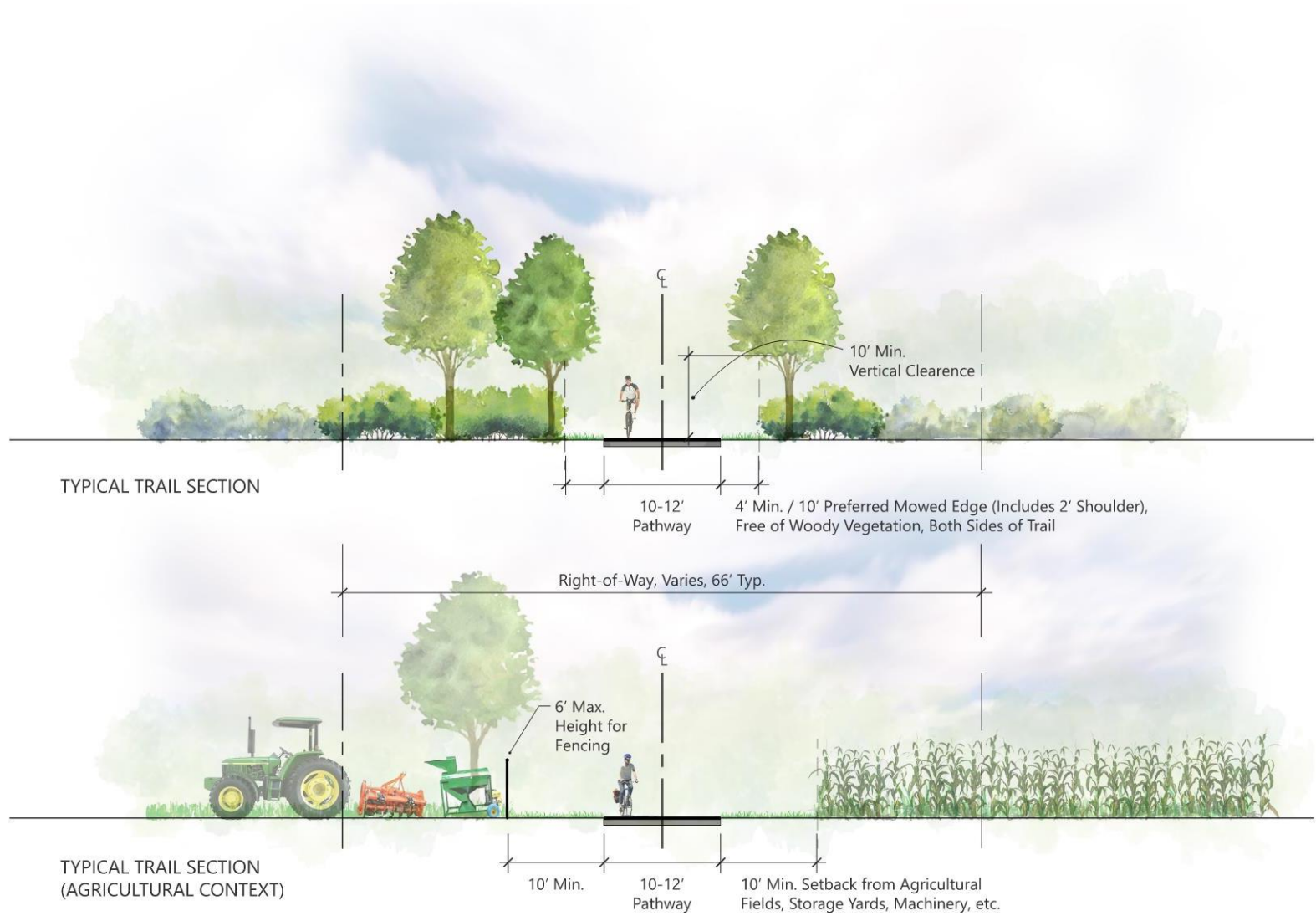
necessary. This may entail meeting with contractors to understand their capabilities, equipment, rates, and other details to inform the upcoming season’s contracts and agreements, as well as broader planning, budgeting, and prioritization for the upcoming year.

Typical trail cross sections with various contexts, illustrating minimum setbacks that the maintenance planning should be looking to achieve, are demonstrated in Figure 16. These minimum setbacks align with the trail management approach of creating a clear zone along the corridor. A clear zone helps to focus the condition assessment, access, and maintenance of assets and features along the trail system that pose risk to the trail. Clearing this area allows for the Rail Trail Program staff, LVRT Council membership, and volunteers to visually inspect the drainage ditches, visually inspect embankments or slopes, gain improved access to visually inspect culverts, and understand where other hazards like trees may be encroaching on the trail. The visual cue for this approach is illustrated in Figure 13 where any feature, asset, or encroachment within the rectangular frame centered on the trail should trigger concern for the Rail Trail Program staff or others conducting regular condition assessments on the trail corridor. An example of pre- and post-mowing (left side and right side, respectively) to demonstrate the targeted clear zone is shown in Figure 14. Figure 15 shows two perspectives on an active vegetation management operation meeting the specifications set forth in the current contracting.

Figure 15 LVRT Vegetation Management in Action



Figure 16 Typical Trail Cross Section with Varying Contexts and Minimum Setbacks



Developing an update to the maintenance plan annually serves as a vehicle to adjust the maintenance program based on experience and feedback from the previous season(s). This annual update includes consideration for the performance standards and evaluation of performance on the various maintenance tasks from prior year(s). For instance, as the vegetation management program progresses to meet the performance standards and the desired baseline is established, the intensity of vegetation management activities may taper off. This adjustment, if appropriate, will be reflected in the annual maintenance plan and may open up another opportunity for other preventative maintenance priorities.

As part of the annual maintenance planning, the Rail Trail Program staff will look ahead to the season's anticipated workload for contractors. The winter off-season will be the time to identify appropriate contractors for the seasonal tasks ahead and request quotes from multiple contractors for the work. Most of the seasonal maintenance activities requiring contractor service will be bid through VTrans' Job Order Contracting process. It is imperative that the contractor pool meets the needs of the trail system. Unique service and equipment needs for the trail system should be included in the request for proposals and should be bid regularly to amend the current pool with necessary services and equipment. Any repair or maintenance requiring a contractor that is above \$50,000 in cost will need to be bid through different means and should be coordinated with the Rail Trails Program Manager.

Recommended Strategy: Identify contractors and procure services for annual seasonal maintenance activities (mowing, trail surface rehab, etc.).

Remedial maintenance is a critical component to the functional use of the trail, state of good repair, and trail user health and safety. There will be a continuous need for response to issues or hazards on the trail, even with a shift in focus toward preventative maintenance and preservation activities to mitigate anticipated issues. Timely response relies on clear lines of communication between an issue being identified and Rail Trail Program staff responding and coordinating Maintenance District resources, contractors, or volunteers to address the issue as appropriate. For minor issues, Rail Trail Program staff are able to respond and mitigate the issue. It is noted that for emergency situations, Maintenance District equipment and staff may be requested in a coordinated response with the Rail Trail Program contingent on Maintenance District staff and equipment availability. The LVRT predominantly falls in Maintenance Districts 6, 7, and 8, with a short segment in District 9, where five different primary or satellite maintenance facilities are in close proximity to the trail. For issues that are more significant in scale or scope, or require equipment not available to staff, the Job Order Contracting pool will be utilized to procure the equipment and services required. Again, given the unique nature of the trail system, it will be imperative that the contractor pool be

expanded to provide the types of services and equipment required on the trail, even in an emergency capacity. Further, contractors should have access to adopted best management practices and/or training for proper rail trail maintenance. Any emergency repair or maintenance tasks requiring a contractor that is above \$50,000 will need to be bid through different means and coordinated with the Rail Trail Program Manager.

Issues may be identified by anyone on the trail system. Regular presence on the trail of Rail Trail Program staff, Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee members, or coordinated volunteers can expedite the process through close coordination between engaged entities, minimizing time between identified issue and responsive action. For trail users, neighbors, volunteers, or others on the trail, issues may be identified and reported to the Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee coordinator or directly to the dedicated Rail Trail Program staff. Phone numbers, email contact information, and web-enabled comment links will be readily

Figure 18 SeeClickFix Request Interface

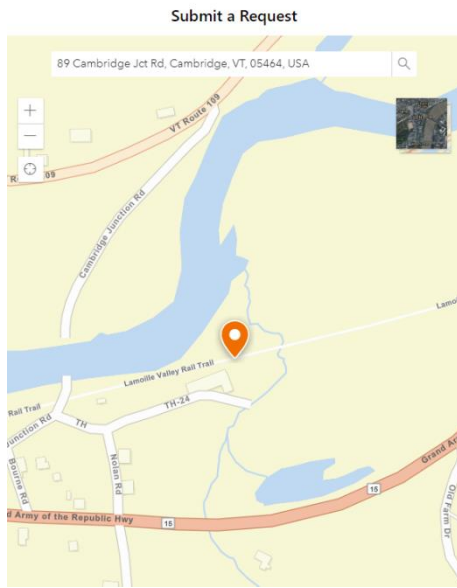
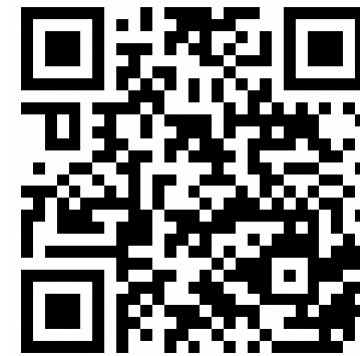


Figure 17 LVRT QR Code



available to users and published on the trail website, printed to informational materials, and on signage at trailheads and other high visibility access points. VTrans Public Outreach has created a QR code that trail users and others will be able to scan, directing them to the web-enabled comment tool.

Response to the identified issue will be coordinated through the dedicated Rail Trail Program staff. Developing a repository for issues that are reported and recording when and how they are addressed will help to inform the annual maintenance planning and budgeting for the corridor. It may also serve to identify recurring or systemic issues that may need to be addressed more strategically. In the short term, tracking any issue reported in a single database and documenting the response, mitigation, labor hours, cost, and other details is imperative. In the mid-term, development of a map-based online tool, similar to SeeClickFix or the Crowdsourcing Input Tool utilized in the Management Plan development process, would provide means for issues to be documented and mitigation tracked based on their geographic location. These tools can be augmented so the user can specify the type of issue categorically, provide particular information (e.g. milemarker), or upload a picture of

the issue. In responding to the issue, it can be assigned to a particular party (e.g. Field Technician), additional information or comment can be added to demonstrate response, and other details can be added like action taken or picture of the issue resolved. Follow up condition assessments or evaluation of job order contracts may even be attached before the issue is closed and archived. Portions of the tool could be made available to the public and/or volunteers to report issues or assessments, other portions could be made available to staff to track remediation and evaluation. Options to integrate this type of issue reporting and maintenance tracking with other GIS-based information like the asset data, resource information, active maintenance activities, and/or programmed preservation projects could further the ability of the Rail Trail Program to make informed decisions about the asset management and maintenance of the trail resource. This type of tool can serve to not only streamline the reporting process and target response based on geographic inputs, but it can also serve to inform the planning and budgeting in the short and long term by providing the Rail Trail Program staff with a one stop shop for the data and information necessary for building the program.

Best Management Practices

There are existing best management practices already utilized by VTrans and Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) for managing and maintaining state-owned assets or state regulated actions. These existing best management practices may serve to inform the management practices for the Rail Trail Program. In particular, existing BMPs for mowing, managing non-native invasive species, managing beaver activities, and vegetated buffers should be adhered to as guidance or adapted to serve the unique needs of the rail trail corridor.

Recommended Strategy: Adapt and adopt best management practices for trail specific maintenance activities including surface inspection, vegetation management, wildlife management, and flood mitigation

Roadside Terrestrial Invasive Plants

There are known non-native invasive species (NNIS) along the LVRT. These plant species tend to be aggressive and opportunistic. When left unchecked they are able to thrive and spread, particularly along corridors like trails where disturbed areas and sunlight combine to create ideal conditions. VTrans has published best management practices for [roadside terrestrial invasive plants](#) that should be considered for the management of NNIS along the LVRT. The BMP outlines the impacts and prevention of NNIS along transportation corridors and identifies those designated noxious weeds for Vermont. In particular, common buckthorn, common reed, Japanese knotweed, and purple loosestrife have all been identified along the trail corridor.

General practices for soil disturbance, equipment, mowing, disposal, and excavation in areas containing invasives are detailed in the BMP. For those VTrans priority invasive plant species, like Japanese knotweed and purple loosestrife, there are preferred control methods. To date, the mechanical control options have been employed by volunteer groups, particularly for the control of Japanese knotweed. This collaborative approach to the management of invasives should continue to be supported and potentially expanded. An inventory of pre-construction NNIS for segments currently under construction (i.e. LVRT(11), LVRT(12), and LVRT(13)) has been assembled along with the development of a management plan detailing post-construction monitoring, control plans for new occurrences due to construction, and a five-year monitoring period. These could be leveraged as a template for existing segments of the trail with an updated inventory and adapted management plan to track the progression of NNIS and/or mitigation efforts on the LVRT.

Mowing

VTrans has adopted [*State Highway System Mowing Best Management Practices*](#). Although these practices are not intended for the trail system, there are some practices contained within the document that could be adapted to the trail system. It is noted that the guiding principles for the state highway mowing practices include creating consistent requirements, setting a basis for contractor specifications, and maximizing the benefit of the maintenance practice while minimizing costs. The non-limited access highway practices *NLAH.1 Mowing One Time Annually* and *NLAH.3 Mowing Medians, Islands, and Intersections*, may be the most relevant practices that could be adapted appropriately to the trail system. Creating a trail suitable “clear zone” based on the design speed and operating characteristics of the fastest moving users of the trail system, likely snowmobiles and bicyclists, is one adaptable aspect of the best management practice. In addition, guidance on increased frequency (i.e. more than one time annually) to achieve a more “manicured lawn appearance” and meet sight-line needs at intersections may better serve the mowing maintenance needs of this unique situation. It is anticipated that there will be geographic variability to this as well depending on existing vegetation, growing conditions, shade coverage, and other factors. While some areas will require more frequent mowing (e.g. three times per year), others may require less frequent mowing to establish a consistent vegetation set back and appearance. The considerations outlined in the *State Highway Mowing Best Management Practices* should be weighed along with experience from the first few seasons of vegetation management to establish a best management practice for mowing rail trail corridors.

Another aspect of mowing that should be considered and adopted into practice for the LVRT is mowing operations for the conservation of pollinator species. There are existing best management practices that address mowing operations for a variety of pollinator species that identify preferred dates for mowing activities and identify pollinator friendly plant species that should be avoided, if possible, in mowing operations. According to the [*Monarch Joint Venture*](#), mowing between April and May 1st, June 20th and July 10th, and October 1st until the snow flies are targeted as Monarch friendly management time windows. VTrans, as

an enrollee in the Monarch Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA), is eligible for conservation credits when mowing operations are completed and tracked within these date windows. Pollinator friendly plant species along the LVRT, like large stands of milkweed for Monarchs, may be identified, inventoried, and potentially avoided in mowing operations to further support pollinators. Rail Trail Program staff should work with VTrans Biologists to identify other pollinator species and their best management practices around mowing operations and other management activities to help support pollinator conservation.

Beaver Management

Beavers pose risk to the trail system primarily by changing the flow characteristics of water surrounding the trail and potentially disrupting drainage features. With these disruptions, the trail is at a higher risk for flooding, which can cause damage to drainage structures and the trail surface. As such, beaver management best practices need to be adopted for the trail system. Vermont Fish and Wildlife and Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation have collaborated to publish the [Best Management Practices for Resolving Human-Beaver Conflicts in Vermont](#). In general, the practices fall into three categories:

- **Type 1** is focused on prevention of damage, where there may be some evidence of beaver activity, but no significant damage has occurred. These practices may involve methods for discouraging tree damage and/or planning for population reduction.
- **Type 2** is focused on more recent (i.e. within 2 years) obstruction of drainage features or dam building activities that pose a flood hazard to the trail system. The methods involve targeted monitoring, appropriate water control or exclusion devices, culvert obstruction removal and water control device implementation in consultation with Fish and Wildlife, DEC, or ANR Regional offices, or dam alteration or removal and water control device implementation in consultation with Fish and Wildlife, DEC, or ANR Regional offices.
- **Type 3** is focused on well established beaver dam or dam complexes that pose risk to the trail. For active Type 3 areas, close consultation with Fish and Wildlife and/or DEC is required and likely many of the methods employed in Type 2 situations will be appropriate. For Type 3 areas that no longer have active populations, the risk of unmaintained dams could be a potential hazard to the trail and downstream areas and will need to be mitigated in close consultation with Fish and Wildlife and/or DEC.

As these management practices are adopted and employed for the trail, areas that are at risk due to beaver activity should be tracked as part of the larger maintenance logging effort. Careful tracking of the issue will help to identify areas requiring more targeted monitoring when beaver activity is first recognized and can prevent significant mitigation and/or damage costs later.

Vegetated Riparian Buffers

There are other best management practices that may prove relevant for the trail system and should be consulted or adopted as needed. One area that is relevant is management of the vegetated buffers in the riparian zones adjacent to the trail. With the majority of the trail system along the Missisquoi River, Lamoille River, and Black Branch Brook, much of the right of way is adjacent to riparian zones. In alignment with the [settlement agreement](#) regarding Land Use Permit #7C1321 and the previous lease agreement, the trail manager is expected to maintain “undisturbed, naturally vegetated buffer zones, measured from top of bank, along the watercourses on the project site.” This is relevant for the maintenance practices going forward, where vegetation management along the trail must comply with this practice. The [Riparian Management Guidelines for the Agency of Natural Resources](#) and the [VTrans Riparian Planting Toolkit](#) may prove to be useful resources outlining best management practices. It is noted that the areas where vegetated buffers are to be maintained, no mowing, cutting, clearing, and other disturbance is allowed except select cutting for the purposes of establishing river viewsheds.

User Count & Survey Program

Recommended Strategy: Develop count and survey program to gather visitor use and user feedback data

Understanding the user characteristics and use of the trail over time is critical to management of the system. The purpose of a count and survey program is to identify use patterns, user characteristics, user experience, and visitor behaviors. Use patterns and user experience information can support maintenance and operations activities as well as potential prioritization of future projects. Use patterns can also inform outreach and help to target trail promotion activities, maximizing the reach of the investment in the marketing program (*see Marketing and Tourism*). User experience and visitor behavior data can further the understanding of the broader impact the trail resource may have on the surrounding communities, particularly in regards to the economic vitality and healthy community objectives. Trail user count and survey data will provide benchmarks for these objectives and are therefore a critical component to the assessment of strategies and actions outlined in this Management Plan.

At a minimum, permanent directional counters between major trailheads will provide an indication of the overall activity on the trail corridor and provide a sense of the most utilized trail segments between major access points. This base network could be supplemented with automated or manual seasonal or short-term counts in areas of interest. These simple directional counts can give indication of overall use to understand the seasonal, day of week, and time of day patterns of trail use by segment. Characteristics such as these can inform targeted trail presence or trail ambassador activities to maximize reach for educational or informational outreach; identify times to target more disruptive maintenance activities to avoid significant impact to users; identify segments that are subject to more wear and tear and therefore may be priorities for maintenance activities.

There are many different types of automated counters available for these purposes. Devices that employ appropriate technologies for counting users across a multitude of use types on unpaved trails might include active infrared, passive infrared, laser scanning, or radio frequency. Classification of use types is also possible through dual sensor technologies. Additional technologies employed in these instances may include inductive loops or magnetometers. For instance, inductive loops and passive infrared coupled together in an automated counter enable classification of bicyclists and pedestrians. Coupling the two sensors with a third, strategically placed passive infrared device can provide classification of equestrians as well. These devices for monitoring use and/or classification of use types are available off-the-shelf or customized.

As a baseline, the selected counting equipment must be weatherproof, battery-powered, and easily concealed for remote deployment. The devices can be wirelessly enabled to download the data remotely on regular intervals or data can be downloaded directly from the units. Typically, the former is more energy intensive requiring batteries to be replaced at more frequent intervals (i.e. about every 2 years) than the latter (i.e. about every 10 years). There are maintenance tradeoffs between

these options. Rail Trail Program staff would need to replace batteries more frequently on the wirelessly enabled units, but data will automatically upload from the devices to a database to provide near real time information. This is in contrast to those remotely deployed units that require regular visits to the devices to upload data (frequency depending on the data storage capacity) but more infrequent service visits to replace the batteries. Further there are options to combine different technologies to differentiate between uses as well. Getting the automated count infrastructure in place as soon as possible, ideally prior to the completion of trail, would provide baseline information to monitor trends longitudinally and compare full trail use to the currently open segments.

Survey instruments can be deployed to provide additional information about user experience and visitor behavior. In its simplest form, a short survey can be made available in print format with drop boxes at trailhead locations, web-enabled with QR Code or web links available, or intercept surveys with volunteers at trailheads. By targeting trail users during or just following their trail experience, feedback on user experience and behaviors while visiting the trail can be captured. Survey instruments should be made available year-round to capture user experience and visitor behavior in all seasons, which can inform seasonal experiences of the trail and help to target marketing based on user groups. Questions should be aimed at understanding where trail users are coming from, how long they are on the trail, what activities they are engaged in on the trail, what their experience of the trail was like, what other activities they are engaged in while visiting the area, how long they are staying within the area, and what their spending has been or is anticipated to be while they are in the area (*see Marketing and Tourism for more on research regarding the economic impact of the trail*). Making a survey tool like this readily available year over year would provide a means to identify deficiencies or issues, evolve targeted marketing efforts, and gage progress toward many of the objectives within the Management Plan.

The count and survey program should be administered as a collaborative effort. Coordination of the program and the data analysis and reporting should be the responsibility of the Rail Trail Program Manager with support from the Field Technicians to manage and maintain the count equipment and support from the LVRT Council and Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees to administer surveys.

Operations Manual

The topic areas covered within the Operations Manual should be further pursued and adopted as policy. These policies should be codified by VTrans and published on the LVRT website, similar to the [Policies and Regulations](#) posted on the Vermont Department of Forest Parks and Recreation's website. On a smaller scale, the Rail Trail Program will be managing, maintaining, and operating the LVRT as the stewards of this outdoor recreation and transportation resource, much like FPR serves as the

stewards for forests, state parks, and outdoor recreation opportunities in Vermont. The policies that have been developed and codified for state-owned forests and public lands under FPR jurisdiction have been published on their website along with other applicable ANR regulations. Each policy statement includes a philosophy, policy, and procedure for implementation, and is signed by the commissioner. Replicating this approach with relevant policies for the LVRT and other VTrans operated Rail Trails will provide a single repository for the procedures by which the trail is operated.

Recommended Strategy: Establish clear policies and procedures for:

- Allowable uses and use permits
- Trail etiquette (incorporate in signage and promotional/educational materials)
- Resolving user conflicts
- Mitigating encroachment & encampment issues
- Agreements supporting trail connections and amenities for the public good
- Trail access, crossing and right-of-way use agreements

Allowable Uses & Use Permits

The LVRT allows for a broad range of recreation and alternative transportation uses that serve the public good. Uses are generally considered appropriate if they meet the following criteria:

- › Uses align with the vision, goals, and objectives outlined in this Management Plan and other policies or procedures expressed by VTrans regarding the Rail Trail Program;
- › Uses are compatible with the other established and accepted public uses of the facility and do not exclude, degrade, restrict, or conflict with other uses;
- › Uses do not adversely impact the trail resource or any of the natural, historical, cultural, or recreational resources along the trail corridor;
- › Uses are not expressly prohibited by law, rule, regulation, or policy.

The criteria listed above have been adapted from the [Agency of Natural Resources Policy: Uses of State Lands](#) to meet the needs of the LVRT.

Nonmotorized recreational and transportation uses are welcome and encouraged on the LVRT. Trail use should be compatible with a hardened, crushed stone trail surface. Nonmotorized activities include walking, running, hiking, biking, and horseback riding. In winter months with snow coverage, allowable uses expand to include snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, winter (fat tire) biking, and dog sledding with sufficient snow coverage.

Wheelchairs and mobility devices, including motorized wheelchairs, that meet the definition from [28 CFR 36.104](#) are allowed on the LVRT. The CFR defines a wheelchair as “a manually-operated or power-driven device designed primarily for use by an individual with a mobility disability for the main purpose of indoor or of both indoor and outdoor locomotion.” The trail surface is generally firm and stable compacted crushed stone surface, consistent with Americans with Disabilities Act and Architectural Barriers Act standards according to the US Access Board Technical Guide on Floor and Ground Surface. This guidance notes that loose materials, like crushed stone, meet these requirements when treated for “sufficient surface integrity and resilience.” Regular maintenance of the surface, including regrading and compaction, will be required to remain consistent with the firm and stable standard. Use may be restricted by condition, particularly during saturated conditions in the spring when trail surface may become soft or during winter season with snow coverage. Following the Signing Project (LVRT(14)), public highway crossings of the LVRT will be equipped with detectable warning surfaces.

Electric bicycles, or e-bikes, as defined by 43 CFR § 420.5 and further stipulated in [state statute](#), are allowed on the LVRT. This includes Class 1, 2, and 3 e-bikes, which by definition have fully operable pedals, are equipped with electric motors with less than 750 watts, and cease to provide assistance at 28 mph or less.

The LVRT is designated as part of the VAST network of trails and allows for snowmobile use during the Open Season between December 15 and April 15 with sufficient snow coverage. Snowmobile use is only allowed between the hours of 6 AM and 11 PM during the winter months. VAST will continue to manage winter operations of the trail through an agreement with VTrans. VAST and their affiliated local snowmobile clubs will be responsible for a number of wintertime activities including grooming, temporary seasonal signage, curfew enforcement, wintertime remedial maintenance, and trail condition advisory on their [interactive map](#).

Motorized wheeled vehicles are prohibited on the LVRT. Exceptions to this include maintenance, law enforcement, and emergency service vehicles. These vehicles must be marked and have flashing lights.

Consistent with [state statute](#) and management of other state lands, roads, and trails, public use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) is prohibited on the LVRT. Exceptions to this include approved maintenance, law enforcement, and emergency service all-terrain vehicles. These vehicles must be marked and have flashing lights.

Pets are allowed on the trail provided they are under the control of their owner at all times. For their own protection and that of other users and wildlife, dogs should be leashed. Pet owners are responsible for any mess or damage caused by pets and should be prepared to clean up after their pet including proper disposal of pet waste. It is noted that some jurisdictions have more stringent leash laws and should be prepared to leash their pets based on local ordinance.

In general, the trail is open to approved uses by the public 24 hours per day, year-round, unless otherwise noted in this section.

Occasionally, conditions on the trail may warrant closure or restricted uses. Trail closures or restricted uses will be limited, if possible, to conditions where there is risk of damage to the trail surface integrity or surrounding trail corridor, risk to trail users, or required maintenance activities where temporary traffic control to maintain trail traffic is infeasible. Especially notable for the trail are periods with saturated conditions during spring, where even light use could cause significant damage. In these conditions, use may be restricted to particular activities that will limit irreparable wear on the trail or may be closed entirely. The Rail Trail Program Manager will make decisions regarding the closure and reopening of segments of the LVRT. Appeals of closure and reopening decisions or requests for closure or reopening may be made in writing to the Rail Trail Program Manager. The Rail Trail Program Manager, in close coordination with Rail Trail Program staff and consultation with Rail and Aviation Bureau Director and/or Policy, Planning and Intermodal Development Director, will provide response. Notifications of closure will be distributed through the trail website, social media, and other appropriate outlets. The trail will be signed for closure appropriately. It will be the responsibility of individual trail users to understand and comply with restricted use or closures that are posted publicly.

Individuals engaged in the recreational or alternative transportation activities outlined above and per policies set forth by VTTrans do not require formal authorization to use the LVRT. However, some activities or events may require authorization should the activities or events meet any of the following criteria:

- › The event is publicized ahead of time;
- › Participants are charged a fee, or the event is a fundraiser;
- › The event makes any temporary alterations to the trail;
- › The event may conflict with or obstruct other users;
- › The event size exceeds 15 people;

- › The event includes research activities and/or demonstration projects.

Activities or events should not exceed ten days in length, do not permit any prohibited uses of the trail including motorized vehicles except snowmobiles during the designated season, and do not apply to any areas outside of the right-of-way. Permits for use of parking areas, trailheads under municipal jurisdiction, traffic control, or any other supportive needs for the event outside of the right-of-way need to be negotiated with those entities separately. These criteria and limitations are consistent with previously established protocols for special use permits on the trail. General liability insurance is required for these events as outlined in trail access, crossing, and right-of-way use agreements below. Should a special use permit be required, the activity or event organizer should submit a Special Use Permit application for authorization by the Rail Trails Program Manager.

For large events, the Department of Public Safety requires a Commercial Assembly Permit for any events involving 2,000 people or more. The criteria for any organization hosting an event in the state of Vermont requiring a Commercial Assembly Permit includes the following:

- › The event will have 2,000 people or more people attending;
- › Admission will be charged, and you cannot attend the event unless you pay admission.
- › The event is not a cycling or road running event.

Trail Etiquette

Respectful use of the trail is imperative to the trail's longevity as a public resource. In order to encourage inclusive and respectful use of the trail previously developed trail ethic and trail courtesy have been adopted.

The trail ethic, as posted on signs along the LVRT corridor, outlines the ethos for use of the trail with a reminder to “help keep Vermont's recreation and trail resources healthy” and reads as follows:

- › Know and respect the allowable use of the trail.
- › Respect other trail users.
- › Respect public and private landowners' property.
- › Use good judgement and tread lightly; trail conditions are subject to change at any time.
- › Stay on marked trails.
- › Respect natural resources, historic structures and wildlife.
- › Be prepared with food, water and first aid.

- › Pack out your trash.
- › Respect all trail closures.
- › Plan ahead, be safe and have fun.

These signs will be posted at major trail access points, including at trailhead kiosks. The content will also be published on promotional materials and the LVRT website.

Users should keep to the right and move in single file when in groups. The expectation is that all users will respect other users and uses, regardless of sport, speed, or skill level. Yielding the right-of-way to other users and uses is critical to setting user expectations on the trail and preventing conflicts. In general, when approaching from the opposing direction, trail users should move to the right to yield the right of way. When overtaking users that are moving more slowly, the overtaking trail user(s) should announce their presence and intention, then pass on the left.

The trail courtesy designates the yielding behaviors between allowable uses, setting user expectations on the trail system. The trail courtesy discussed here is consistent with the existing trail courtesy guidance previously established for the trail. The guidance is depicted on signage that is posted at major access points and trailheads. These user expectations should also be published on promotional materials and the LVRT website.

During typical summer use, bicyclists should yield to runners, hikers, and walkers. All users should yield to equestrians and should announce presence when approaching. Heed the advice of equestrians when approaching or passing a horse to limit possibility of spooking the horse. Similar to summer, in winter bicyclists should yield to users on foot, including snowshoers. Pedestrians and snowshoers should yield to those utilizing the groomed trails that may have more difficulty stepping off groomed tracks to allow others to pass. This includes skiers yielding to dog sleds yielding to snowmobiles. All uses should operate at a reasonable speed and should slow down when

Coordination with First Responders, Emergency Services, and Law Enforcement

To expedite response to emergencies, the Rail Trails Program Manager should initiate annual coordination with first responders as follows:

- Coordinate with local first responders and emergency medical service providers
- Orient first responders to the trail system, mile markers, major landmarks, access points, and constraints within their jurisdiction
- Provide information on constraints or barriers to access (i.e. appropriate equipment for response, bridge load ratings, etc.)
- Identify appropriate equipment and any constraints that should be considered in response to an event
- Develop agreements, as needed, with first responders, emergency medical service providers, and law enforcement entities
- Establish protocols for reporting emergencies back to VTrans Rail Trail Program Manager for documentation
- Prepare trail users to know what to look for to orient emergency responders to site of emergency (mile marker or cross street signage)
- Maintain an annually updated list of emergency first responders and providers as part of the annual maintenance planning and update agreements as necessary

engaging in passing maneuvers, especially when passing other use types. As more users and modes are present on the trail, the trail courtesy guidance should be revisited to confirm it is serving a safe and inclusive experience for all users.

Trail users should respect all landowners and private property along the trail. Access to the trail at trailheads, at public highway crossings, and at other trail junctions will be clearly marked following the implementation of the Signing Plan (LVRT(14)). Respect for the adjacent landowners includes accessing the trail only from these designated access points and not along private driveways, farm crossings, or other trail crossings that do not otherwise connect to public facilities.

Emergency Response, Law Enforcement, and Resolving User Conflicts

Setting user expectations and encouraging preparedness and prevention are the primary means to avoiding emergency situations along the trail system. This means educating users before they are on the trail system to what sort of experience they might expect to have. Setting expectations can include orienting users to the linear trail system and trail access points, informing users of the types of services that are available and frequency with which those services are available, and reminding users to be prepared with properly functioning gear and appropriate safety equipment for their activity or mode. Including this information on the trail website and in promotional materials is crucial to prevention and discussed in more detail in the Tourism and Marketing section below. Trailside signage also gets the message across to users as to what the expectations are. Finally, generating a presence on the trail, through mechanisms like trail ambassadors (see Volunteer Staff Management), Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee volunteers, and the Rail Trails Program staff, provides an opportunity for face-to-face education around these issues.

Even with the best preparation, emergencies will occur. Coordination with first responders, emergency medical service providers, and law enforcement should occur annually to ensure their staff and volunteers are oriented to the trail system. With more trail users and those less familiar with the trail frequenting the system, having efficient response to the trail, especially in the case of emergency medical or safety situations, will be imperative. The Rail Trail Program Manager should initiate this coordination with local and state emergency first responders, including emergency medical service providers, local fire and rescue squads, state and local law enforcement (i.e. Vermont State Police, County Sheriffs, and local police departments), and other entities with authority along the trail like Vermont Fish and Wildlife.

If there is an emergency on the trail requiring law enforcement, emergency medical response, or other emergency first responders, trail users should call 911. Dispatch will connect users in an emergency situation to the appropriate agency. Users should be prepared to inform dispatch they are on the LVRT and provide landmarks and/or milemarkers. It is noted that there may be segments of the trail that do not have cell coverage. Like many backcountry experiences in Vermont, trail users should be prepared to travel some distance or send someone on their behalf to call for help in areas with limited or no cell reception.

One of the primary deterrents to unlawful activity is regular presence of users and authoritative figures on the trail. Involvement from the Rail Trails Program staff and Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee volunteers to have presence on segments within their region and opportunities to involve volunteers through trail ambassador programming creates an active trail patrolling activities. Any violations of Vermont laws should be reported to law enforcement. Currently County Sheriffs are the primary law enforcement contact for non-emergency reporting of unlawful activity and may continue to be so unless agreements with local and state law enforcement state otherwise. Subsequent notice should be provided to the Rail Trails Program Manager to track and document as part of the trail log.

The most effective method to resolving user conflicts is preventing them from occurring in the first place. Whether conflicts arise between users engaged in the same activity, users engaged in different activities, users interacting with adjacent landowners, users interacting with trail managers, or adjacent landowners interacting with trail managers, the expectation is that trail users, trail neighbors, trail volunteers, and trail managers are approaching interactions in a respectful and inclusive manner. Informing users of the various use types and setting expectations for trail etiquette and courtesy are imperative to this prevention. Should there be any unlawful activity or danger requiring immediate intervention, law enforcement should be called to intercede. The incident should subsequently be reported to the Rail Trails Program Manager. These types of incidents should be tracked just like a maintenance issue or trail hazard requiring remedial response. Should there be disagreements, disputes, or conflicts between any two (or more) parties, a grievance may be filed with the Rail Trails Program Manager. This should be submitted in writing and include detailed descriptions of the conflict or issue and any documentation to support the aggrieved request. The Rail Trails Program Manager will review and confirm receipt within 14 days and alert the Rail and Aviation Bureau Director to the issue. The Rail Trails Program Manager, in consultation with appropriate entities (i.e. Property Management if it is a dispute between user and adjacent parcel owner regarding property, Vermont Fish and Wildlife if it is a wildlife endangerment issue, etc.) may seek more information, reach out to relevant parties, request input from the LVRT Trail Council and/or Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees, and gather other relevant information to the issue. These will be documented in a report to the Rail and Aviation Bureau Director with a proposed course of action. With approval, this proposed course of action will be recommended in a written response to the aggrieved party and copied to other parties requiring notice. Should the issue not be resolved to the satisfaction of the aggrieved party, they may appeal the response. As an assembly of the different user groups and stakeholders to the trail community, the LVRT Trail Council should be prepared to process an appeal of this nature.

Mitigating Encroachment and Encampment Issues

Regular, authoritative presence on the trail serves as a primary deterrent to unwanted behavior including encroachment issues. Encroachment can be defined as any unauthorized activity occurring within the state owned right of way. Illicit actions on state

property can be viewed as an exploitation of public resources. Encroachment actions can include constructing permanent or temporary structures within the right of way, removing barricades or other demarcations, growing crops or other plants, regrading areas within the right of way, developing renegade crossings, illegal dumping, and other misuse of the public resource. On the LVRT, this may be exacerbated by the limited authorized use of some trail segments in recent history, where the perception of abandonment may have invited other unauthorized uses. It is anticipated that as the trail sees more established use in the coming years, new encroachments may become more infrequent.

Suspected encroachments on the trail right of way should be reported to the Rail Trail Program Manager. Encroachments may be observed and reported by Rail Trail Program staff, LVRT Council or Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee membership, volunteers, users, adjacent parcel owners, or others on the trail. The suspected encroachment should be logged like all other remedial issues on the trail. Initial response to the suspected encroachment activity should be confirmation of the encroachment issue or activity by Rail Trail Program staff. With this initial response, the suspected encroachment activity should be documented in situ and added to the maintenance log. If the alleged encroachment is deemed minor or easily remediated, Rail Trail Program staff should initiate contact with the responsible party and suggest corrective action to be taken. If voluntary corrective action is not possible or feasible, the issue is not mitigated appropriately, the issue is more complex, or it warrants further investigation to assess corrective action, the Rail Trail Program Manager should alert the Rail and Aviation Bureau Director to the issue and initiate the development of an investigative report. The report should document the facts regarding the alleged encroachment and recommend a course of action, in consultation with the Property Management Section. The report should be issued to the Rail and Aviation Bureau Director. Depending on the situation and involved parties, course of action may range from issuing warnings to taking legal action. Monitoring of the situation may be necessary until the encroachment is mitigated to the satisfaction of the Rail Trails Program Manager or Rail and Aviation Bureau Director. This approach is consistent with encroachment policies set forth for public lands managed by Forests Parks and Recreation.

Given the narrow nature of the trail right-of-way and the adjacent land uses, primitive camping along the LVRT at this time is not permissible. This aligns with the primitive camping guidelines for Vermont state lands which dictates that camping must be at least 100 feet from any stream or body of water, 200 feet from any trail or property line, and 1000 feet from any traveled road. Should established encampments be encountered or reported, they should be treated as encroachments and mitigated through the course of action outlined above. This does not preclude areas surrounding the LVRT from establishing and promoting camping opportunities in the future on private or public parcels outside of the trail right-of-way (see Tourism and Marketing section below).

Agreements Supporting Trail Connections and Amenities for the Public Good

Providing trailside amenities and trail connections to the many trailside communities along the LVRT will be imperative to leveraging the recreation tourism opportunities sought by the trail communities along the LVRT. Entities may seek to enter a right-of-way use, license, or lease agreement to utilize a portion of the rail trail right-of-way for the public good. In particular, a municipality in collaboration with the Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee and LVRT Trail Council, may seek to enter an agreement with VTrans to establish a trailhead, trail connection, or pause place and develop trailside amenities within the existing right-of-way as part of the development.

Currently, the terms in the [Master License Agreement](#) dictate the rental schedule for use of lands within the state ROW along railbanked lines. Maintaining the integrity of the inactive rail corridor while maximizing the benefit of the interim trail use by encouraging positive user experiences is possible through thoughtful design and agreements. The Master License Agreement notes that [state statute](#) 19 V.S.A. § 26a provides for exception to leasing or licensing property under its jurisdiction at fair market value should the occupancy or use serve a public purpose justifying a lesser rent. This exception should be considered for the development of pause places, trail connections, trailheads, and trailside amenities as outlined within this Management Plan so as to not unduly burdened municipalities or other organizations in their pursuit to support the user experience along the LVRT and create the vital connections to this trail resource. Further, waiving additional document preparation fees or providing support for these fees should be considered in support of establishing these trail connections and amenities for the public good. Setting a policy for these developments and agreements along the LVRT specifically will set precedent, demonstrating to partnering municipalities that VTrans values these improvements and their upkeep as critical to the trail system and the user experience.

Trail Access, Crossing, and Right-of-Way Use Agreements

The Property Management division of the Rail and Aviation Bureau will continue to manage trail access, crossing, and right-of-way use, license, or lease agreements. These requests are handled on a case-by-case basis through an established process. To be consistent with the other operations manual topic areas, these processes should be codified in a policy statement and specifically adapted to the Rail Trail Program as necessary.

Based on the guidance available from the Rail Property Management division, requests should be submitted either using the [electronic form](#) to initiate new requests and/or in writing. Whether submitted electronically via email or in writing, the following information should be included as attachments to the request:

- › A depiction of the area (i.e. picture, map, plan, sketch) identifying property lines and parcel owners for any abutting properties;

- › Distance to nearest landmark or milemarker;
- › Documentation proving ownership of the adjacent property;
- › Description of identified need for the agreement and proposed use
- › Documentation of ability to obtain general liability insurance

It is important to note that trail access, crossing, and right-of-way use, license, or lease agreements require general liability insurance that covers all major divisions including:

- › Premises – Operations
- › Products and Completed Operations
- › Personal Injury Liability
- › Contractual Liability
- › Liquor Liability
- › Environmental Damage

Where the policy shall be on an occurrence form and limits shall not be less than:

- › \$1,000,000 Per Occurrence
- › \$2,000,000 General Aggregate
- › \$1,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate
- › \$ 50,000 Fire/Legal Liability

Trail crossings were a topic that surfaced during the plan development process beyond the agreements required for a legal crossing of the trail right-of-way. In particular, safety at roadway crossings were a point of concern for some community members. With the completion of construction and implementation of the signage plan, current best practices for roadway-trail crossings to promote safety will be implemented. This standardized approach will be consistently applied along the trail, helping to set expectations for interactions at trail crossings for both trail and roadway users, furthering the safety objective. For public highway crossings of the trail (i.e. state and town highways), this includes detectable warning surfaces on each side of the crossing and sign packages that increase the conspicuity of the crossing and clearly conveys priority. For low volume roadway crossings, mainly private roads and residential driveways, sight lines and other safety features of the crossing will be assessed to determine appropriate priority. Based on best practice, the preferred treatment at locations deemed appropriate will give



priority to the trail users at these crossings. As such, the sign package will provide warning in advance of the roadway crossing for trail users and a yield to trail traffic condition for roadway users (e.g. motorists).

8

Economic Development & Community Connections

Overview

The economic development opportunities presented by the LVRT can be fully realized through fostering safe and comfortable connections to trail-adjacent communities, promoting existing services and amenities available along the trail, supporting improvements to services and amenities, and aligning with local and regional plans to amplify economic revitalization efforts already in motion. The greatest opportunity for stimulating the local economy entails promoting and marketing the trail to visitors while encouraging trail users to venture into towns and village centers, or other locations with services and amenities off-trail, while empowering community members to be engaged stewards of the trail and fostering an inviting environment for trail users.

Trail Identity

Recommended Strategy: Establish a **cohesive trail identity** and incorporate into signage, wayfinding, guidance, amenities, and promotional materials.

One of the challenges with a 93-mile linear trail system is providing one consistent user experience and cohesive aesthetic along the corridor. A user at the Swanton terminus and at the St. Johnsbury terminus should recognize the trail identity. Ideally, users relate that identity to their experience of the trail as well as the other information and materials they have interacted with through trail promotion or trip planning. This trail “brand” has been established through the efforts of VAST to promote the trail

and support its construction. As the page turns to developing the user experience along the full length of the corridor, creating a recognizable logo that appears ubiquitously on all signs and materials related to the LVRT builds on that foundation.

The need to establish a cohesive identity was evidenced through the multiple LVRT logos that existed on signage and trailside amenities along existing trail segments through 2022. As communities work to establish trailheads or round out the trailside amenities at existing trailheads, the adoption of the graphics outlined in the graphics guide below will be imperative.

Of the logos that are currently associated with the LVRT, one stood out as evoking the elements of the trail and surrounding landscape. The color palette also matched with the existing Vermont state and VTrans brands, making it a logical choice for the cohesive aesthetic for the trail. Building on the logo already developed for the trail by VAST, the updated LVRT logo is presented on light and dark background and with and without color, creating acceptable formats for many applications. In addition to the standard logo, the fundamental and recognizable elements were developed into alternative lock ups for use cases where the standard logo might not be legible or appropriate. Two use cases, on VTrans letterhead and on a website mock up, show the alternative lock ups in applications that would not otherwise lend themselves to the standard logo.

Capital Planning Objectives

The capital improvement projects that are detailed in this section help to further the objectives identified in the Vision & Goals, including:

- Improve connections to villages and town centers to encourage exploration of trailside communities
- Foster trail stewardship opportunities to promote sense of community pride
- Promote rural heritage, history, and educational programming
- Provide meaningful opportunities for connection with the scenic, natural, and agricultural landscape
- Promote development and improve connections to recreational opportunities proximate to the LVRT
- Improve connections to alternative transportation networks and trail systems
- Provide convenient trail access points along the LVRT with clear directional signage and well-maintained parking areas

PRIMARY LOGOTYPE

Seal—Full Color



Seal—Black



Seal—Reverse



Seal—White

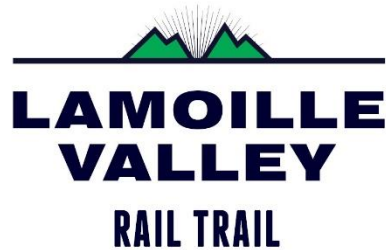


ALTERNATIVE LOCKUPS

Side By Side (Suggested Use: Letterheads, Web banners)



Horizon—Vertical (Suggested Use: Signage)



Horizon—Horizontal (Suggested Use: Signage)



Horizon—LVRT (Suggested Use: Stickers/Window Decals)



LVRT Simple Seal (Suggested Use: Stickers/Window Decals)



PRIMARY TYPEFACES

Swiss 721 Extended

Aa

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789 (.,:;!@#\$%^&*)

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
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ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789 (.,:;!@#\$%^&*)

DIN Condensed

Aa

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
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ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
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abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
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COLOR PALETTE

Primary



PMS Pantone 2767 C
 CMYK 100 | 87 | 42 | 41
 RGB 18 | 40 | 76
 HEX #12284C

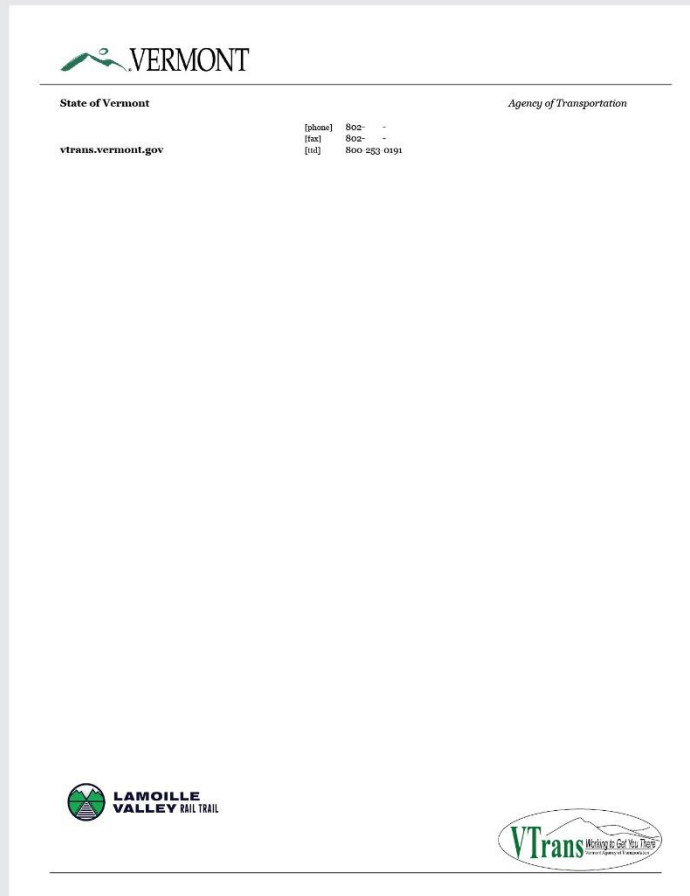
Secondary

PMS Pantone 7482 C CMYK 96 8 99 1 RGB 0 157 79 HEX #009D4F	PMS Pantone 7462 C CMYK 100 71 22 5 RGB 0 83 139 HEX #00538B
PMS Pantone 7482 C @ 20% CMYK 18 0 18 0 RGB 207 237 217 HEX #CFEDD9	PMS Pantone 663 C CMYK 9 9 5 0 RGB 229 225 230 HEX #E5E1E6

Tertiary

PMS Pantone 7621 C CMYK 21 100 95 13 RGB 177 32 40 HEX #B12028	PMS Pantone 1795 C CMYK 10 98 93 1 RGB 215 40 47 HEX #D7282F	PMS Pantone 1235 C CMYK 0 32 95 0 RGB 255 183 27 HEX #FFB71B	PMS Pantone 109 C CMYK 1 16 100 0 RGB 255 209 0 HEX #FFD100
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LOGO USAGE EXAMPLE



VERMONT

State of Vermont Agency of Transportation

vtrans.vermont.gov

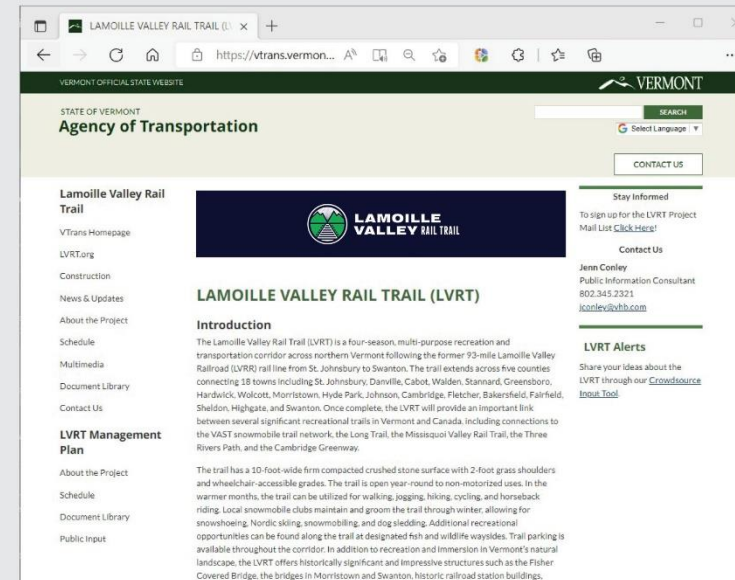
[phone] 802- -
 [fax] 802- -
 [toll] 800 233 0191

LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL TRAIL

VTrans Working to Get You There

VTrans Letterhead

Website Banner



LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL TRAIL (LVRT)

VERMONT OFFICIAL STATE WEBSITE

STATE OF VERMONT Agency of Transportation

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail

VTrans Homepage
 LVRT.org
 Construction
 News & Updates
 About the Project
 Schedule
 Multimedia
 Document Library
 Contact Us

LVRT Management Plan

About the Project
 Schedule
 Document Library
 Public Input

LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL TRAIL (LVRT)

Introduction

The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) is a four-season, multi-purpose recreation and transportation corridor across northern Vermont following the former 93-mile Lamoille Valley Railroad (LVR) rail line from St. Johnsbury to Swanton. The trail extends across five counties connecting 18 towns including St. Johnsbury, Danville, Cabot, Walden, Stannard, Greensboro, Hardwick, Wolcott, Morris town, Hyde Park, Johnson, Cambridge, Fletcher, Bakersfield, Fairfield, Sheldon, Highgate, and Swanton. Once complete, the LVRT will provide an important link between several significant recreational trails in Vermont and Canada, including connections to the VAST snowmobile trail network, the Long Trail, the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, the Three Rivers Path, and the Cambridge Greenway.

The trail has a 10-foot-wide firm compacted crushed stone surface with 2-foot grass shoulders and wheelchair-accessible grades. The trail is open year-round to non-motorized uses. In the warmer months, the trail can be utilized for walking, jogging, hiking, cycling, and horseback riding. Local snowmobile clubs maintain and groom the trail through winter, allowing for snowshoeing, Nordic skiing, snowmobiling, and dog sledding. Additional recreational opportunities can be found along the trail at designated fish and wildlife waysides. Trail parking is available throughout the corridor. In addition to recreation and immersion in Vermont's natural landscape, the LVRT offers historically significant and impressive structures such as the Fisher Covered Bridge, the bridges in Morris town and Swanton, historic railroad station buildings.

Stay Informed

To sign up for the LVRT Project Mail List [Click Here!](#)

Contact Us

Jenn Conley
 Public Information Consultant
 802.345.2321
jconley@vrb.com

LVRT Alerts

Share your ideas about the LVRT through our [Crowdsourcing Idea Tool](#)

Capital Improvement Projects

The capital improvement program for the trail is focused on key areas that will need to be developed to create the desired user experience for the trail system by providing strategic locations to connect with the surrounding landscape and/or trail features, other recreational or transportation opportunities, and access to the trail and vital connections to the surrounding communities. By identifying places along a linear trail system that will serve the user experience in these ways and setting in to motion the development of these locations in collaboration with the trail communities, VTrans seeks to further many of the objectives that are outlined in the Vision & Goals. Fully leveraging this trail system to actualize the connections among communities in northern Vermont and the economic benefit those communities stand to gain by serving trail users and visitors hinges on the development of pause places, trail connections, and trailheads, as outlined in the section below.

In alignment with the objectives, centering equity and inclusivity in the development of these trail connections is imperative. In the collaborative process to establish pause places, trail connections, and trailheads, representation from stakeholders, particularly those that have been historically underrepresented and/or underserved, will be vital in identifying disparities and addressing needs. Empowering community members to contribute to decision making in development of trail connections will support establishing inclusive gathering spaces that serve to connect communities and trail users across a broad range of ages, abilities, and other social inequities.

Pause Places

Recommended Strategy: Identify and support development of pause places.

Pause places along the LVRT are opportunities to further two primary objectives identified in the Vision & Goals: 1) to provide meaningful opportunities for connection with the scenic, natural, and agricultural landscape and, 2) promote rural heritage, history, and educational programming. Developing a network of pause places between other trail system landmarks, like

Memorial Benches at Pause Places

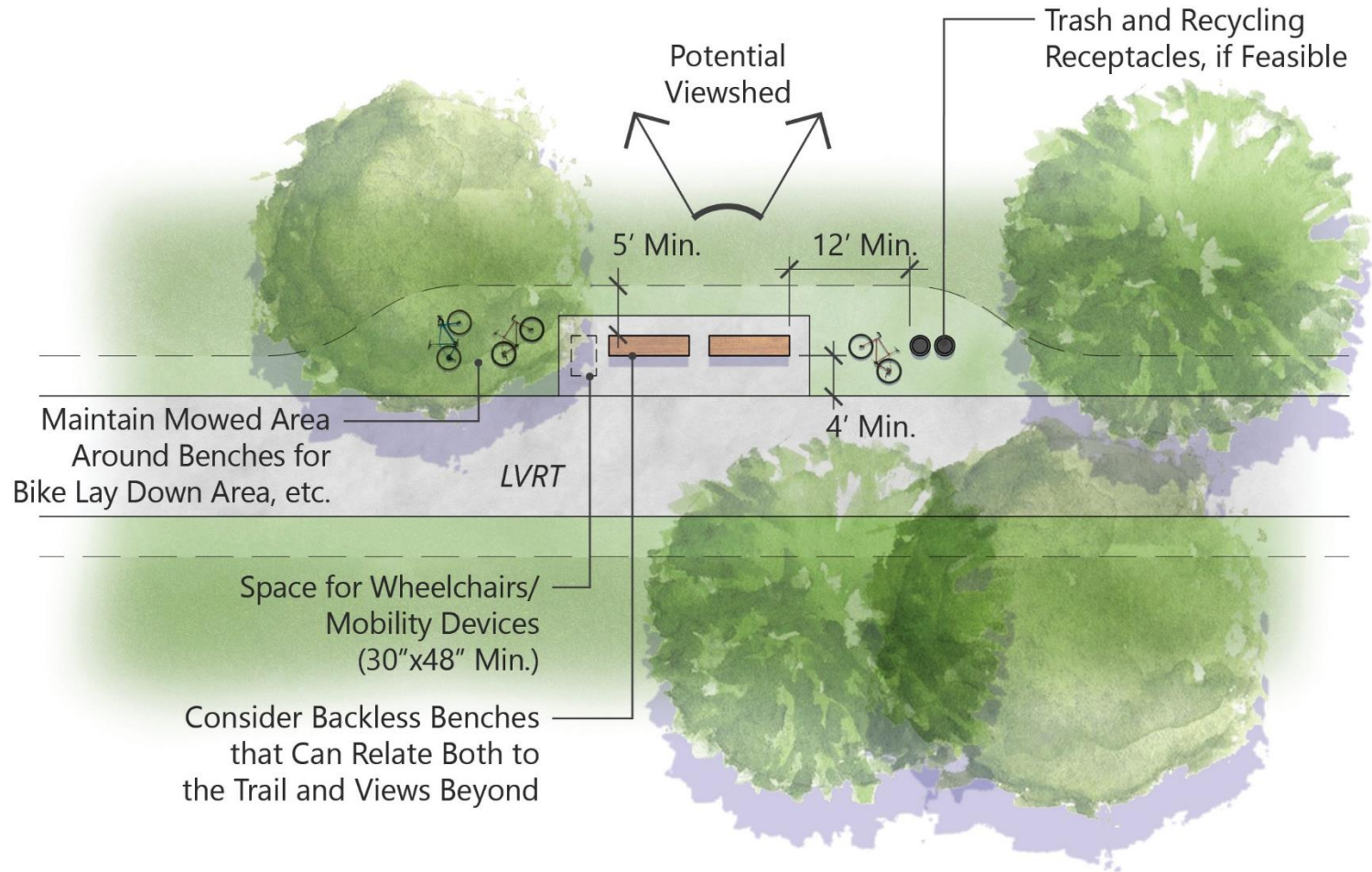
Requests for benches or plaques affixed to benches in memory of loved ones, family members, and even pets are made to the trail's manager on a regular basis. Having an established list of possible locations where development of a pause place and bench amenity is desired will allow for those efforts to be channeled to already vetted locations. Guidance on the bench and plaque aesthetic will help build the consistent and cohesive look for the trail. Agreements for the installation and maintenance will have to be established between the requester, volunteer organization or municipality, and VTrans.

trailheads, crossings, and trail junctions, creates those mid-segment opportunities to rest, connect with the trail’s surrounding context, and highlight other features of the trail system.

For the most recently constructed segments, there were a number of trail adjacent areas that were identified as potential pause places. This effort should be expanded to the full length of the trail to identify areas that could strategically provide mid-segment pause places between other interest areas on the trail like trailheads, trail crossings, and other significant trail features. Each potential pause place should be evaluated for site suitability with consideration for available width, resource constraints (e.g. wetland buffers, embankments, rare, threatened, or endangered species), and opportunities to showcase surrounding context or trail features through vistas, historical resources, natural features, or other points of interest. Creating an inventory of these potential locations through a screening process will allow VTrans to help guide communities in the development of pause places, channeling the efforts of neighbors, trail champions, stakeholders, historians, and others to sites where the development of a pause place is feasible.

To provide consistency along the trail system, a typical pause place template was developed detailing the typical amenities and layout for this type of trail feature. It is important to note that these locations may also provide an opportunity for an interpretive panel detailing a historic, cultural, or natural resource along the trail.

Figure 18 Typical Pause Place



Trail Connections

Recommended Strategy: Support the development of connecting or spur trail systems.

For existing trail-to-trail connections, formalizing the junctions with signage to identify and legitimize the connection will be an important step in the development and promotion of the trail-to-trail connections. These existing trail connections will set the standard for signage and features to welcome exploration on future connecting trails and other trail-adjacent opportunities. Some trail connections, like the junctions with other rail trail spurs like the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail (MVRT) and Cambridge Greenway, will collocate with trailheads serving both systems. For other trail-to-trail connections, whether hiking trails like the Long Trail, ski trails like the Catamount Trail, snowmobile trails like the VAST network, mountain bike connections being contemplated for the Velomont Trail, or angler or paddler river access paths like the Lamoille River Paddler's Trail, the first step to formalizing the connection will be to vet the permissions for trail use. Permissions should be evaluated from an adjacent parcel or trail governing entity standpoint to ensure the easements or agreements for use are in place. The trail access point should be vetted by the Rail and Aviation Bureau Property Management Division to ensure the trail access point or crossing is sanctioned prior to further development. If the access point is not sanctioned, and there is current or anticipated use of the trail as a connection to the LVRT, the process to pursue an agreement with VTrans should be initiated. For instance, there are a number of locations that are utilized by anglers and paddlers as access to the adjacent riverways with the potential for short trail segments connecting to the LVRT. Formalizing these locations so that users are aware of the opportunity to interact with the riverways proximate to the LVRT promotes desired multisport synergies and leverages the recreation economy opportunities that are sought with this trail resource.

With the completion of the LVRT, it is anticipated that communities will begin to develop or expand connections to this trail. Many of the communities along the trail recognize the opportunity to generate synergies and connect local or regional trail systems via the LVRT. Action is already taking place in communities, like Hardwick, where local trail development and stewardship groups have pursued town lands or crafted easements with private parcel owners to develop trail networks. Other more regional connections have also been contemplated, like the Stowe-Morrisstown Trail. In this instance, the more regional trail connection proposed between the LVRT and Stowe Recreation Path has been [studied](#) and supported by the communities it connects, while recognizing the challenges to realizing this future non-motorized link. Whether local or regional, these connecting trail networks leverage the LVRT development, but also further goals for creating outdoor opportunities for active and healthy communities. Formalizing these connections with signage and encouraging exploration off the trail and into these adjacent areas should be the aim of these trail-to-trail junctions. These elements further the objectives of encouraging healthy and active lifestyles as well as creating meaningful connection to the surrounding landscape.

Recommended Strategy: Support promotion of regional or destination loops connecting to the LVRT.

One area that is ripe for encouraging off-trail exploration is through the development of regional or destination trail loops. Creating a self-guided side trip from the LVRT creates opportunities for trail users to experience offerings in the neighboring communities while likely discovering other services or attractions along the way. Suggestions of regional loops to see the Chester Arthur Historic site in Fairfield or creameries and breweries in the Greensboro area create extensions of the experience on the LVRT and connect users to the neighboring communities. Providing guidance on routing for this type of destination loop can bolster the opportunities for local spending and connection to the working lands, history, and culture of the surrounding areas. These regional or destination loops should be promoted as part of the trip planning for the trail and opportunities to improve the user experience along these routes may be focal areas for communities to further leverage the LVRT as a resource.

Trailheads

Recommended Strategy: Establish network of trailheads to provide trail access and trailside amenities at regular frequencies.

Trailheads serve as the gateway to the trail as well as the gateway to trailside communities. The trailhead therefore serves as the critical connection between the trail resource and the opportunities the trail presents to the neighboring areas. As the chapter closes on the construction of the linear trail segments, the next frontier for the LVRT is establishing a network of trailheads that serve the trail and trail communities in this capacity.

School Connections

There are a number of school campuses that are in close proximity to the LVRT and listed below. Many of the communities engaged in this process identified potential alternative transportation, recreation, and educational opportunities that would be created with safe connections between those campuses and the trail. Logical partners in identifying those connectivity needs and helping to champion those projects are [Safe Routes to School](#) and [Local Motion](#).

- St. Johnsbury Academy
- Danville School
- Hardwick Elementary School
- Hazen Union School
- Wolcott Elementary School
- Morristown Elementary School
- People’s Academy High School
- Hyde Park Elementary School
- Lamoille Union Middle and High School
- Johnson Elementary School
- Northern Vermont University
- Cambridge Elementary School (via Cambridge Greenway)
- Fairfield Center School
- Sheldon Elementary (via MVRT)
- Highgate Elementary School
- Swanton Elementary School (via Swanton Fit and Healthy Path)
- Missisquoi Valley Union High School

Figure 19 Existing LVRT Trailheads (St. Johnsbury (left) and Cambridge Junction (right))



Guidance and practice vary tremendously, but for more suburban and urban linear trail systems, five to eight miles spacing between trailheads is recommended. Based on a review of many other trail systems, published best practices, and recognition of the existing conditions along the LVRT corridor, a maximum distance between trailheads for the LVRT was established at eight to ten miles. The rural context of some segments of the LVRT will lead to longer stretches of more backcountry experience. Other segments connecting Village Centers and Downtown Districts with more frequent trail crossings and trail adjacent attractors will dictate closer spacing. Furthermore, some segments of trail have already been active in establishing trailheads, so careful consideration of those locations in relation to desired community connections were required.




Trailheads are anticipated to provision users with trailside amenities at regular, strategic frequencies. Striking a balance of supporting the user experience and upholding health and safety objectives trailside, while creating opportunities for off-trail exploration to garner services and support community economic vitality objectives is a top priority. A strategic set of trailhead locations with varying levels of amenities would establish a minimum set of services along the trail. As such, three different trailhead amenity levels are proposed.

Table 8 outlines the three different trailhead types, based on levels of amenities offered at each level. The icons indicate those amenities that should be located, may be located, and are not typically located at each particular type of trailhead.

Across all trailhead types, considerations of ADA accessibility are contemplated. As these concepts are developed into site

Table 8 **Amenity Theme Levels**

AMENITY	TRAILHEAD TYPE		
	<i>Level 1 Small Trailhead</i>	<i>Level 2 Medium Trailhead</i>	<i>Level 3 Large Trailhead</i>
Wayfinding Trail Map (Direction / Distance, etc.)	✓	✓	✓
Benches and Trash/Recycling Receptacles	✓	✓	✓
Bike Racks and Bike Repair Station	✓	✓	✓
Vehicular Parking	?	✓	✓
Historical / Interpretive Element	?	?	?
Information / Map Kiosk (Nearby Attractions, Events, Direction / Distance, etc.)	?	?	?
Entry / Arrival Signage	✗	✓	✓
Water Fountain / Bottle Filling Station	✗	?	✓
Picnic Area / Tables	✗	?	✓
Restroom Facility	✗	?	✓
Pavilion	✗	?	?
Landscaping	✗	?	?
Lighting	✗	?	?
Public Art	✗	?	?
Pull-Through Trailer Parking (Boat, Canoes, Sport Facility Support, etc.)	✗	✗	?

-  Amenities that should be included for a trailhead of this listed level
-  Amenities that may be included for a trailhead of this listed level
-  Amenities not typically found at a trailhead of this listed level

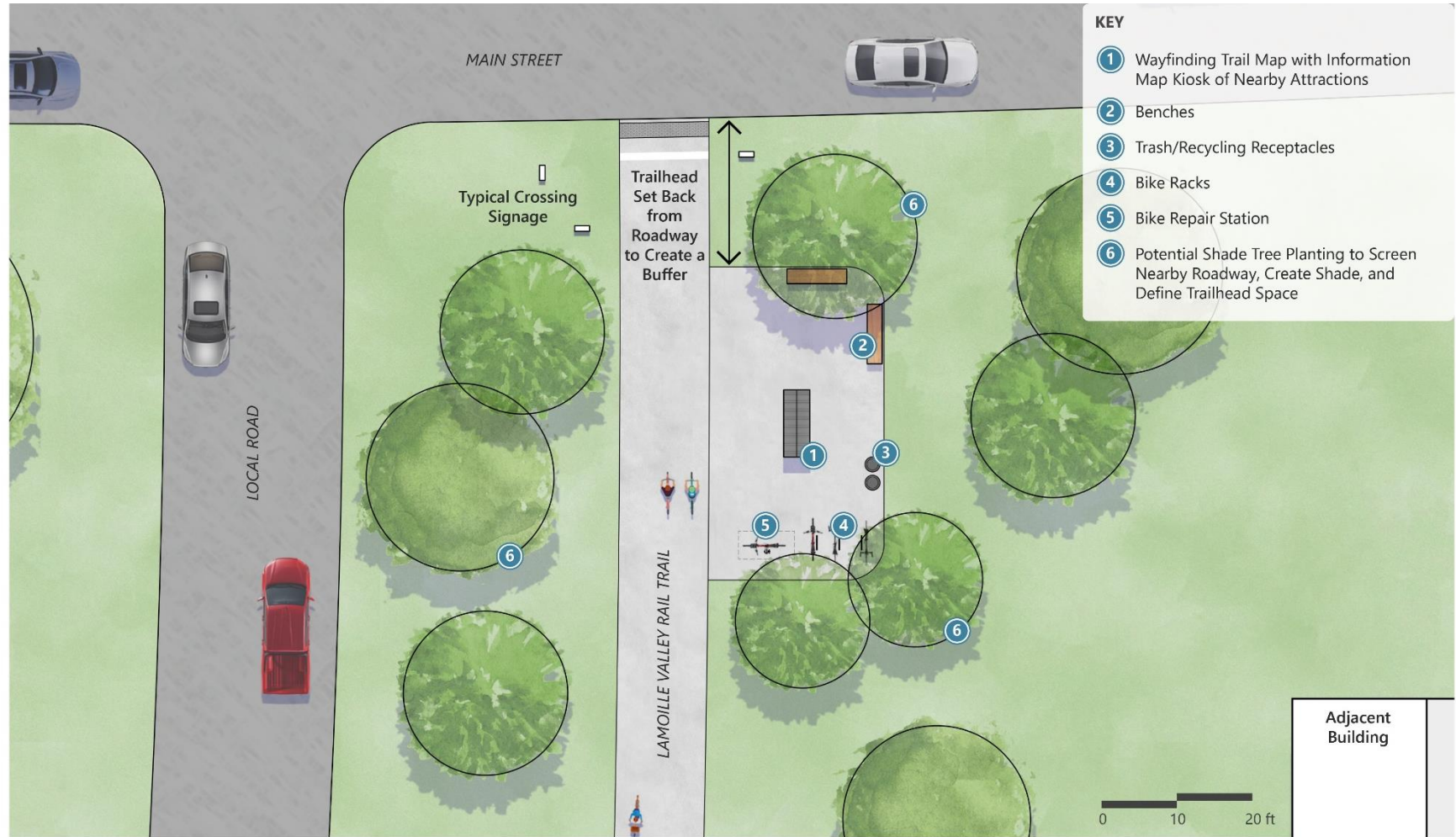
specific designs and constructed, elements including ADA accessible parking, appropriate ramps, level landings, firm and stable

surfaces, and other design features will establish accessibility. Moreover, inclusive access to these spaces and the trail system will require engaging community representation throughout the planning and design process to identify disparities, address needs, and foster stewardship of these spaces.

For a Level 1 Trailhead, the typical amenities that should be present include a wayfinding trail map, benches and trash/recycling receptacles, and bike racks with bike repair stations. This basic set of amenities will create a consistent, affirming aesthetic to the trail while providing users a basic set of amenities trailside. Other features, such as an information kiosk with nearby community attractions or services can help orient users to off-trail opportunities or an interpretive element or panel might draw attention to some feature or resource along the trail or in the trail's vicinity.

The Level 1 Trailhead typical drawing demonstrates the placement of these elements in space, providing guidance on setbacks from the trail and buffer from nearby roadway crossings. A typical application of a Level 1 Trailhead would be as a gateway into a Village Center or community area, where opportunity for users to connect to off-trail services or businesses may be in close proximity. Creating space around a two-sided trailhead kiosk with trail-oriented elements like the trail map on one side and information about local services, attractions, and events on the other. The typical drawing demonstrates placement that is conducive to users interacting with both sides of the kiosk. Providing bike racks encourages users to lock up and check out the community offerings within walking distance to the trailhead. Creating a buffer around bike racks and the bike repair station allows for users to navigate comfortably around these elements. Finally, benches and intentional plantings that might offer shade create an inviting location for rest at these trailhead facilities. Creating some separation between seating areas and trash and recycling receptacles is shown to encourage a buffer between these two uses of the trailhead space.

Figure 20 Typical Level 1 Trailhead

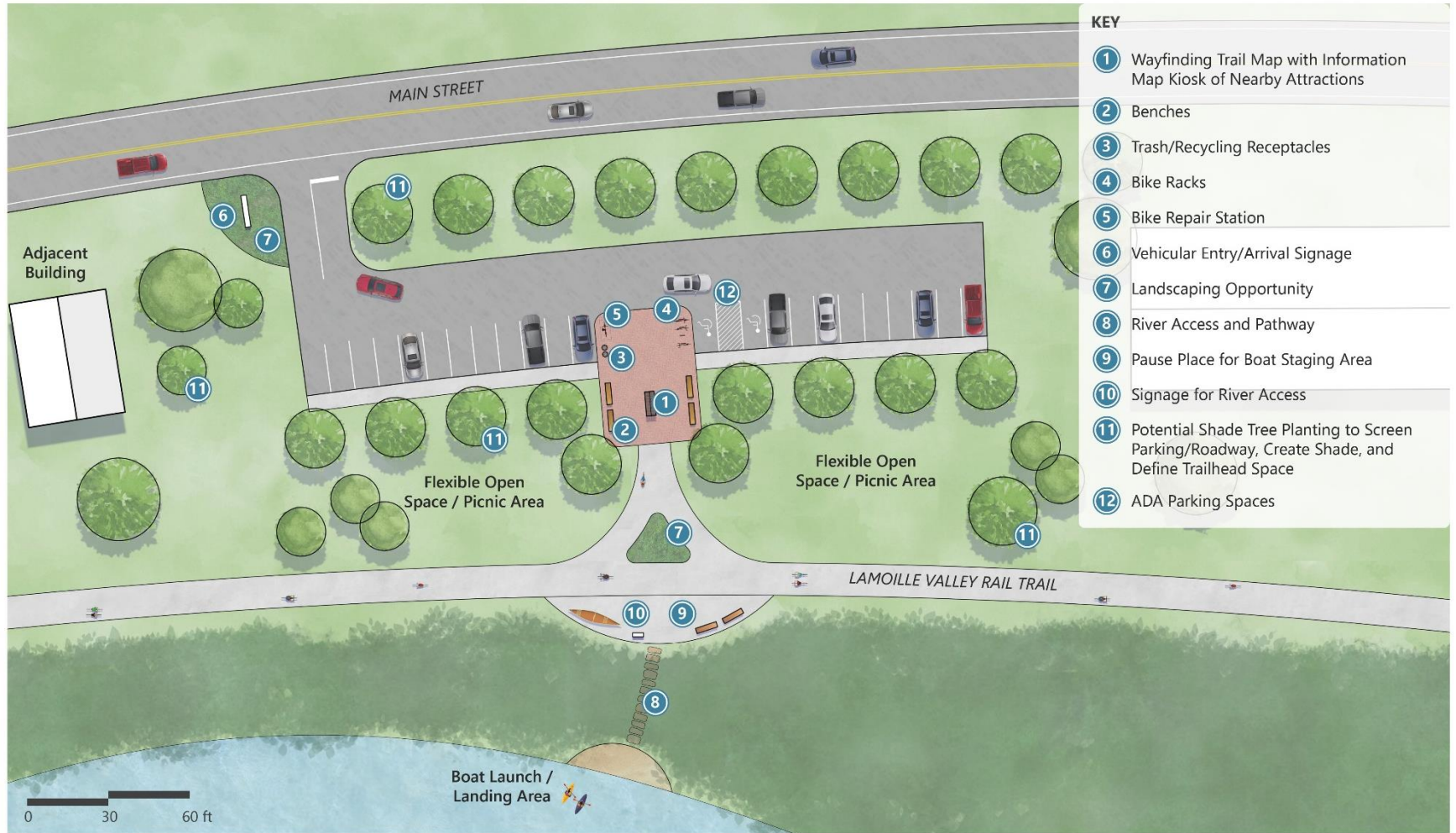


At a Level 2 Trailhead, parking and entry signage are added to the basic list of amenities that should be present, creating the arrival experience for those that are coming to the trail system by car. The opportunity exists for communities to add many amenities that may be present and round out the user experience at these locations. These additional amenities might include public art, landscaping, or a shade pavilion.

As shown in the Level 2 Trailhead typical drawing, the placement of these elements should be done intentionally to create the desired user experience regardless of whether users are arriving to the trailhead space from the roadway network or from the trail. Centrally locating the information kiosk with trail information as well as local services, attractions, and/or events provides the opportunity for users to interact with both sides of the kiosk and creates that gateway at the interface between the trail system and off-trail network (i.e. parking area and broader transportation network). Like the Level 1 trailhead, providing space around other elements like bike racks, the bike repair station, trash receptacles, and benches allows for users to interact with those elements comfortably. Intentional landscaping and tree planting can further define the trailhead space by screening parking from the roadway, providing shade to resting locations, and defining more open flexible spaces or picnic areas.

It is recognized that there are opportunities for synergy with the paddling and angling communities along the reaches of the Lamoille River, Missisquoi River, and Black Creek. The Level 2 trailhead typical drawing depicts one of these riverine connections, where the opportunity to formalize the relationship between the trail and a paddling launch area may be present. In these areas, like with the trail-to-trail junctions, legitimizing this connection through signage and trail development provides an affirming experience that this activity is welcome. Again, creating the space trailside for users to enjoy a river vista from a bench or stage their boat for a launch minimizes possible disruption of trail activities. There are active recreational and stewardship groups developing opportunities such as this along the LVRT like the [Lamoille River Paddlers Trail](#) that may provide partnership in pursuit of these types of trail connections.

Figure 21 Typical Level 2 Trailhead



At a Level 3 Trailhead, adding in potable water access, restrooms, and picnic tables provides trail users with a wide range of essential services. Having strategic placement along the trailside for these types of facilities provides a minimum level of services consistent with the user expectations of a rural trail system. The restrooms at a Level 3 Trailhead may be portable or permanent, depending on the services at the site. For portable restrooms, the recommendation to develop an enclosure that serves to surround the temporary restroom facility on at least three sides gives a portable toilet more of a permanent feel, inconspicuous look, and helps to deter vandalism. This is consistent with how restroom facilities to date have been treated at trailhead sites like Cambridge Junction or Johnson.

The Level 3 trailhead typical depicts the recommended amenities and appropriate spacing and relationships between elements. It was noted that for some potential locations or existing trailheads along the LVRT, collocation with other recreational opportunities provides for synergies with these resources. Creating intentional connectivity to these adjacent uses helps to affirm the link to other community resources and welcome users in these spaces. Localized wayfinding and signage can support this connection. Much like the Level 2 trailhead, creating a central gateway linking the parking area and greater roadway network to the trail system welcomes trail users. In the Level 3 trailhead, this landing area has restrooms and leverages the building to host the trailhead kiosk elements like trail maps and wayfinding information regarding locally available services, attractions, or events. Bike racks and a bike repair station flank this area to provide plenty of bike parking opportunities.

The typical drawing depicts intentional plantings to define spaces and create connections between different use areas. This is particularly important for creating those intuitive connections between the trailhead features and the trail itself or other adjacent uses. A Level 3 trailhead might consider elements like simple play structures or other opportunities for collocated community amenities. Making sure that those elements are visible from multiple vantages so different users can engage in elements they are drawn to while still being within line of sight (e.g. kids on a play structure within sight of a parent checking out the local attractions on the information kiosk). Plantings can also help define open or flexible spaces that give way to other uses like picnicking or play.

One key element to the Level 2 and Level 3 trailheads is the provision of parking. In the Level 3 trailhead, an option for pull through parking for trailers is depicted. This may prove to be essential for trailheads with more snowmobile activity or synergies with the paddling opportunities. Counting users through all seasons and gathering feedback from users may help to inform where a need for trailer parking is emerging.

A formalized connection to a local hiking trail network is depicted within the typical. Again, this trail-to-trail junction is affirmed with signage and creates a pause place or vista opportunity with bench seating.

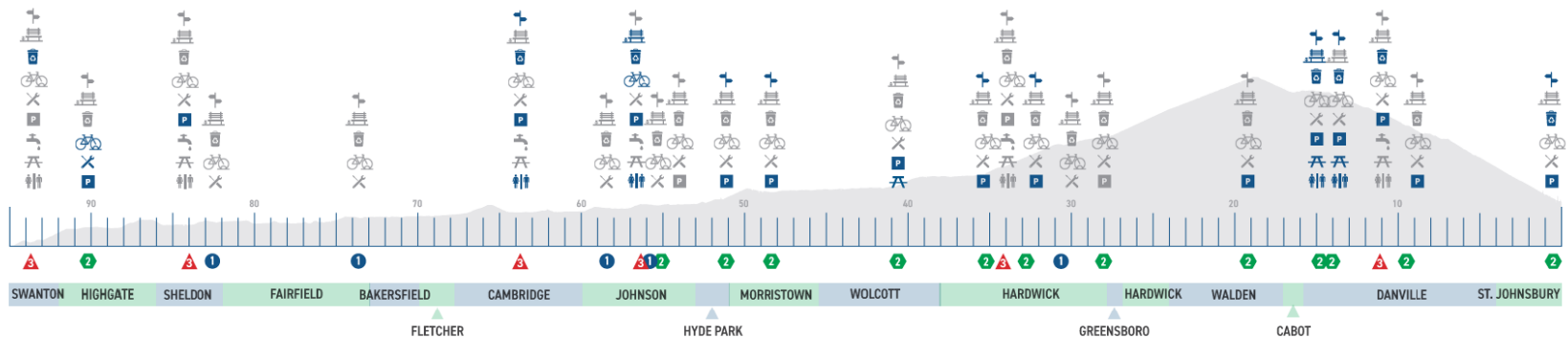
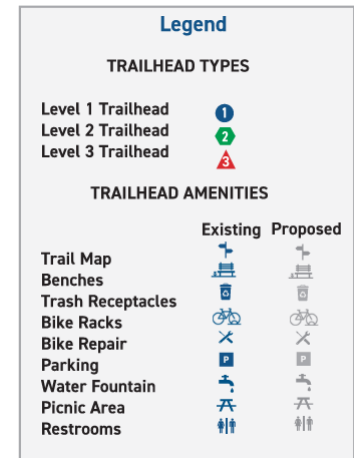
Figure 22 Typical Level 3 Trailhead



Recommended Strategy: Engage with local communities in the development and maintenance of trailheads and trailside amenities.

Recommended locations of trailheads and trailside amenities to support the trailhead spacing goals and create gateway opportunities to trail communities and centers of activity are depicted below. The proposed trailhead locations are included in the linear diagram with trailhead type and amenity level depicted based on milemarker along the trail. The existing trailheads and the amenities already in place at those locations are indicated with dark blue icons. Proposed amenities to round out the trailside services available in each location are depicted with grayed out icons. This recommended spacing and amenity guidance does not preclude municipalities from pursuing additional amenities to outfit trailheads, trail connections, access points, and pause places, but rather provides guidance on strategic spacing to provide minimum services.

Creating the desired user experience along the LVRT will depend on the development of a strategic network of trailheads and provision of trailside amenities. The LVRT Trail Council, Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees, municipalities, other local organizations, and volunteers will be critical to the trailhead and trailside amenity development and maintenance. The Rail Trail Program will provide support and guidance on the development of trailheads, placement of trailside amenities, agreements to establish these within and adjacent to the state-owned right of way, and agreements to keep the amenities maintained and in a state of good repair.



For some trailheads, there are already many of the recommended amenities in place. In these locations, efforts to adapt the trailheads to the updated trail identity and aesthetic will help to create the cohesive look and feel desired for the trail system. For other recommended trailhead locations without any existing features in place, efforts to identify potential sites, scope the project, develop designs, and construct the facility will be a more significant undertaking.

In order to establish a cohesive trail aesthetic, a recommended set of trailside amenities have been identified for the system. The aesthetic builds on the existing amenity theme and rounds out the options to meet the minimum strategic service offerings at trailheads. Locations that already have trailhead kiosks or gateway signage for parking may need to update or adapt the printed signage to match the trail identity offered in the graphics guide. Locations that already have additional offerings like picnic tables, bike racks, or restrooms may look to adapt to the updated amenity aesthetic when those existing amenities reach the end of their serviceable life or adapting those updated amenities over time as budgets allow. Otherwise the expectation is that new offerings would look to match the amenity aesthetic as shown in Figure 23, aiming for a consistent look and feel along the entire length of the trail. Approximate itemized costs for these amenities are included in Table 9, providing a gage on the cost to implement these different combinations of amenities to meet the recommended strategic placement.

Park & Rides

There are a number of Park & Ride Locations in proximity to the LVRT that could be explored as longer-term parking for end-to-end tours or future opportunities for trail user vehicle charging (ownership and charging infrastructure noted):

- St. Johnsbury (State owned with 7 Level 1 chargers)
- Danville (State owned)
- Hardwick (Town owned)
- Morristown (Town owned)
- Hyde Park (Town owned)
- Cambridge (State owned)
- Fairfield (Town owned)
- Highgate (Town owned with one Level 2 charger)
- Swanton (Town owned)

Figure 23 Recommended Trailside Amenities

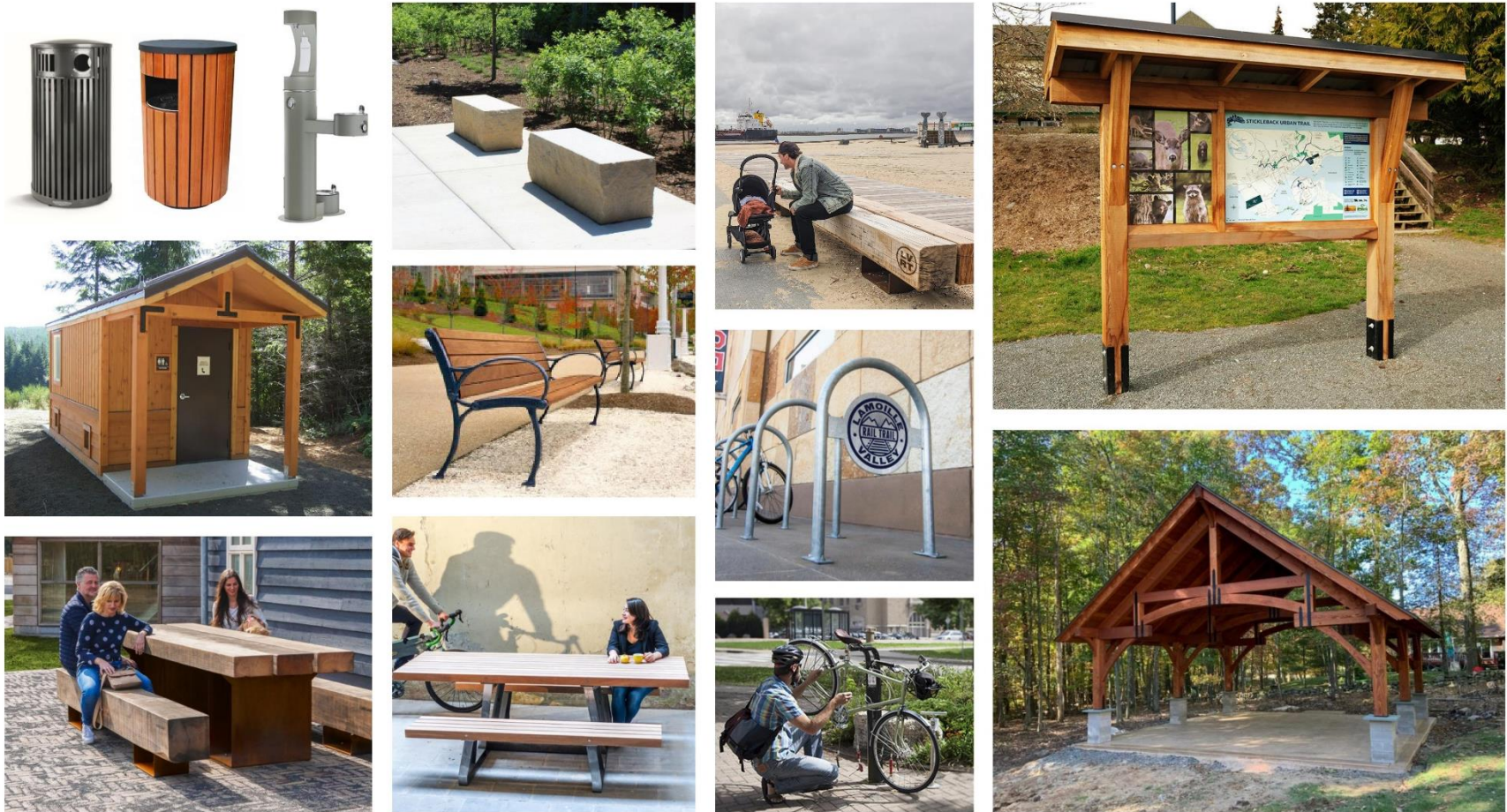


Table 9 Trailhead Typical and Recommended Amenity Itemized Costs

AMENITY/TRAILHEAD ELEMENT	COST**	UNIT	REMARKS
Map Kiosk (Wayfinding/Information/Map Kiosk)	\$2,725-3,325*	EA.	Includes One 36"x48" Wayfinding Map (\$325)
Entry / Arrival Signage	\$3,000-4,000*	EA.	
6' Bench with Back	\$2,100*	EA.	
Rustic Wooden Bench	3,100*	EA.	
6' Stone Slab Bench	\$3,300	EA.	Solid Cut Stone Seat Wall, \$550/L.F.
Picnic Table Set	\$2,500-5,600*	EA.	
Trash and Recycling Receptacle	\$1,800*	EA.	
Bike Rack	\$140*	EA.	
Bike Repair Station with Pump	\$1,600*	EA.	
Water Fountain / Bottle Filling Station (Integrated into Pavilion)	\$2,000-6,000*	EA.	Does Not Include Utility Work
Water Fountain / Bottle Filling Station (Freestanding)	\$9,000-12,000*	EA.	Does Not Include Utility Work
Pavilion	\$300-500	S.F.	Open Air Structure, Does not Include Restrooms
Shade Tree	\$550	EA.	1.5-2" Caliper, Mixed Varieties
Ornamental Tree	\$575	EA.	10-12' Height / 1.5-2" Caliper, Mixed Varieties
Shrub	\$65	EA.	18-24" Wide, Mixed Varieties
Groundcover/Ornamental Grasses	\$35	EA.	2 Gallon Pot, Mixed Varieties
Crushed Stone Paving	\$12	S.F.	
Concrete Paving	\$10	S.F.	
Brick Paving	\$35	S.F.	Includes Concrete Sub-base
6' Tall Chainlink Fence	\$25	L.F.	Black Vinyl Coated

NOTES:

*Prices shown do not include installation costs

**Additional project costs may be required (permitting, design, grading, demolition, utility work, freight, etc.)

Electrification of both bikes and vehicles were a topic area that came up with some regularity when discussing development of trailheads and trailside amenities. The accessibility afforded by e-bikes and their growth as an option for enjoying trails like the LVRT creates demand for charging opportunities. Although this may be an option for future development at some trailhead locations where electrical connections are available, this type of service should be evaluated as part of the trail friendly business program, where some businesses that look to serve trail users may be able to offer charging services.

In regard to vehicle charging at trailheads, efforts to identify suitable sites for vehicle fleet charging are underway and include electrification infrastructure at locations like park-and-ride lots. Much like e-bike charging, the need for vehicle charging while using the trail may be fulfilled at other locations that will sooner become part of the charging infrastructure network. Once trailheads are established to fulfill the minimal services trailside, these issues of car and bike charging infrastructure should be revisited.

Cultural Resources

Recommended Strategy: Coordinate with state and local historical organizations to identify historical site opportunities and develop interpretive signage plan.

Based on previously compiled cultural resource assessments of the LVRT corridor, there are 28 identified properties adjacent to or within line of sight to the LVRT, five identified bridges on the LVRT, and one identified depot adjacent to the LVRT that are listed on the Vermont State or National Register of Historic Places. In addition, there were eight bridges, 16 cattlepasses, and 116 culverts that were recommended eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. There are also four existing historic districts that encompass the LVRT corridor as well as four more historic districts identified and recommended eligible for the National Register, including Greensboro Bend, Hardwick, West Danville, and Wolcott.

Working closely with the State Historic Preservation Office, the list of recommended eligible LVRT resources should be assessed for nomination next steps. Further, these inventories and recommendations should be leveraged to develop an interpretive plan. Creating a connection to the historic significance of the resources along the trail advances the objective to promote the rural heritage, history, and educational programming for the trail. Identifying the resources to highlight and developing the interpretive elements will require close coordination with state and local historical organizations. The Rail Trails Program Manager, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office, should initiate the development of the interpretive signage plan in the mid-term with support from the LVRT Council and Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees to connect with membership and local input.

Educational & Recreational Programming

The trail system provides ample opportunities to engage local communities in educational and recreational programming and events. Many local organizations, including schools, libraries, local non-profits, and others already leverage the trail as a great resource in programming or events on or near the existing segments of trail. Many others see expanded opportunities with the completion of the 93-mile trail system. Events on the trail system or in the adjacent communities serve to draw users to the trail, promote inclusive use, encourage healthy and active communities, and promote a sense of community pride and trail stewardship.

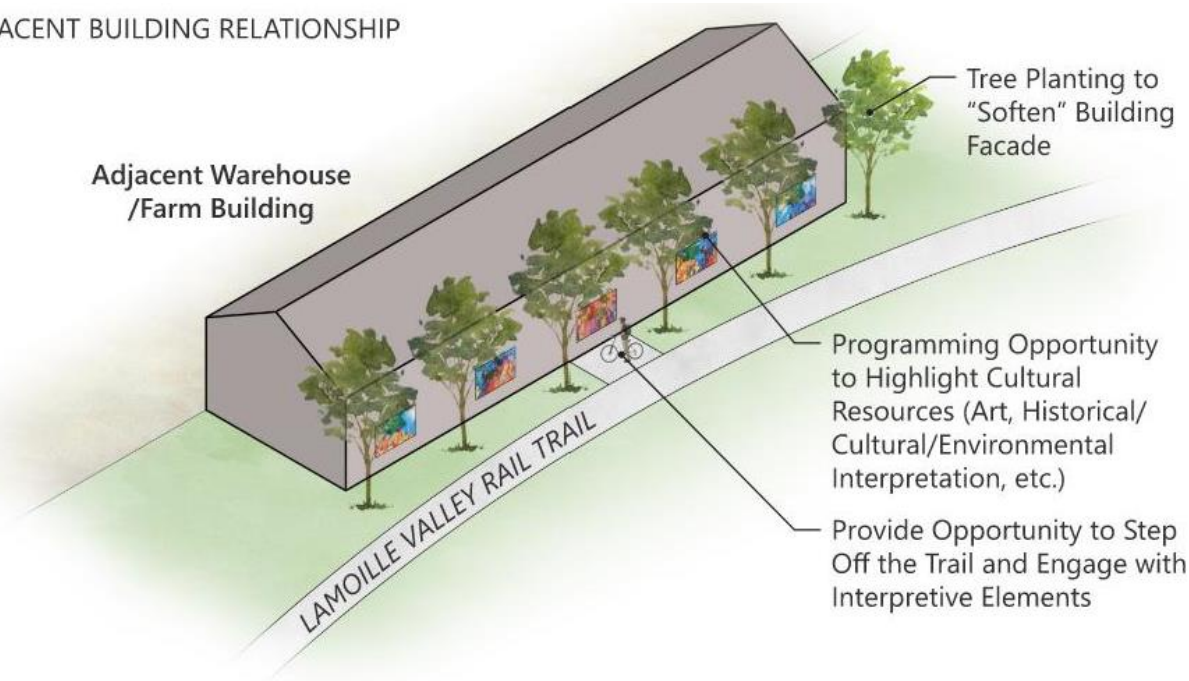
Recommended Strategy: Encourage local and regional trail-based educational and recreational programming and events in coordination with schools, libraries, and other organizations or resources.

Whether a small charitable fun run, end-to-end bike race, dog sled event, book walk, historical tour, local art display, or any other trail-based event or programming, the LVRT is poised to provide opportunities for local communities and visitors alike to maximize the benefits of the trail system. It is through these types of events or programming that the promotion of healthy and connected communities and cultivation of community, culture, and history along the trail are really on display.

Given the once working railroad that occupied the rail trail corridor, it was recognized that there are many building facades that abut the trail. Some are former depot buildings or rail stations, but others are part of the agricultural and industrial landscape that the rail once supported. Reclamation of these buildings or building facades as functional space could be pursued to support programming opportunities, as illustrated in Figure 24. These facades could support interpretive panels highlighting historical, cultural, or environmental resource significance. They could also become a showcase for art installations. Communities should consult the policies published by VTrans in the [Guidance Document: Art Installations on State Transportation Facilities](#), should they take advantage of the opportunities that these building facades present.

Figure 24 Adjacent Building Programming Opportunity

ADJACENT BUILDING RELATIONSHIP



Recommended Strategy: Support bike, ski, snowshoe lending libraries and/or rental opportunities.

In support of the objective to encourage healthy and active lifestyles, it is recommended that communities pursue lending libraries to share equipment and provide opportunities for trail users to try new or different modes along the trail. Providing equipment through lending libraries eliminates barriers to trying out new activities. This can be particularly effective for more cost prohibitive equipment like skis or bikes, creating equitable access to these activities on the trail system. Lending libraries can also provide some basic service or equipment maintenance, again eliminating barriers to community members getting out on the trail. If these lending libraries are mobile and made available at trailheads, or located in close proximity to the trail, they may

also help serve as repair pitstops for visitors and tourists. Recently, St. Johnsbury secured funding from the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative to support a lending library and community-based bike shop. A network of these lending libraries along the trail can create opportunities for local communities to provide equitable access to activities out on the trail, as well as opportunities to spur community involvement with the trail as a source of community pride and stewardship.

Recommended Strategy: Support working lands educational and promotional opportunities to highlight Vermont farms and forests as part of the LVRT identity.

The working landscape surrounding the trail system provides a picturesque backdrop, but also provides opportunity to promote the farms and forests that are such a vital component of the local economies. The trail passes through areas known for their maple production, cheesemaking, locally raised meats, and local produce. Whether logging or sugaring, crops or husbandry, much of the area surrounding the LVRT has been productive working land for many generations. The LVRT provides an opportunity to connect these working landscapes with visitors to celebrate this history and these practices. One way to connect visitors to this experience is directly, through promotion of off-trail destination loops to farms, sugaring operations, creameries, or other locations in close proximity to the trail. Another way is to connect visitors to the many local farmers markets or vendors of farm and forest products in close proximity to the trail. Further, programming along the trail, with interpretive panels or other educational elements, could highlight these working lands and their historical relationship to the rail line that was previously in place. The Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees and LVRT Trail Council will play a critical role in establishing these connections between working lands and visitors, whether through the interpretive sign plan development, trail friendly businesses (including farms, creameries, and sugar shacks), and event promotion (farmers markets or seasonal farm stands).

Community Assistance

Recommended Strategy: Support communities seeking funding for development or enhancement projects (e.g. trailheads, amenities, wayfinding, services, gateways, pathways to trailside communities).

The development of pause places, trail connections, trailheads, and trailside amenities that are recommended as part of the Management Plan will fall primarily to the local communities along the trail system with support from VTrans and the Regional Planning Commissions. This support for the planning, design, and implementation will be imperative in achieving the cohesive trail identity and strategic provision of trailside amenities and trail connections along the corridor. Moreover, helping municipalities connect to funding resources will be critical to bringing these ideas for the next phase of the LVRT development to fruition.

As a means of spurring these desired developments, an approximately \$2 million grant program will enable trail communities to scope, design, or construct projects that align with the Vision & Goals outlined within the Management Plan. This matching grant funding has been made available through a Federal Earmark from Senator Sanders for the LVRT to “improve its function as a means of transportation for the public.” The program encourages the eligible municipalities along the LVRT to work with their Regional Planning Commission to develop applications and project ideas. Applying for funding as a consortium is also feasible, especially for projects that may benefit from economies of scale and consistent production, like implementing trailside amenities.

Eligible Projects

The LVRT Community Grant Notice of Funding spells out the potentially eligible project types as follows:

- Water and sewer connection for critical trailside amenities including bathroom facilities and water fountains
- Trail, sidewalk, or bike lane connections between trails or to downtowns, villages, and community assets such as existing parks or recreation fields
- Establishing or improving trail parking and trailheads
- Establishing a marketing program and/or materials
- Developing and implementing a user experience survey
- Installing amenities such as benches, signs, pavilions, and kiosks
- Resolving trail Right of Way issues
- Establishing local trail ambassador programs
- Art installations
- Historic, cultural, and/or significant natural features signage, interpretive panels, or markers
- Supporting safety improvements (i.e., addressing unsafe trail crossings, improving lighting, establishing a trail monitoring program)

Beyond the grant funding made available specifically for LVRT trail towns, there are many other grant programs that communities have already had success with or may find viable to support further developing the enhancement projects along the LVRT including improving connections to trail towns. See the Potential Funding Sources section for more detailed information on programs.

Tourism & Marketing

Nature-based recreational activities are recognized as a source of economic and community development and are a sought asset in the recreational tourism economy across the state. The LVRT provides the communities it passes through with a unique opportunity to draw visitors to its towns and village centers. The corridor will help support the economic development opportunities already in motion and spur new opportunities through growth of local businesses, expansion of the recreational tourism and hospitality market, and connection to the beauty and culture of scenic northern Vermont.

Collaboration between the Rail Trails Program staff, LVRT Trail Council, Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees, and partners at the state (i.e. Agency of Commerce and Community Development) and local (i.e. Chambers of Commerce and individual businesses) levels will be essential to realizing the potential economic benefits from the trail. Connecting users to the trail system and to the opportunities in the surrounding communities, while generating a unique user experience on the trail and in trail towns will be critical to this effort. The strategies outlined below will lay the foundation for this.

Visitor Website

Recommended Strategy: Build out LVRT visitor website and investigate integrating trip planning tools into the website.

The LVRT website will be essential in providing a singular landing place for information regarding the trail system and the primary means for communicating with existing and potential trail users, stakeholders, and the surrounding communities. As the management of the trail transitions to VTrans, the website and social media accounts that VAST maintained for the trail will sunset. In their place, the LVRT website will be built out under the Rail Trail Program with the aim of having a trail landing page for each of the VTrans rail trails.

The LVRT website will provide basic information about the trail while catering to the broader user experience. The website and integrated trip planning tools will encourage users and visitors to get on the trail, set user expectations about the trail experience, and connect users to exploration beyond the trail corridor. General information about the trail will include interactive or static trail and trail segment maps that depict trail location, geography, trailheads, available parking, and other trailside amenities. The website serves as an introduction to the trail, and as such may include facts about the trail, a brief history, and any noteworthy information that makes the trail unique. To set user expectations and keep users up to date, trail status and closures should be included on the website and may include listings and/or maps of trail events, maintenance activities, projects, planned and emergency closures, and other

Typical Trail Website Elements

General Information

- Interactive Trail Maps
- Trail Status and Closures
- Trail Facts and History
- Policies, Procedures, and Regulations
- Contact Information

Volunteer and Involvement Opportunities

News, Events, and Programming

Trip Planning and Experience Tools

- Area Maps and Directions
- Trail Communities and Destinations
- Trail Connections
- Regional or Destination Loops or Routes
- Area Services and Amenities
 - Attractions (Historical, Cultural, Arts, Parks, etc.)
 - Trail Friendly Businesses
 - Camping/Lodging/Overnight Accommodations Regional Marketing Campaign

information about the trail status. This may link to, or be expanded to include, the trail asset maps and information. As outlined in the Operations Manual, clear and concise communication of policies and procedures on the website regarding allowable uses, trail etiquette, user conflicts, emergencies, and other relevant processes will help to set user expectations and prevent issues.

For volunteers and communities, the website can serve as a single point for connecting to resources including the Rail Trails Program staff, LVRT Trail Council, and Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees, as well as the many ways to get involved through training programs, volunteer opportunities, events, and other programming. The website will also serve as a conduit to highlight information regarding trail events, LVRT in the media, press inquiries, and other noteworthy news regarding the trail.

Integration of trip planning tools can take many forms and will help to draw users to the trail while generating the off-trail activation that is sought through the LVRT Vision & Goals. These tools can introduce visitors to the trail communities and highlight multisport opportunities, trail connections, attractions, destination loops, and other trail adjacent opportunities. Interactive maps and/or listings of trail friendly businesses, overnight accommodations, and other off-trail services and amenities can provide up to date information for planning the full visitor experience. Providing this information helps set expectations as to where visitors may (or may not) be able to access services and amenities in support of their trail visit and helps draw clear connections to trail towns and other attractions along the corridor. These trip planning tools are critical to spurring the economic activity sought by the LVRT adjacent communities.

Social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.) can be leveraged to highlight the trail and create a web presence outside of the website. For social media connections, the Rail Trails Program Manager should coordinate with VTrans Communications and Public Outreach, which already has active networks on these social media platforms that can amplify messaging regarding the LVRT. Messaging on the trail status and closures, events and programming, and marketing and promotion may all be suited for the existing VTrans social media presence.

Regional Marketing Campaign

Recommended Strategy: Coordinate with partner agencies and organizations to develop regional marketing campaign.

Coordination with state and local partners to develop a regional marketing campaign and broader marketing plan for the trail is recommended and a high priority. Excitement for the trail completion locally can be leveraged in raising awareness that the trail is open for use and drawing users from the region and beyond. Strategies aimed at supporting trip planning and enhancing user experience should also be part of the planning. At a high level, the regional marketing campaign will entail close coordination with ACCD to help guide strategy development and promotion of the trail. Working with the Rail Trails Program Manager and

Regional LVRT Trail Stakeholder Subcommittees, ACCD can help to shape the marketing strategies for the LVRT. Identifying the target audiences for trail marketing and the most advantageous tools to reach those markets will be key to the strategy development. The regional marketing campaign should consider strategies at the state and local levels to align the messaging and reach. Coordination with the Regional LVRT Trail Stakeholder Subcommittees will help to draw in the local perspectives, especially from Chambers of Commerce and other entities engaged in marketing the areas along the trail. Other statewide partners like Local Motion and VAST that have established networks and user groups can help to support the marketing efforts and amplify the message to their constituents. Communications and Public Outreach within VTrans can also serve to support these efforts. Grant programs like the Vermont Community Development Program may be a viable funding source.

With the graphic identity guidance in place and a website established, the marketing campaign can leverage these tools and focus on digital and print media as well as events, programming, wayfinding, and other methods to reach target markets. For digital media, ACCD can leverage already established outlets for promoting recreational tourism in Vermont, like the [Vermont Vacation](#) website and [Stay & Play](#) Directory, to highlight the LVRT and market the experience to networks already looking for those types of experiences. As events specific to the LVRT are programmed, these can be submitted to highlight on the [Vermont Events Calendar](#) as well. Any trip planning tools on the LVRT website should link to the broader Visit Vermont outlets so potential trail users have access to the full breadth of offerings from the area while they visit. Beyond high-level digital outlets, the marketing campaign should consider strategies for raising awareness, drawing users, supporting trip planning, and enhancing user experience through other digital media, printed media, promotional materials, wayfinding, and other proven methods.

Marketing the LVRT

Already the energy around the completion of the trail and the opportunities the trail creates for northern Vermont communities has made a splash on the national stage with an article in the [Rails to Trails](#) magazine Spring/Summer 2022 issue. This highlight by the Rails to Trails Conservancy in their publication is just one example in a myriad of ways that the reach of a regional marketing campaign can be amplified.



Broudy, Berne. “Rural Revitalization.” *Rails to Trails*, Spring/Summer 2022, pp. 22-26.

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Multisport Synergies

Recommended Strategy: Leverage recreational tourism opportunities through promotion of multisport synergies and coordinate with partner organizations (VAST, paddlers, Northern Forests, GMC, Velomont, local trail stewards/councils).

There are paddling, hiking, skiing, snowmobiling, and biking trails that connect to the LVRT. With the prominence of so many recreational opportunities throughout the area, the Rail Trails Program Manager and Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees should engage with other trail managers and stewards to promote the multisport opportunities and amplify the message to visit the area to enjoy these offerings. This might take shape as coordinated marketing campaigns with VAST or Catamount Trail for winter use, collaboration with Velomont particularly along trail segments being contemplated as collocated, coordination with Green Mountain Club for synergies with the Long Trail hiking route, or partnerships with the Lamoille River Paddlers Trail for bike and paddle excursions.

Camping and Lodging

Recommended Strategy: Encourage camping and lodging opportunities in trailside communities to support multiday tourism opportunities.

With the LVRT complete, there will be trail users that are interested in navigating the entire length of corridor, multiple segments back-to-back, or segments as just one part of other recreational pursuits while they visit the area. Further, there are significant economic opportunities that come with multiday tours or visits. Based on data compiled from trail based economic impact analyses to estimate the [Economic Potential of the Great American Rail-Trail](#), overnight trail visitors spend over two times as much per visitor per day as a day visitor spends on average nationally. The opportunity to develop the LVRT as a destination for multiday visits may leverage this spending trend. To enable this, there is a need for a broad range of camping or lodging options along the trail. Whether looking to pursue a multiday tour with self-supported camping, creating a bed and breakfast tour of northern Vermont, or just a quick overnight stay at a hotel or motel with a tour group, the types of overnight accommodations that trail users seek will vary. Although there are some existing opportunities along the corridor including a number of bed and breakfasts, inns, and campgrounds, it is recognized that meeting this need will require establishing more of

these overnight accommodations. Other trail systems have leveraged areas along the trail right-of-way for designated camping areas, like the Canal Corporation Biker-Hiker-Boater campsites along the Erie Canalway Trail at specific locks on the canal system. Provided the narrow nature of the LVRT and its adjacency to river corridors and roadway networks, creating camping accommodations within the ROW is infeasible. Designating camping areas, much like establishing other overnight accommodations, will have to happen outside of the trail right-of-way. Partners like [Vermont Huts Association](#) may help adjacent parcel owners and others establish accommodations in close proximity to the trail system. Any existing and future overnight accommodations in proximity to the trail should be identified as part of the trail friendly business program and included in the trip planning information.

Trail Friendly Business Program

Recommended Strategy: Support development of trail friendly business program.

A trail friendly business program establishes a network of businesses along the trail corridor that may provide basic amenities or services to trail users while businesses may enjoy promotion and additional patronage in return. Moreover, these trail friendly businesses can help to encourage exploration off-trail and serve to fill gaps in the strategically spaced trailside amenities. These programs are voluntary and can either be free or have a small fee associated with them to support the programming. Often initially the program coordinator will help to assess the trail friendliness of the business and then offer ways in which the business can be more welcoming to trail users. This could range from allowing patrons to charge cell phones to providing bike racks for secure bike parking, allowing water bottle refilling to offering restrooms and/or shower facilities. The Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees will be pivotal to establishing the LVRT trail friendly business program. The program coordinator will be responsible for connecting with businesses, serving as a resource to the trail friendly businesses and helping to network the trail friendly businesses to crosspollinate best practices and lessons learned. The program coordinator will also serve to keep business listings or directories up to date. These directories can be made available at trailhead kiosks, on the website, on an interactive area map, or even a trip planning application for smart phones. Businesses might display a sticker or decal with the LVRT logo on their window to indicate they welcome trail users and signify they are part of the program. Depending on the marketing campaign and desire for printed promotional materials, stocking the trailhead kiosks with trail friendly business listings is a possibility. Keeping the printed promotional materials updated and stocked will fall to the trail friendly business program coordinator and their affiliates within each Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittee.

Passport Program

Recommended Strategy: Support development of passport or quest program to encourage exploration.

A passport program encourages participants to visit certain locations or landmarks along the trail or in neighboring trail towns. This type of program can spur exploration beyond the typical trail experience. Looking across the state, programs like the Valley Quest put on by Vital Communities in the Upper Valley create destination-oriented exploration where natural, scenic, historical, architectural, cultural, or other significant locations or landmarks are highlighted as quests and visitors are encouraged to track their explorations by creating their own passport and stamp to use when they visit. Other programs looking to encourage this type of exploration provide a paper or digital passport, like the Vermont Brewers Association Brewery Challenge, where each visit to a new brewery earns a stamp in the passport and once complete can be submitted to the Association to win prizes. The success of these types of programs demonstrates yet another mechanism to encouraging visitors to explore destinations they may not have otherwise and gamifies the experience. The MVRT has similarly employed a model of this with a paper passport and rubbings on the trailhead kiosks at each trailhead. A visit to each trailhead along the length of the trail gamifies the visit by adding a rubbing to the participant's passport and encourages trail users to explore the entire length of the trail. It is recommended that through the Regional LVRT Stakeholder Subcommittees and LVRT Trail Council, a passport program unique to the LVRT experience be developed. This could start with a simple passport addition at each trailhead and expand to off-trail destinations like historical sites, landmarks, or trail friendly businesses.

Economic Impact

Recommended Strategy: Identify funding and support research to quantify economic impact of the LVRT on trail communities and broader regional and state level economies.

Leveraging the economic development opportunities that come with the completion of the LVRT and its draw to northern Vermont communities is a high priority. According to the [Agency of Commerce and Community Development](#), the marketing and tourism industry in Vermont generates \$3 billion annually and makes up 10% of Vermont's workforce. The LVRT is poised to benefit from the state's reputation as a recreation tourism destination, tapping into the many recreational opportunities that are already sought by visitors to the state. Other trail systems have evaluated the impact a trail has on local and regional economies, gaging the return on the initial trail investment and justifying the continued support for management and maintenance of the trail system once it is established. These impacts can be quantified as direct, indirect, and induced impacts

to the region, based on direct visitor spending at businesses, indirect spending to support the area businesses, or induced spending from the revenues of those direct or indirect purchases.

Evaluating the potential economic growth the LVRT is poised to spur and periodically measuring the impact of the LVRT on the local and regional economies will provide metrics to quantifiably measure progress towards the goal of supporting economic vitality in northern Vermont communities. Moreover, a more detailed understanding of the economic impact of trail users on the surrounding trail communities can help to target limited resources appropriately to realize the greatest benefit. There are existing methodologies for developing these impact assessments that should be reviewed as part of the research initiative. Data captured in the count and survey program or augmented using specific survey tools, including the spending patterns of trail users and visitors, will inform these analyses. These data should be supplemented with information regarding businesses and their experience of trail users, which can be captured through surveys or interviews and integrated into the trail friendly business programming.

Funding for the economic impact research may be sought through the Vermont Community Development Program, Northern Border Regional Commission Grants, or other potential resources. There may be an opportunity to submit an economic impact analysis research statement to the VTrans Research Program, where the LVRT has already received research funding for analysis of floodplain reconnection.

Appendix



Appendix A. Meeting Materials



Date: November 30, 2021

Agenda Prepared By: Karen Sentoff

Place: Teams Meeting

Project No.: 58600.06

Project Name: LVRT Management Plan

Kick-Off Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

2. Project Overview

Review and discuss the project background, study corridor, and overall project vision and goals.

3. Review Project Scope and Schedule

Review and discuss project scope of work and anticipated schedule with key milestone deliverables.

4. Identify Project Stakeholders & Plan for First Round of Public Meetings

Discuss key project stakeholders and details for first round of public meetings.

5. Data and Information Gathering

Provide an overview of the resources already gathered for the corridor including project plans, survey data, corridor inventory data, GIS resources, and website content. Identify additional information needed to support corridor inventory, assessment, and website development efforts.

6. Discuss Anticipated Issues and Opportunities

Brief discussion to identify known or anticipated issues and/or opportunities.

7. Next Steps

- Stakeholder Engagement: Stakeholder interviews, first round of public meetings
- Existing Conditions Assessment: Corridor inventory, literature review/best practices scan, funding resource scan
- Vision & Goals: Prepare Draft Vision & Goals Statement

Current LVRT Websites

[LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL TRAIL \(LVRT\) | Agency of Transportation \(vermont.gov\)](#)

[HOME \(lvrt.org\)](#)



Date: November 30, 2021

Notes Taken By: Cierra Ford

Place: Teams Meeting

Project No.: 58600.04

Re: LVRT Management Plan: Kick-Off Meeting

ATTENDEES:

Michele Boomhower – VTrans
Amy Bell – VTrans
Jon Kaplan – VTrans
Jacqueline DeMent – VTrans
Joel Perrigo – VTrans
Chris Hunt – VTrans
Mark Fitzgerald – VTrans
Matthew Arancio – VTrans
Melanie Riddle – Lamoille County Planning Commission
Rob Moore – Lamoille County Planning Commission
Bethany Remmers – Northwest Regional Planning Commission
David Snedeker – Northeastern Vermont Development Association
Ken Brown – Vermont Association of Snow Travelers
Dave Saladino – VHB
Karen Sentoff – VHB
Sam Alger – VHB
Evan Detrick – VHB
Cierra Ford – VHB
Mark Jewell – VHB
Chris DeWitt – VHB

Summarized Agenda

- Introductions
- Project overview
- Review project scope and schedule
- Identify project stakeholders and plan for first round of public meetings
- Data and information gathering
- Discuss anticipated issues and opportunities
- Next steps

Meeting Summary

The meeting kicked off with a round of introductions. David Saladino and Michele Boomhower provided a project overview. This project is being conducted in anticipation of the lease for maintenance activities and trail work transitioning from the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) to VTrans at end of June 2022. The trail, when construction is completed, will consist of 93 miles of east-west rail trail through 19 towns in northern Vermont.

This project coincides with requests from Senator Sanders and Senator Leahy for earmarked funds in the Budget Reconciliation Bill. Senator Sanders has requested \$2 Million for the LVRT. It was added that it is important to note that the funding requested by the Senate delegates is not guaranteed and other funding resources should be explored.

Karen Sentoff reviewed the scope of work, with a focus on the importance of stakeholder and public involvement throughout the project. The primary deliverables associated with each task are as follows:

- Task 1: Memo summarizing data needs and preliminary issues and opportunities
- Task 2: Memo summarizing stakeholder meetings/interviews and public meetings
- Task 3: Memo summarizing existing conditions and draft vision and goals statement
- Task 4: Memo on gap analysis, needs assessment, conceptual plans and cost estimates for enhancements, operations, and maintenance
- Task 5: Final vision and goals, LVRT recommendations and implementation plan, and a 10-year capital improvement plan
- Task 6: Draft and final LVRT Management Plan

It is anticipated that Tasks 2, 3, and 4 will be in progress simultaneously. It was noted that conceptual plans developed in Task 4 may be a hybrid of some site-specific solutions and some "typical" concepts.

VHB reviewed the project schedule, which is anticipated to carry through to the proposed transfer of management responsibilities from VAST to VTrans on June 30, 2022. The question of timing the first public meeting was raised. Preference to wait until after the holidays for the first public meeting was voiced.

It was emphasized that stakeholders will be critical to the project and that part of Task 2 will be to conduct up to 10 interviews with stakeholders. A discussion of possible stakeholders to involve in the project through interviews or other engagement ensued. Michele suggested that state agencies (VTrans, ANR, ACCD) all attend one meeting to provide the opportunity to get all of the agencies on the same page. VTrans offered to help identify the appropriate representatives from each agency. Ken Brown offered that there are a few more layers to VAST than the list indicates. He suggested including businesses that are along the trail and local clubs (approximately 10) that may have different perspectives than VAST. He recommended communicating through Chris Hunt to get the word out to the various clubs. The anticipated level of involvement in this process from the local clubs came up. Ken suggested that the public meeting forum was probably sufficient for the purposes of engaging the clubs and understanding their perspective. He recommended that the clubs be invited to the public meetings and provided the opportunity to follow up if they wanted to be more involved. The suggestion was made to look back at the groups that were active on the LVRT Committee circa 2012. Ken offered to look back at meeting minutes to identify other groups that this effort may want to reengage. Another suggestion was made to involve the Department of Health. Either the chronic disease prevention section or possibly the regional offices along the trail may have interest in being involved. Suzanne Kelly is a possible contact for the Department of Health. Additionally, AARP of Vermont has interest in active transportation.

Suggestions of project stakeholders are listed below:

- State agencies (VTrans, ANR, ACCD)

- Regional planning commissions (NRPC, LCPC, NVDA)
- VAST
- Local Clubs
- Businesses along the trail
- Friends of LVRT
- Northwest Rail Trail Council
- Municipal representatives (Highgate, Swanton, Sheldon, Fairfield, Bakersfield, Fletcher, Cambridge, Johnson, Hyde Park, Morristown, Wolcott, Greensboro, Hardwick, Stannard, Walden, Cabot, Danville, St. Johnsbury)
- VT Trout Unlimited
- Outdoor Business Alliance
- VT Mountain Bike Association
- Local Motion
- Organization of Bike Shops (if such a thing exists)
- Vermont ATV Sportsman's Association – Note: ATV use is prohibited on the trail
- Local chambers of commerce
- VT Department of Health
- School districts
- AARP Vermont

The preference for the first public meeting would be to target the second week in January. The format of the meeting was discussed. The state has been trying to provide hybrid opportunities for public meetings, similar with the RPCs, some of which have to provide a physical location. VHB will plan on a hybrid meeting. The question was raised of whether construction updates should be integrated with the public meetings in anticipation of there being some questions about the construction on the remaining sections. VHB will be proactive and give the latest construction update at the public meeting.

The topic of data and information gathering was discussed, with a focus on data needs for the study.

GIS resources that have been gathered are based on 2008-2009 inventorying done for the corridor. Some sections have been updated based on the design and construction of intermediate sections.

Part of final documents package for LVRT design plans is a signage plan. This plan will cover signage along the trail as well as destination signs to direct users to and from the trail. The plan will include locations for signs and what they will look like.

Parking access for the trail was discussed. VAST has agreements for parking during the winter but these agreements may not exist during other seasons, so this effort will need to focus on year-round users and not just a single user group. Rob Moore also indicated that signage should be considered in this way too, much of the current signage is seasonal and will need to serve year-round users. It would be helpful to know about established parking areas and identify areas that are being used for parking as these areas could be candidates for creating formal parking. Ken Brown noted that Cambridge Junction has a parking area that has been expanded three times. These expansions included asking permission of a property owner. There are no documented parking studies, but VAST and user groups

have some anecdotal knowledge base for parking needs. Ken also offered that VAST has a shape file for LVRT interactive map (including parking point locations).

In terms of count data for the corridor, David Snedeker noted that NVDA has completed traffic/pedestrian counts along the completed section from St. Johnsbury to Danville.

Amenities along trail route should be included in the inventory. Things that trail users will want to know about or supporting services they might require like where to get a bike fixed, proximity to lodging, food/drink, etc.

David Snedeker also noted that they had worked recently with White Out Solutions to do an aerial flyover with a drone from St. Johnsbury to the Lamoille County line along the trail route. That LiDAR data is now available. VHB will connect with David on this.

One data need identified by Bethany was any known adjacent brownfields, hazardous materials, contaminated soils, etc. A note was made that some of the data from the existing inventory is from the 2008 inventory and if there are updates available regarding these data resources those should be incorporated.

Examples of using a map interface to gather information and interact with the public was shared with the group. One example shown on the screen was the Vermont Freight Plan, where an interactive map with a comment tab was available for the public to identify ideas or issues. There was a short survey available through the same interface to ask targeted questions. Another example was a story map approach used on a Burlington-based project, where maps and concepts were shared and interspersed with survey questions. One benefit to creating an interface like these is that it can be available to the public outside of the public meeting period. Jon Kaplan added that the on-road bike plan crowdsourced input from the public several years ago and it was pretty well received.

The question of where the website and any web-based engagement tools should live was raised. Currently there are two websites for the LVRT, one VTrans managed site and one VAST managed site. Ken suggested that once management of LVRT transitions away from VAST, he doesn't anticipate they'll need to hold on to website or content. Snowmobile information is on a different website. LVRT.org is a project of VAST. There does not need to be a separate VAST website for LVRT. Currently the construction information is the main information on the VTrans LVRT site. Jacqueline offered that VT Tourism and Marketing will have some insight into a long term website for the trail and where that might live. She suggested bringing that up with that group. It was noted that Heather Pelham from VT Tourism and Marketing will be invited to future stakeholder meetings.

Bethany added a note that the NRPC has some studies and plans to pass along, including a conceptual design for the Sheldon Junction parking area at the intersection of MVRT and LVRT, a 2013 Fairfield study for proposed trail connections to LVRT, and a 2020/2021 Marketing Plan for MVRT. VHB will follow up by email for these resources.

Issues and Opportunities

The question of what the most important things that the report contains and/or addresses should be was raised.

From the current management perspective from VAST, the two most important things are funding and schedule. Management is currently being done reactively. Now as they prepare to turn the facility back to VTrans, they are

running into things they should have been proactive with (like bridge decks rotting). In many sections the corridor is a functional trail, but might not be meeting user expectations (i.e. grass growing, rust, other more aesthetic reasons). Maintenance for this length of trail would be constant.

David Snedeker offered that communities along route are already planning for the day new sections are open. How can we work closer with those communities and bring them to the table? Jacqueline suggested some communities have municipal planning grants to look ahead to see what the trail will bring for them in the future. Some areas identified in those efforts where they want to develop are rail owned assets. This could become an issue as communities start envisioning their downtown areas and connections to the trail to make their amenities accessible to users. Michele suggested that this plan should spell out the agency policy and provide guidance on how the agency will manage everything along the rail corridor.

Mark offered that in property management they do long term leases for the area. The critical information becomes what is proposed to be developed, who is developing it, and what is the long-term maintenance plan. The goal is to keep the railroad corridor intact somewhat. The approach has been to look at every project and how it'll impact the corridor and who is responsible. Long term leasers will invest time/money into the trail. We will want to have that protocol outlined in the Plan so people understand the approach and can plan for advancing projects which may occur in the rail ROW. Making connections from the trail to communities is essential to realizing the economic benefits of the trail.

Jon Kaplan noted that there is a project that UVM Transportation Research Center is pursuing for funding to collect counts along the LVRT. This would entail setting up a counting program with some semi-permanent counters and temporary counters over a 3-year period. The idea is to share that data with local businesses so that they understand the number of trail users and opportunities for drawing in business. The grant is an opportunity that each New England state has the potential to receive. It is noted that the grant application is due soon so they will know in the spring if it is successful. It was suggested that trail counting be part of the management plan.

The point was made that parking is a serious concern. Making sure there is adequate parking along the trail so people are not parking in illegal or inappropriate locations to access the trail will be critical.

Identifying scheduled maintenance needs and laying out what is required over time so that maintenance of the trail's assets are dealt with proactively. It will also be important to understand the costs associated with these maintenance needs so the budget for the proactive maintenance schedule can be programmed appropriately. The next step is really understanding what it is going to take to maintain this asset as an attractive amenity over time.

Next Steps

The next steps on the horizon for the project include:

- Technical memo summarizing feedback from today's meeting;
- Scheduling interviews and planning for the January public meeting; and,
- Jumping into the existing conditions assessment.

The next meeting with this stakeholder group is currently scheduled after the public meeting. This meeting will serve as an opportunity to digest the takeaways from the public input.

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Management Plan

Kick-Off Meeting

November 30, 2021





Agenda

1. Introductions

2. Project Overview

Review and discuss the project background, study corridor, and overall project vision and goals.

3. Review Project Scope and Schedule

Review and discuss project scope of work and anticipated schedule with key milestone deliverables.

4. Identify Project Stakeholders & Plan for First Round of Public Meetings

Discuss key project stakeholders and details for first round of public meetings.

5. Data and Information Gathering

Provide an overview of the resources already gathered for the corridor including project plans, survey data, corridor inventory data, GIS resources, and website content. Identify additional information needed to support corridor inventory, assessment, and website development efforts.

6. Discuss Anticipated Issues and Opportunities

Brief discussion to identify known or anticipated issues and/or opportunities.

7. Next Steps

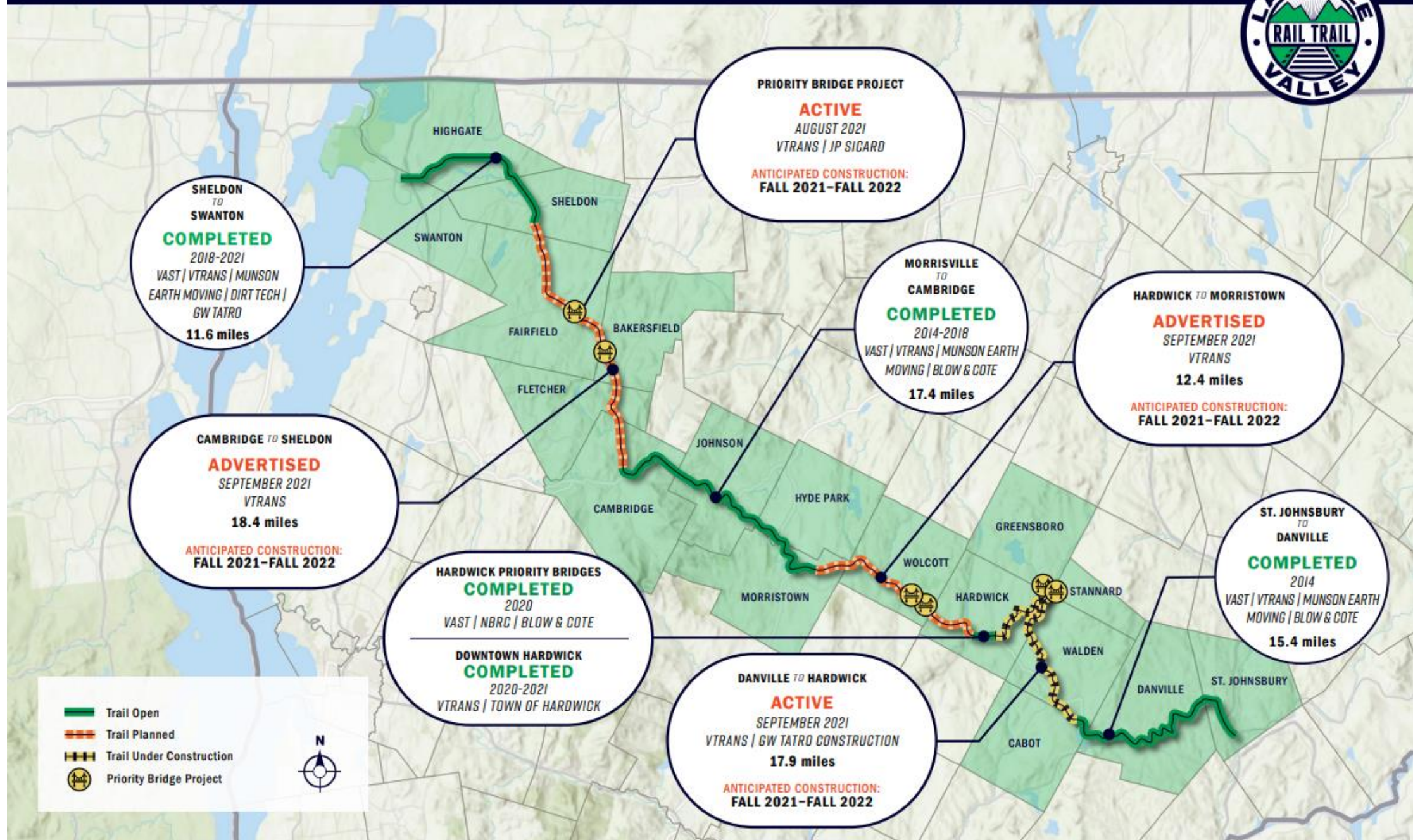
- Stakeholder Engagement: Stakeholder interviews, first round of public meetings
- Existing Conditions Assessment: Corridor inventory, literature review/best practices scan, funding resource scan
- Vision & Goals: Prepare Draft Vision & Goals Statement



Project Overview

- 93-mile, east-west rail-trail through 19 towns
- 33 miles constructed
- 60 miles anticipated completion in Fall 2022
- Lease agreement with VAST ends June 2022
- Transition of trail management to VTrans
- Goals of Project
 - Engage in robust public involvement process
 - Identify “unified, trail-wide vision”
 - Target specific goals and strategies to develop, maintain, promote facilities
 - Inform forward-looking trail management plan integrated with local and regional transportation, tourism, and economic development planning





Project Scope of Work

- **Task 1: Project Kick-off**
 - Kick-off meeting
 - *Memo: Data Needs and Preliminary Issues/Opportunities*
- **Task 2: Stakeholder and Public Involvement**
 - Stakeholder Group Meetings
 - Stakeholder Interviews (up to 10)
 - Public Meetings (up to 4)
 - Project website
 - Informational marketing materials
 - *Memo: Summary of Stakeholder Meetings/Interviews and Public Meetings*
- **Task 3: Existing Conditions and Vision & Goals Statement**
 - Historic Context
 - LVRT Management Structure
 - LVRT Corridor Inventory
 - Existing Documentation Review
 - Best Practices Scan
 - Potential Funding Resource Scan
 - Develop Draft Vision and Goals Statement
 - *Memo: Summary of Existing Conditions Inventory and Assessment*
 - *Draft Vision & Goals Statement*



Project Scope of Work

■ Task 4: Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment

- Identify Gaps/Needs
 - Routine Maintenance / Asset Management
 - Trail Enhancements
- Assess Management and Operations
- Develop conceptual plans
- Develop Conceptual Cost Estimates
- *Memo: Gap analysis, needs assessment, and identified needs/opportunities to advance*
- *Concept plans (up to 8)*
- *Conceptual cost estimates (Maintenance, Inspection, Enhancements)*

■ Task 5: Recommendations and Implementation Plan

- Refine and Finalize Vision, Goals, Strategies
- Develop Implementation Plan Development
- Develop 10-Year Capital Improvement Plan
- *Final Vision, Goals, and Strategies*
- *Memo: LVRT Recommendations and Implementation Plan*
- *10-Year Capital Improvement Plan*

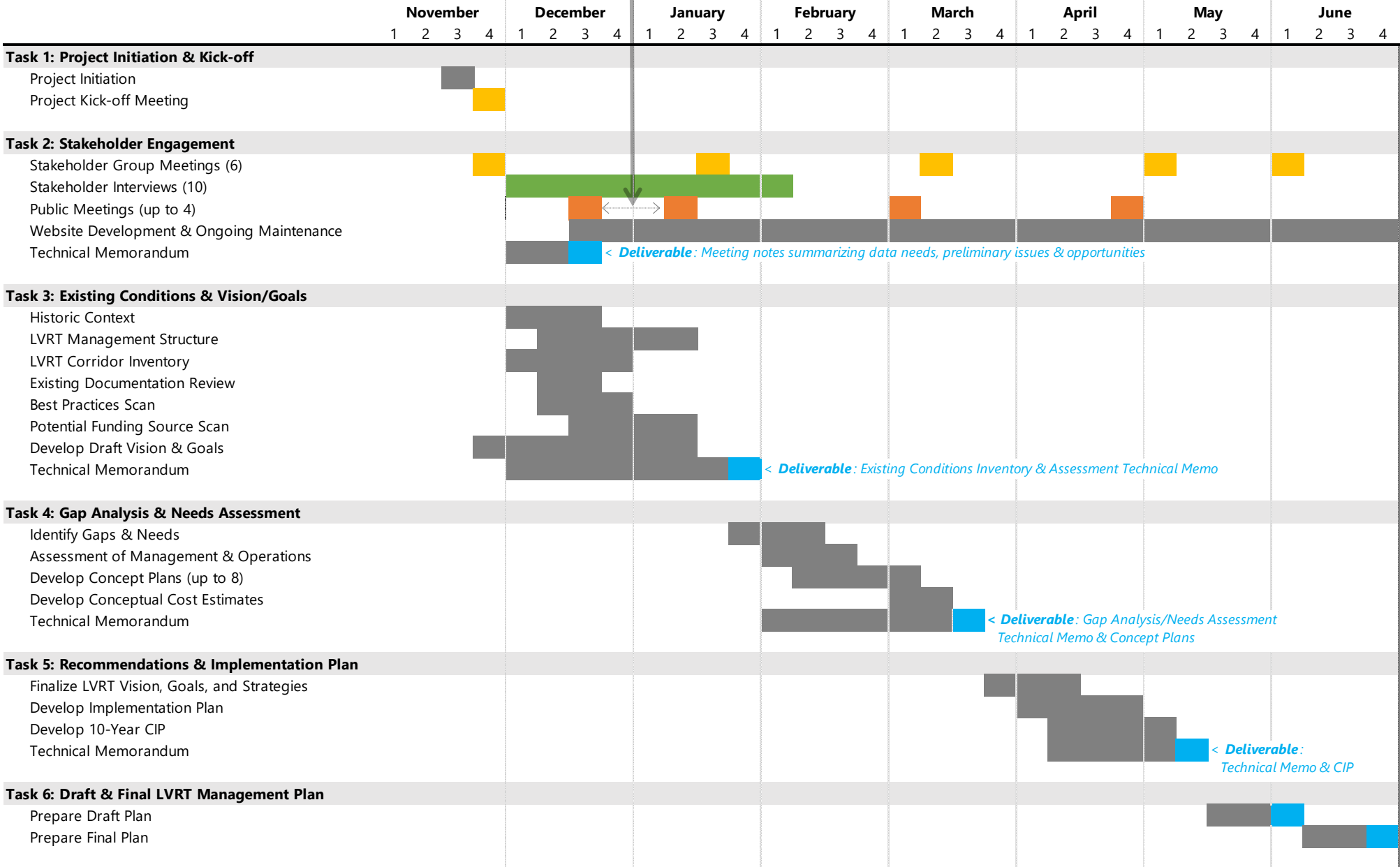
■ Task 6: Draft and Final LVRT Management Plan

- Draft and Final LVRT Management Plan



Project Schedule

Public Meeting Before or After Holidays?



Identify Project Stakeholders & Plan for First Public Meeting

Project Stakeholders

- State Agencies
 - Agency of Natural Resources
 - VTrans Rail Property Management
 - Department of Tourism & Marketing
- Regional Planning Commissions
 - Northwest Regional Planning Commission
 - Lamoille County Planning Commission
 - Northeaster Vermont Development Association
- Other Stakeholders
 - Vermont Association of Snow Travelers
 - Northwest Rail Trail Council
 - Municipal Representatives



Identify Project Stakeholders & Plan for First Public Meeting

First Public Meeting

- Before or after holidays?
- Virtual or hybrid
 - 1 or 2 Sessions?
 - Host location(s) if hybrid
- Focus meeting on management plan or integrate construction updates
 - Anticipating inevitable construction questions/comments



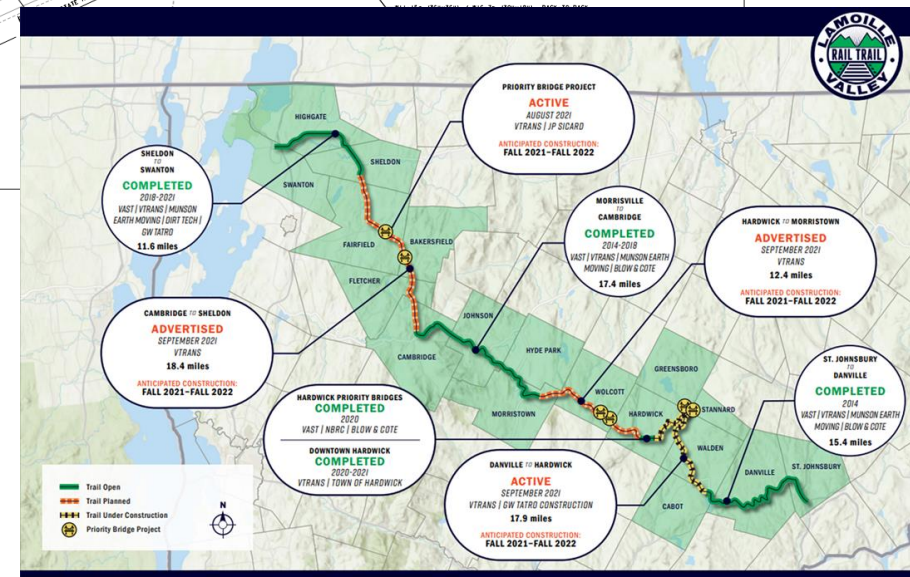
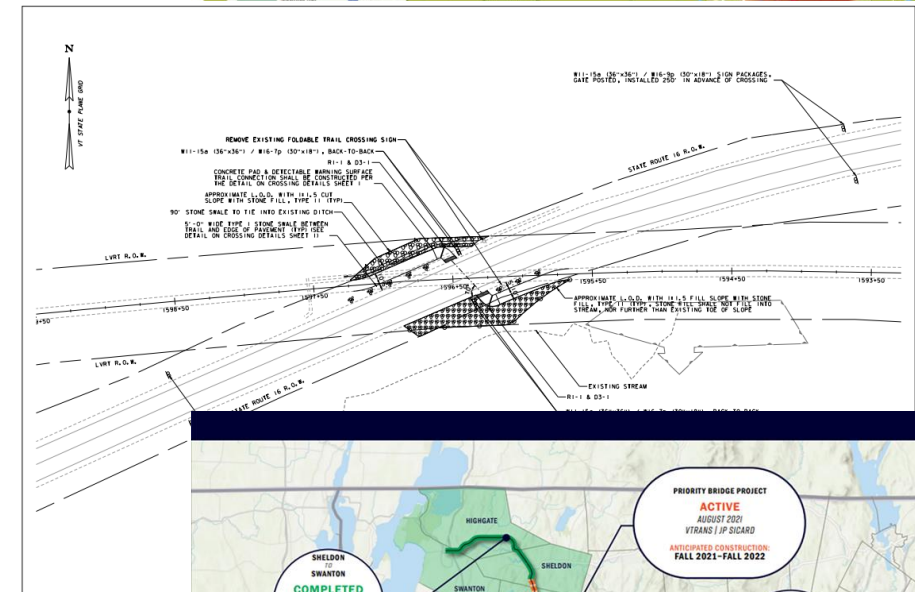
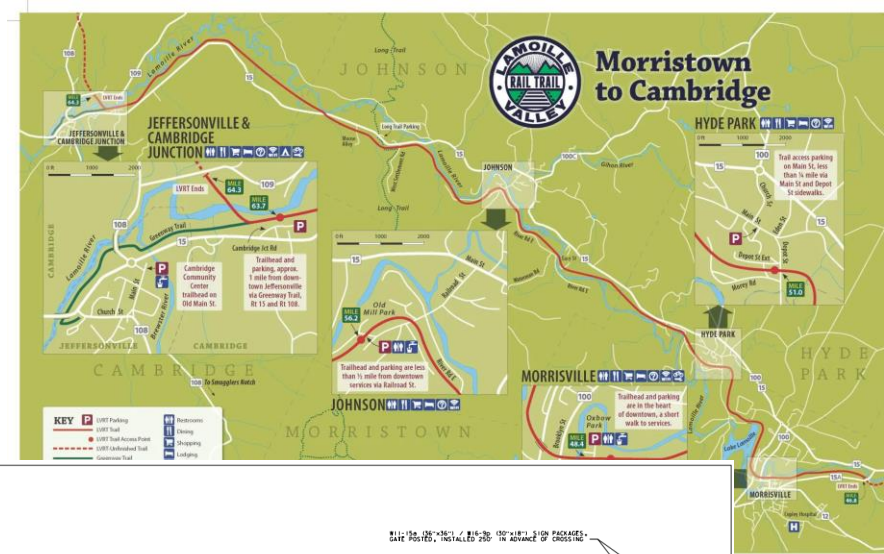
Data & Information Gathering

- **Data Compiled or Available**

- [LVRT Assessment 2020](#)
- Bridges and Culverts
- Trailheads
- Crossings
- Natural Resources
 - Wetlands, streams, RTE, etc.
- Historic sites
- Parking locations and capacity

- **Data Needs**

- Signage – will be collected under LVRT signage plan
- Parking utilization



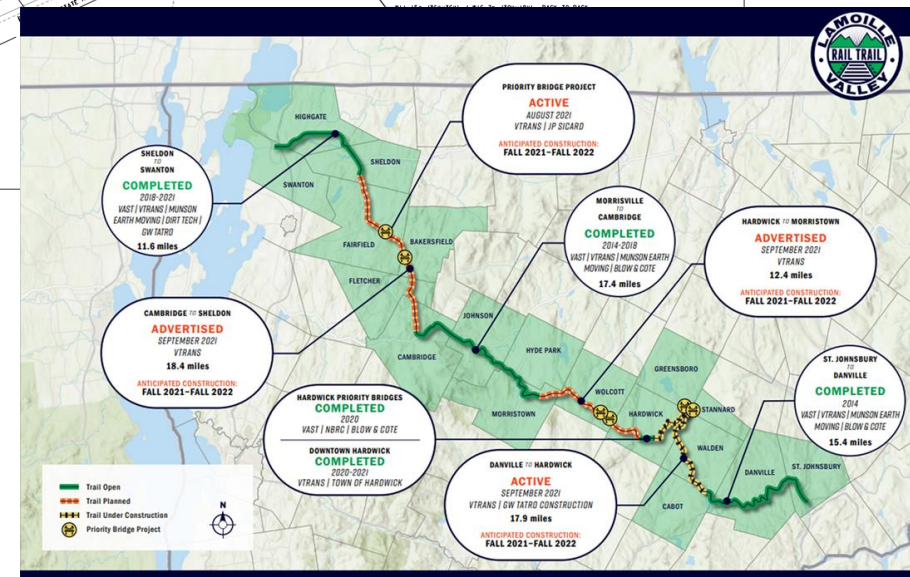
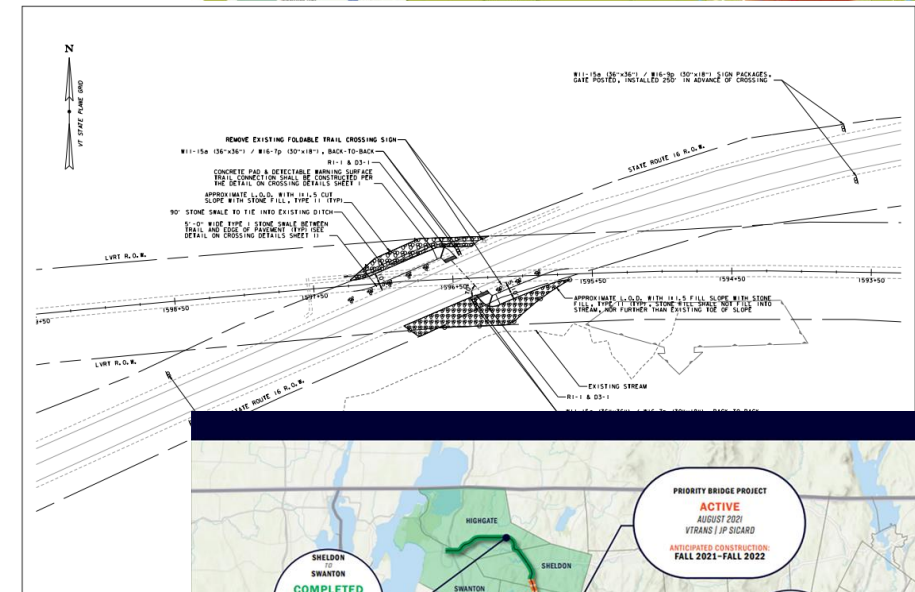
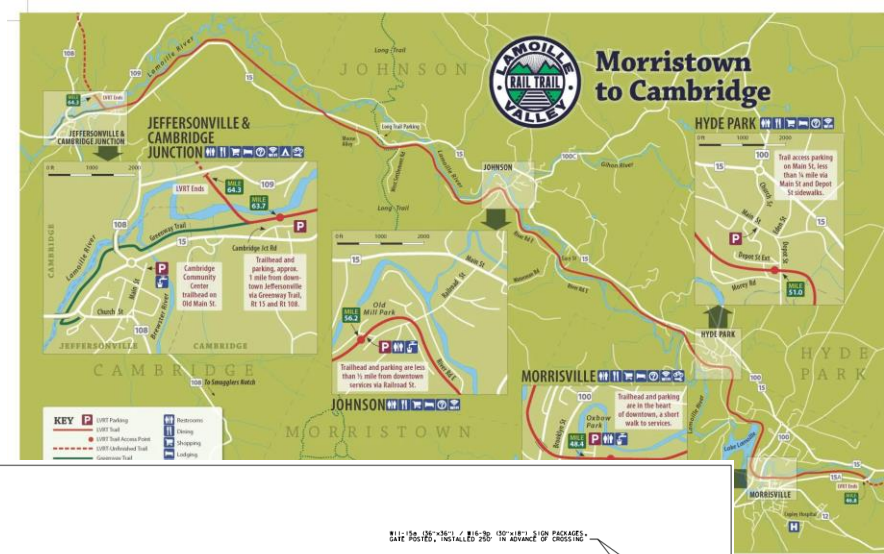
Data & Information Gathering

- **Gathering Public Input**

- GIS based survey or crowdsourcing tool
- Examples:
 - [Freight Plan Update \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)
 - [Burlington North Champlain Street](#)

- **Gathering and Disseminating Information**

- Website Content Development
- Where does this site live in relation to existing sites?
 - [LVRT \(VTrans\)](#)
 - [LVRT \(VAST\)](#)



Issues & Opportunities

– Trail Management/Operations

- Program Management
- Funding
- Asset Management / Preservation
- Stakeholder Coordination

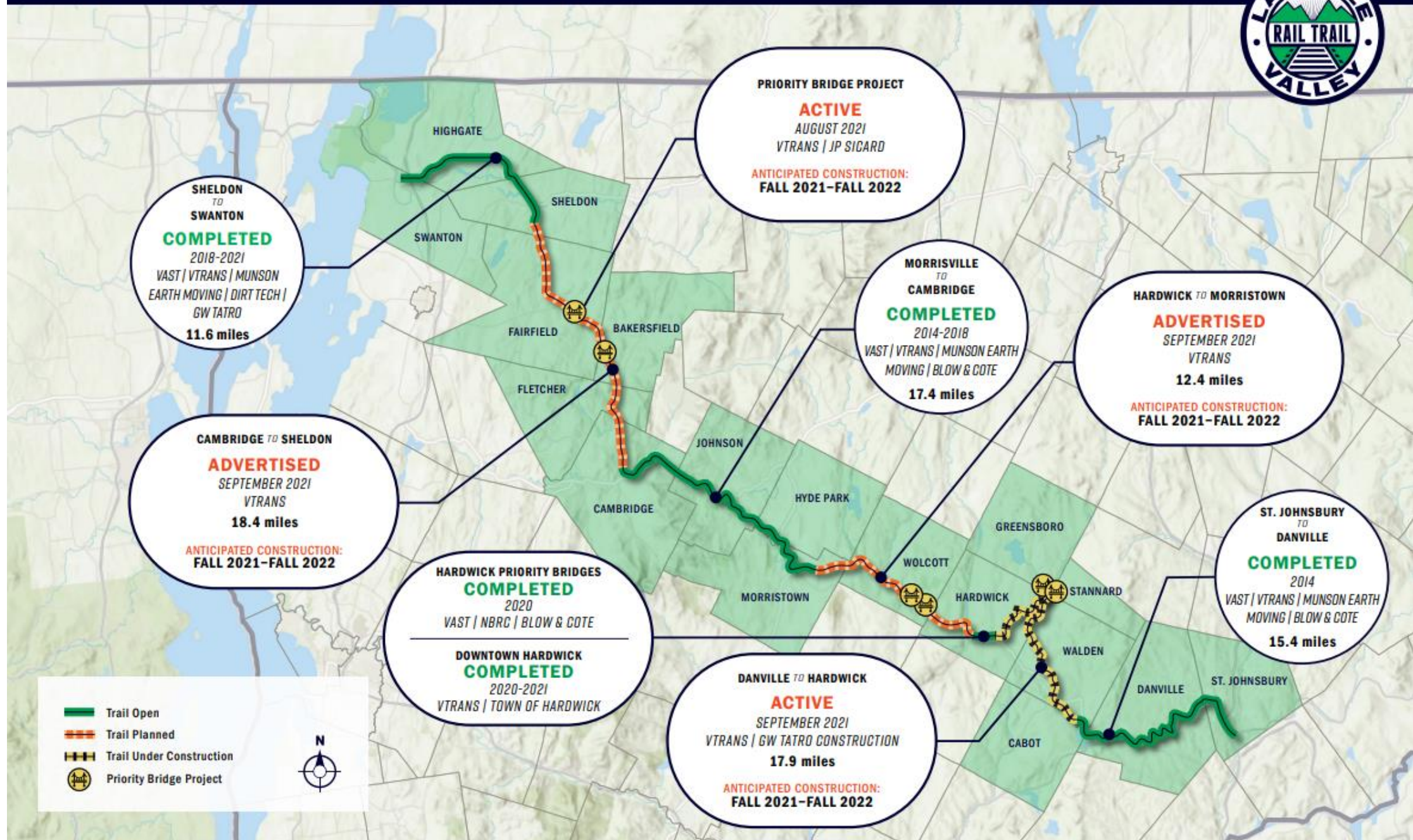
– Infrastructure

- Parking
- Accessibility
- Wayfinding
- Path Connections
- Restroom Facilities

– Economic Activity

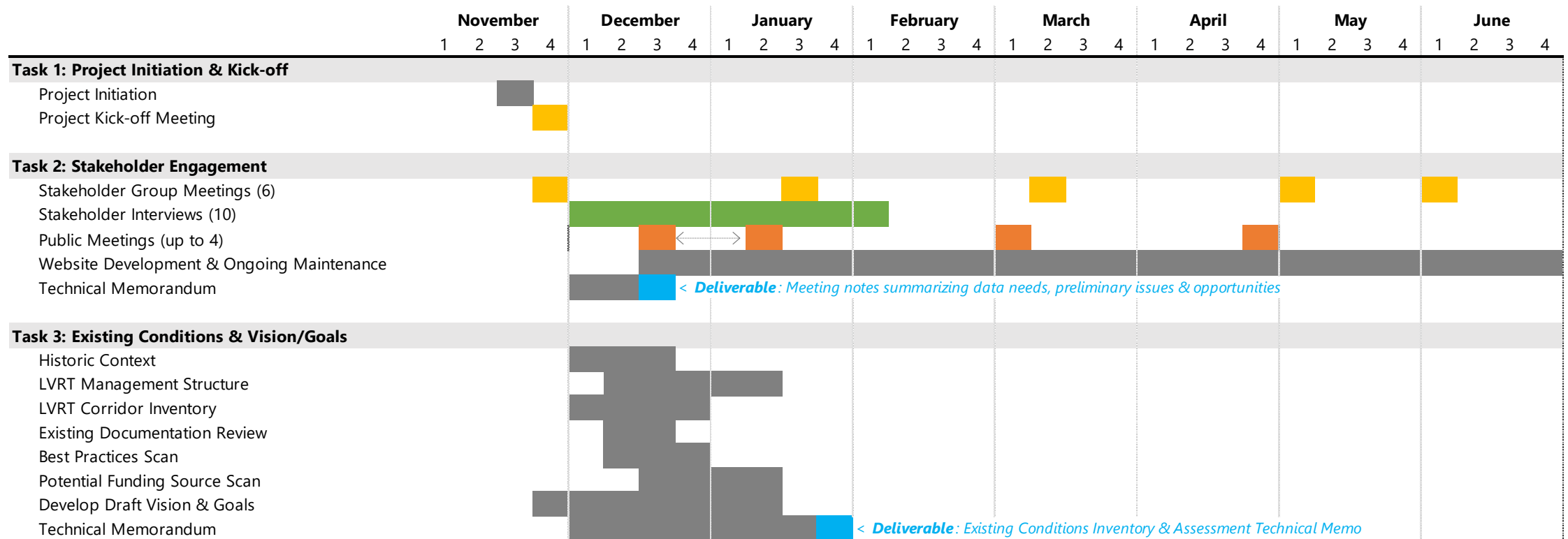
- Village Connections
- Tourism / Marketing





Next Steps

- **Technical Memo #1:** Summary of data needs and preliminary summary of potential issues and opportunities
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Stakeholder interviews, first round of public meetings
- **Existing Conditions Assessment:** Corridor inventory, literature review/best practices scan, funding resource scan





LVRT Management Plan Public Meeting



Date:
January 25, 2022



Time:
6:30PM



Hybrid Meeting
(In Person or Virtual)



Project Website:
<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt>



With the anticipated completion of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail through Northern Vermont in 2022, VTrans is looking for your input on this important recreation and transportation corridor.

Please join us to share your ideas on a cohesive vision for the 93-mile corridor and potential opportunities to maintain, enhance, and connect your community to this vital resource.

Requests for interpretive or translation services, assistive devices, or other accommodations should be made to Karen Sentoff at 802-497-6130 or ksentoff@vhb.com at least 5 business days prior to the meeting.

In Person Details

Location:
Green Mountain Technology & Career Center
738 VT-15, Hyde Park, VT
Room: Community Education Center
COVID Protocols: Masks required at all times

For more information contact:
Amy Bell, Project Manager
802-279-0783 | amy.bell@vermont.gov

Virtual Details

Please click the link to join the webinar:
<https://bit.ly/lvrt-mgmt-plan-mtg>
(note: if typing, all lowercase)

Or, head to <https://zoom.us/join> and enter
Webinar ID: 873 0824 9941
Passcode: 068784

Via Telephone: 646-558-8656





Meeting Notes

Date: January 25, 2022 Notes Taken By: Elisabeth Sundberg

Place: Green Mountain Technology & Career Center & Zoom

Project No.: 58600.06 Re: LVRT Management Plan Public Meeting #1

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Management Plan Public Meeting Summary

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting started with introductions by David Saladino, consultant team project manager. David introduced the project team and speakers for the evening, including Chris Hunt, Karen Sentoff, Michele Boomhower, and Amy Bell. He conveyed that the primary goal of the meeting is to receive feedback from meeting participants on the opportunities and issues they see or anticipate along the LVRT corridor. He then welcomed Michele Boomhower to provide opening remarks.

Michele emphasized how it is an exciting time for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail with construction underway on the remaining segments of trail and expected completion in 2022. The funding received from Senator Sanders provided a way to collaborate and coordinate with communities and partners throughout the rail trail network.

Michele shared that she has been associated with this project for 25 years since she began working for the Lamoille County Planning Commission. When she first moved to Vermont in the late 80s there was a state-owned train that was purchased in 1973. Up until 1995 the rail was leased by many operators but severe flooding that year damaged or washed away many connections of the rail system. When the flood occurred, the rail system was operating as a scenic train and did not have enough fiscal backing to continue. The lease was dissolved and the vision for what to do with the corridor next began.

By 1997, the State worked with the Regional Planning Commissions along the rail trail in collaboration with Economic Development Corporations and Chambers of Commerce to examine how they could take this resource owned by the state and preserve this corridor for future generations to use. One way was through approval by the Federal Surface Transportation Board to preserve the corridor for interim uses while retaining the option for rail service in the future if ever it was to be operational and profitable again. In 2004, the Surface Transportation Board approved the State of Vermont to move forward with "Railbanking" the corridor.

Around 2005, the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST), who were wintertime users of segments of the trail for some time, submitted a proposal for reuse of the trail. The state of Vermont selected VAST's proposal and entered a lease agreement. Senator Sanders came forward with funding for the project. With growing construction costs and a lengthy trail corridor, it became apparent that it was not enough money to support the development of the entire length of trail. VAST and other key stakeholders came together to continue development of the trail. She noted VAST played an integral role in engaging community members through a capital campaign to raise funds for the effort. People were very generous in bringing their resources to this project. Because they could view the long-term opportunity for this to be a terrific resource, not only for the local communities along the rail trail, but also for visitors to the state of Vermont who are interested in recreation of this nature.

Michele commented on how exciting it is to be here tonight and undertaking this management planning process, which is the first of its kind for the rail trails in the state. Michele thanked the various organizations and community members that have supported the development of the corridor and who made this project possible, including VAST, Friends of the LVRT, RPCs, local Chambers of Commerce and Development Corporations, towns, businesses, and many volunteers and donors.

Project Background

Karen Sentoff introduced the project team and stakeholder groups, noting that the stakeholder group was assembled to help guide the management planning process and has representatives across many sections of VTTrans, the Department of Tourism and Marketing, the RPCs, VAST, and Friends of the LVRT.

Karen reviewed the agenda for the evening, where the team will provide a brief project background, update on construction project activities, discuss the existing conditions information gathered for the project, introduce the management plan development process, and spent the majority of the evening focused on gathering input from participants both in person and virtually. Following that she gave an overview of the history of the LVRT as a railway. Built in 1877, the rail was under various management over the year. Coined the “St. Johnsbury and Lake Champlain Railroad” – giving indication of the geography. Sustained rail operation through transport of freight and passengers for nearly 100 years. The state purchased the rail in 1973 and ceased rail operations in 1994. A decade later, the Surface Transportation Board approved railbanking of LVRT on February 13, 2004, meaning the rail would be preserved for future use while allowing interim use for other purposes.

She noted the history of the LVRT as a recreational trail, highlighting the lease with Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) to begin rehabilitation of corridor in 2006. The stated goal was to restore the corridor as a four-season multi-use recreation and transportation corridor. From 2013 to 2018, VAST completed construction of 33 miles of trail. With construction in progress in 2018, VTrans assumed responsibility for constructing the remaining 49 miles. VAST continued management of the trail in accordance with the lease agreement and on July 1, 2022, the management responsibility shifts to VTrans.

Construction Update

Chris Hunt provided the construction update. He first thanked everyone from VAST and the many partners that have brought the project this far. He acknowledged that the work that VAST laid out has made it possible to complete this project in 2022. Chris described the map showing completed segments and sections under construction. There are currently four active projects that have been awarded to construction organizations. The priority bridges were awarded to J.P. Sicard and it is the hope that they are completed first because they have the longest lead times. Details Chris shared on each project are below:

- LVRT (10) – Bridge project; Contract awarded to J. P. Sicard, Inc. Removal of abutments and site prep work is underway and will continue through the winter with bridge construction beginning Spring of 2022. Construction contract amount: \$3,472,258.50. Completion date August 31, 2022.
- LVRT (11) – Sheldon Jct. to Cambridge; Contract awarded to Dirt Tech Company, LLC. Dirt Tech would like to begin stockpiling materials in their yard; however, no work is expected to begin until the end of the VAST season. Construction contract amount: \$2,476,651.15. Completion date November 12, 2022.
- LVRT (12) – Morrisville to Hardwick; Contract awarded to S. D. Ireland Construction. Pre-Construction Conference held 1/24/22. Some tree clearing and grubbing may begin this winter, but most of the work is not expected to begin until the end of the VAST season. Construction contract amount: \$6,986,878.50. Completion date November 10, 2022.
- LVRT (13) – Hardwick to West Danville (Joes Pond); Contract Awarded to G. W. Tatro Construction, Inc. Tree clearing, grubbing, and other preparatory work is underway and will continue through the winter with culvert, cattlepass, bridge, and trail work commencing in Spring of 2022. Construction contract amount: \$2,254,046.00. Completion date November 12, 2022

Chris finished by discussing the sign project – LVRT (14), which includes geographic signage to show users how to get to the trail, where they are on the trail, mile markers, and county and town boundary lines. There will be opportunities for community members to provide input and ideas regarding what they would like to see along the trail. He noted that the signage plan will not include signs pointing to individual businesses, events, attractions, or locations of historical significance along the trail. The signage plan should be implemented in early 2023 after the completion of the trail.

Existing Conditions

Karen provided an overview of the existing conditions gathered for the corridor. She noted that an inventory of the trail features has been gathered starting over a decade ago and the inventory was used to provide an overview of the LVRT by the numbers to summarize the many assets and features along the trail.

LVRT by the numbers

- 94.3 Miles of Trail
- 96 Crossings
- 53 bridges
- 5 tunnels
- 525 culverts
- 34 cattlepasses
- 6 fishery accesses
- 26 trailheads
- 29 Historic Sites
- 1700' Highest Elevation
- 157' Lowest Elevation
- 36 Miles Adjacent to Lamoille River

Karen continued to discuss the importance of connecting communities along the trail. With the completion of trail, it will be the longest trail in New England. The trail connects to other trail systems including VAST, Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, Long Trail, Catamount Ski Trail, Northern Cross Vermont Trail, and many other trails and spurs. The completed trail will span 5 counties and 18 towns, providing many opportunities. Several towns' plans propose improvements to create LVRT connections. Examples included revitalization of the Danville train station as a Welcome Center, wayfinding improvements including signs, information kiosks, destination and trail maps, and bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects to provide connections to village and town centers.

Karen identified a number of management plans and guidance documents that were reviewed for best practices in the management plan development process. These resources help to set the foundation for elements to consider in the LVRT Management Plan. She pulled forward some of the key components from the management plans reviewed. The three main categories that were considered across the resources were management, maintenance and operations, and economic development. Some key topic areas for each included the following:

- Management
 - Policies and liabilities
 - Planning and budgeting
 - Surveys and counts
- Maintenance & Operations
 - Coordination at all levels
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Routine and remedial maintenance
 - Scheduled condition assessment and maintenance tasks
 - Security and enforcement
- Economic Development
 - Community connections
 - Services and amenities
 - Align with local and regional planning initiatives

Management Plan Development Process

The existing VAST management plan was adopted in 2016. This document sets the stage for the development of the new management plan. As the management responsibilities shift from VAST to VTTrans, focus shifts to the longevity of the trail rather than the completion of the trail. The plan needs to describe a cohesive vision for the completed trail; strategies for management, maintenance, and operations; and support opportunities for community connections. The Management Plan for the LVRT will serve as a framework for management of other rail trails in Vermont. The process will gather input from the community and stakeholders to help define the vision for the trail and guide development of the management plan. The project team will look to gather input at public meetings like these, stakeholder interviews, an active website, an interactive crowdsourcing tool, and outreach through social media.

Karen noted that the project team is looking for input from communities along the corridor, stakeholders, and the general public to define the vision for the corridor, guide development of management plan, help to identify existing or anticipated issues on the corridor, and opportunities for trail improvements or enhancements.

Public Input

David kicked off the public input portion of the meeting by introducing the vision development for the management plan. He shared the vision from the 2016 management plan to build off for the vision of the updated management plan. Dave prompted both the online and in person participants with the question "What is one key word or phrase that comes to mind when you think about the completed the LVRT?"

Responses included:

- Active
- Recreation
- Development
- Growth
- Connection
- Connected communities
- Health
- Economic opportunity
- Celebrating history
- Inclusive
- Great attraction for locals and tourist
- Connectivity
- Functional route
- Capacity
- All users
- Reminds me path in Scotland
- Tourism money funnel
- Nature

He noted that these words or phrases will be used to construct vision statements and begin to articulate goals for the management plan. The main recurring themes that David pointed out were connectivity, economic promotion, and development.

Issues and Opportunities

- What are issues you experience on the existing LVRT segments?
- What issues do you anticipate when the trail is complete?

One person stated that they utilize the trail to commute from Sheldon to Swanton and that he is already experiencing grooves in the path from ATV users. Who will manage this to make it usable for all types of users?

Another person brought up the necessity for the trail to be accessible to paramedics to provide assistance. They pointed out that having an emergency on a trail is different than in a town. Trails have different labeling systems and having a cohesive one will allow for paramedics to safely locate the person.

Chris responded to this comment that there will be consistent mile markers as part of the signage plan, so users and responders can specify where they are on the trail. Emergency service providers will be engaged in the planning and construction process.

Issues identified in the chat included:

- Dog and horse poop on trail between Morrisville and Cambridge
- Dominance by one culture (bike)
- Vandalism
- Consistent mowing and maintenance
- Accessible toilets

Another participant presented a future issue for active transportation. They stated that bike racks and bike locks in strategic locations would be essential to encourage transportation use of the trail.

Another person asked where the zero-mile marker is. Chris chimed in to say that mile zero begins in Swanton.

Another anticipated issue is the increase in the number of people wanting to travel the whole corridor from start to finish. Will there be an opportunity for people to camp if they do the whole trail? The commenter offered that they have done a cross country bicycle trip where it was very common for towns along the way to open their public parks to transient people for camping. The protocol was to call the local police department and let them know they were camping.

One participant suggested resources that bring people to the community. The example of toileting was offered – provide resources so it can be done in a healthy way.

Another participant chimed in to offer that in the Midwest you can camp in the town centers where there are already facilities. Perhaps farmers along the trail could bring in income for camping permits on their property. They noted the ample opportunities for food truck events and other similar events.

A question was raised of how much state property is owned along the LVRT. Specifically, what is the width that state owns for the length of the corridor? Chris responded that when the rail came through, they took a lot in terms of right of way. The general rule of thumb is that the steeper the side slope along the trail the wider the right of way. He also mentioned that there is a right of way resource on the VTrans website where you can view a map of the property extents.

Comments from the chat included:

- Beds breakfast and bikes
- Campsites
- Bridge decking gets slick traction in places, how to aid this?
- Trash cans in place and benches
- Beautifications
- Bike rentals available
- Great opportunity to connect commuters
- Local groups allowed to use trail for events and 5ks

Hearing the many opportunities from the virtual participants, David posed the question - What opportunities do you see for the LVRT?

A number of ideas were offered, which included:

- Excitement to ride the whole length
- Envisioning bumper stickers that you rode the whole length
- Farm to fork bike rides
- Connecting our village and all recreational opportunities – mountain biking, hiking, canoeing,
- Connecting with adjacent landowners and farms

Place: Green Mountain Technology & Career Center & Zoom
 Date: January 25, 2022
 Ref: 58600.06
 Page 6

Meeting Notes

- Small villages can now support small businesses
- Connecting people with the river for recreation and repairing habitat
- Good north-south connection with the Long Trail – adding a bridge across the Lamoille River to connect north, south, east, and west
- Accessibility to e-bike charging stations
- Crowdsourc Input Tool – to share more ideas
- Use the trail to highlight historic sites along the route for education

One Morrisville resident offered that as the development of the trail is completed, there will be an increase in traffic using it. He has ridden finished portions. There may be an opportunity to have transportation from one end to the other, so if you bike one way a shuttle could bring you back to your car.

A suggestion was made specifically for Johnson to increase the number of bridges between the LVRT and other areas. There was an old stone mill bridge, the 54th bridge, that connected the two sides of the Lamoille River in the past.

David began to wrap up the session by thanking everyone in person and online for participating in the meeting. He introduced the Crowdsourc Input Tool as a resource for people to document any suggestions, ideas, and feedback on a map. The tool allows for people to comment and like previous comments or suggestions.

David presented the word cloud that was created by the ideas brought forward in the visioning exercise. He explained that the size of font relates to number of times a word or phrase shows up in comments. The most prominent words were connection, Vermont, commuting and recreation.



Place: Green Mountain Technology & Career Center & Zoom
Date: January 25, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 7

Meeting Notes

Michele asked if people could add vision statements or other thoughts on the website?

David responded that any further vision ideas, comments, or questions can be forwarded to the project team through the website or directly, providing contact information as follows:

- Amy Bell | amy.bell@vermont.gov or 802-279-0783
- Karen Sentoff | ksentoff@vhb.com or 802-497-6130

David wrapped up with the next steps and timeline for the project:

- Wrap up Existing Conditions | January
- Conduct Stakeholder Interviews | February
- Gap Analysis & Needs Assessment | March
- Public Meeting | March
- Public Meeting | April
- Recommendations & Implementation Plan | May
- Final Management Plan | June

Project Team Attendees:

Amy Bell, VTrans Project Manager
Chris Hunt, VTrans Construction Deputy Project Manager
Michele Boomhower, VTrans Director of Policy, Planning, and Intermodal Development
Jacqui DeMent, VTrans Deputy Project Manager (virtual)
David Saladino, Project Manager with VHB
Karen Sentoff, VHB
Matt Hogan, VHB
Alan Belniak, VHB (virtual)
Elisabeth Sundberg, VHB
Samantha Alger, VHB (virtual)

Attendees:

Bobbi Rooney	David Snedeker (NVDA)
Matt Rooney	Eric
Dianna Osborn	Melanie Riddle
Rusty Gregory	Sara Schlosser (Sandiwood Farm Wolcott)
Bill Westermann	Laural Ruggles
Heidi Westermann	Clare Salerno (she/her)
Casey Romero	Michael Hogue
Louis Bushey	Chris
W. Gray	Branden Roberts
Tom DeKornfeld	Kate Wanner
Martha Battle	David Polow
Anea LeLong	Fred Pond
Ken Brown (VAST)	Joyce
Wendy	Lori
Ruth	Lauren Masseria (she/her)
Amy Adams (NRPC)	Scott Campbell
Duane Howard	Jim Ryan
Paul Fixx	Gillian Sewake (she/her)
Jim Rose	Al Spitzer
Ted	Tommy Gardner
Katharine Otto (VTrans)	Juliana Beecher
J. Warner	John Elkins
David T. Gross	Howard Romero
Dave K.M.	Bruce Kaufman
Claudia	J. Robinson
Laird MacDowell	Sandra Hamel
Nancy Banks	Mike O'Hara (Caledonia Trail Club)
Ethan Hill (VASA)	Roger Fox
Don	Terry Carpenter
Mark A. Snyder	Bevin Barber-Campbell
Nancy Hill	Gina Kurrle
Robert Moore	Peter Ingvoldstad
Ken Linsley (Danville SB)	Mark Bushey
Ruth Brown	Danny Hale
James Roy	Anonymous Phone Participant
James Farnsworth	Lisa Crews (she/her)
Eric Osgood	Anonymous Zoom Participant
J. Owen	Scott
Bethany Remmers	Carol
Bob Arnell	Robin Arnell
Lois Parmelee	Keith Gross
Dan Predpall	Peter
Jon Kaplan (he/him) (VTrans)	Anonymous Phone Participant
Jane Williams	Denise Oconnor
Salvador Morales (LCPC)	Linda Fox
Kevin Hudnell	

Virtual Meeting Chat Input

LVRT Vision – Keyword or Phrase

Connected communities	Landmark project for VT
Health	Inclusive
Relaxing	Great attraction for locals and tourists
Opportunity	Health in beauty
Active	Capacity
Economic opportunity	Functional route
Cross Vermont	All users
Incredible resource	Finding Vermont
Recreation development	Historic
Connection growth	Respectful of nature and neighbors
Easy travel along a natural area away from roads	Tourism funnel
Artery for health	Connected with the Lamoille river paddlers trail = paddle down river and bike back up
Scenic- connections to Vermont culture	Reminds me of the belt path that crosses Scotland
Celebrate history	New commuting path
Exciting and fun	Connection with other NE trails and beyond
Bicycle highway	IBID commuting path concept
Fun for all ages	Link to community recreation and businesses
Lifeline	Family and individual adventure route
Connection to land and place- joy in being active outside	
Permanent recreation destination	

Place: Green Mountain Technology & Career Center & Zoom

Date: January 25, 2022

Ref: 58600.06

Page 10

Issues / Concerns

Not enough lodging

Lack of parking

Access to drinking water, particularly outside of business hours

Limited access points

ATV illegal use

Lack of enforcement of irresponsible trail use

Trail width

Safe road crossings

User conflicts horses vs. dogs

Accessible access and benches for rests

Risk from hunters

Safety for users, especially at dusk/ or in remote areas

Trash can need to be placed (and maintained) by the benches also

Inconsistent cell/Wi-Fi connectivity, an issue for safety as well as the need to connect users to local information

Dominance by mono"culture" e.g. cyclists to the exclusion of equine use?

Access to the river for fishing and swimming on public and private land without trespass

Repairs are timely, summer mowing is regularly scheduled

Few accessible toilets

Parking for trail access

Dangerous crossing on route 2 in West Danville. Need some flashing lights to slow down motor vehicles

Need more safety at Willow Crossing in Johnson

Wayfinding and access to services in villages

Places to pull off trail for picnic or rest without trespassing on private land

Need to mow the sides of the trail to remove ticks

Vandalism

Completed trail- potentially a wildly popular trail creates landowner-user conflicts

Riders traveling off trail onto private property

Places to get water

Bicycle maintenance kiosks

Pet control

Not enough parking or trailheads

Some sections will be super popular. how will this be managed?

Regular need to resurface trail exposed to silt and removal of center grass strips

Horse drawn carriages should be accommodated NOT only horseback if we want to be truly inclusive (Disabled individuals unable to ride horses, bicycles, etc....)

Use of electric bikes - is usage compatible with human powered bikes? This has been a controversial topic in Acadia Natl Park

Access to the construction group to make minor adjustments to trail on key crossings

Bridge decking can get slick. Can some friction surface be added?

Need more restrooms

Uniform trail mileage markers- mile 1 is the same either at St. J or Sheldon

Place: Green Mountain Technology & Career Center & Zoom

Date: January 25, 2022

Ref: 58600.06

Page 11

Navigating the truck traffic and potholes in Morrisville between Oxbow parking and the LVRT

Japanese Knotweed infestations on parts of the trail. Any plans to deal with that and/or other invasive species

Opportunities

Economic opportunity for very small, rural communities

Need bike rentals

Good rest stops

Connectivity to the Lamoille River Bike / Canoe experiences with accessible camping for participants

Smooth connection to the towns

Business opportunity to provide service for one-way riders/walkers

It would be amazing if future rural public transit planning efforts can serve trailheads as they hopefully expand.

Great that the Cambridge section is accessible from the commuter bus

VT Huts is looking into the lodging opportunities

I agree need campsites

Make as much of trail as possible ADA compliant and elder friendly (AARP)

Low budget overnight accommodations

B & B & B = Beds, Breakfasts & Bikes

Improve access of public transportation to bring less fortunate

Great opportunity to connect commuters

Stabling for equines using the trail as an economic driver ((Think of these as equine B&B's)

Farm to fork bike rides

Dog and horse poop on trail between Morrisville and Cambridge

Signage referring to The Bend between Danville and Hardwick. The bend is not mentioned now.

Connecting to our village and all recreational opportunities around each town - mountain biking, hiking, canoeing

Big economic opportunity for all the towns that the LVRT runs through.

Connect with adjacent landowners & farms to encourage their participation in economic opportunities

Connecting downtowns to the rail trail in all communities

Opportunities - partnerships with healthcare to promote as a physical activity and social connection resource

Small villages will now be able to support businesses such as campgrounds, diners, etc.

Connecting people using the trail with the river for recreation and the riparian habitat

Clean water project demonstration area opportunities

We host farm to fork and other events at our Sandiwood Farm and are so excited for this trail to come through Wolcott to help the economy

Use the trail to highlight historic and natural resource features along the whole length. Education opportunity

Lots of opportunities to collaborate with local rec programs and building youth programs for running, xc skiing, cycling. Trail also goes past several high schools and there can be opportunities there too

Shuttle service is an entrepreneurial opportunity - build it and they will provide them

E-bike charging stations

General Ideas / Questions

Look to Northern Forest Canoe Trail for some aspects of the management plan and managing user traffic

We need flexibility with regard to use of VTrans land adjacent to trails

Will there be State Park Rangers to patrol for first aid & assistance?

Would local groups be allowed to use the trail for running events and races?

Can you discuss the longer-term plans of a linear state park for the rail trail?

MVRT has been well maintained by VTrans the past years

Will permits be required for events above a certain size. Thinking of foot races or bike races?

Will State Police be responsible for patrolling / safety

What is the plan for bathroom facilities?

I have a rustic off the grid camp on the shores of Joe's Pond. The only access to the camp is via the trail, about 100 yards. My husband and I are senior citizens who go to the camp about 4-5 times a summer we have to bring in a heavy generator as well as drinking water and supplies for our short visits. We are more than willing to help maintain our small trail section in exchange for limited access dropping off supplies when we visit. How can you help us?

Are you seeking local advocacy groups as subcontractors to manage outreach and community engagement activities?

I have some serious concerns about construction efforts in Walden. Who can I contact about that?

The ROW viewer shows the Town of Hardwick, not State of VT, as owner in the completed section through town. Will towns be contacted for formal input? Who qualifies as a stakeholder?

I hope you are going to mention that VTrans is hiring a full-time rail trail manager who will work with the outcome of this plan as well as the other VTrans owned rail trails.

What are the plans to "brand" the trail? Things like consistent logos, wayfaring signs to local attractions, informational kiosk etc.

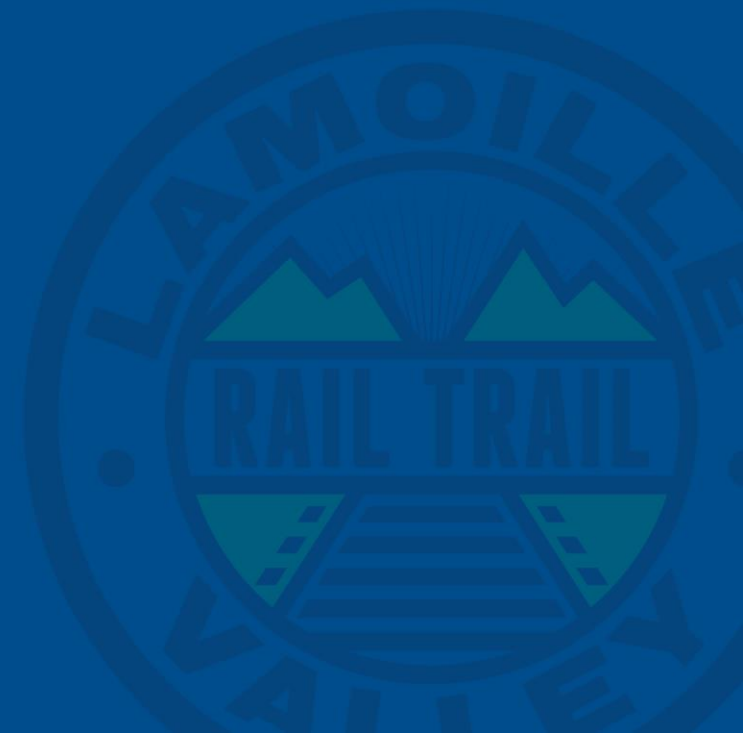


Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Management Plan

Public Meeting
January 25th, 2022



Welcome & Introductions





THANK YOU to LVRT Champions!

- Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST)
- Friends of the LVRT
- Local Chambers of Commerce and Development Corporations
- Regional Planning Commissions
- Towns along the LVRT
- Businesses along the LVRT
- Many **Volunteers** and **Donors**





Management Plan Introductions

■ Project Team

- **Amy Bell** | VTrans Project Manager
- **Jacqui DeMent** | VTrans
- **David Saladino** | VHB
- **Karen Sentoff** | VHB

■ Stakeholder Group

- **Michele Boomhower** | VTrans Director of Policy & Planning
- **Jon Kaplan** | VTrans Bicycle & Pedestrian Program Manager
- **Joel Perrigo** | VTrans LVRT Construction Project Manager
- **Mark Fitzgerald** | VTrans Rail Property Management Section Chief
- **Ken Brown** | Vermont Association of Snow Travelers
- **Dan Delabruere** | VTrans Rail & Aviation Bureau Director
- **Lauren Masseria** | Department of Tourism and Marketing
- **Rob Moore** | Lamoille County Planning Commission
- **David Snedeker** | Northeastern Vermont Development Association
- **Bethany Remmers** | Northwest Regional Planning Commission
- **To Be Determined** | Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail



Agenda

- Project Background
- Construction Update
- Existing Conditions
- Management Plan Development Process
- Public Input

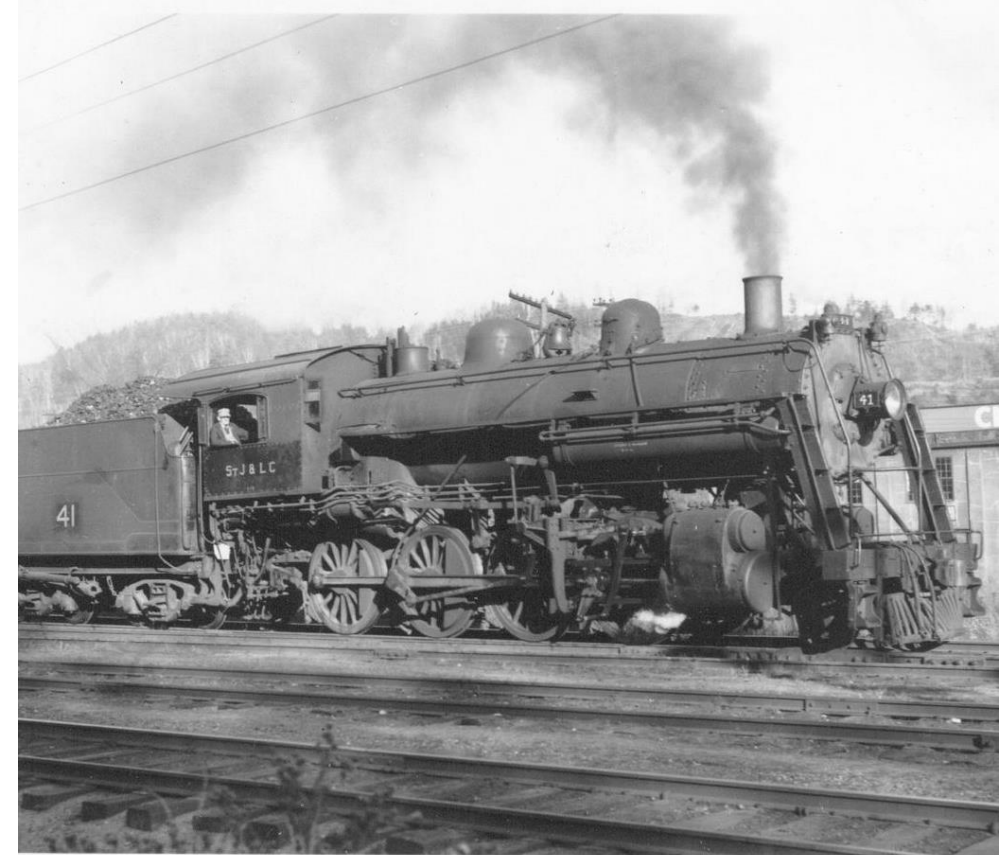
Project Background





LVRT as a Railway

- Railroad built in 1877
- Under various management over the years
- 1880 - "St. Johnsbury and Lake Champlain Railroad"
- Sustained by transport of freight and passengers
- State purchased in 1973
- Ceased operation in 1994
- Surface Transportation Board approved railbanking of LVRT on February 13, 2004





LVRT as a Recreational Trail

- Lease with Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) to begin rehabilitation of corridor (2006)
- **Goal:** Restore as a four-season multi-use recreation and transportation corridor



LVRT as a Recreational Trail

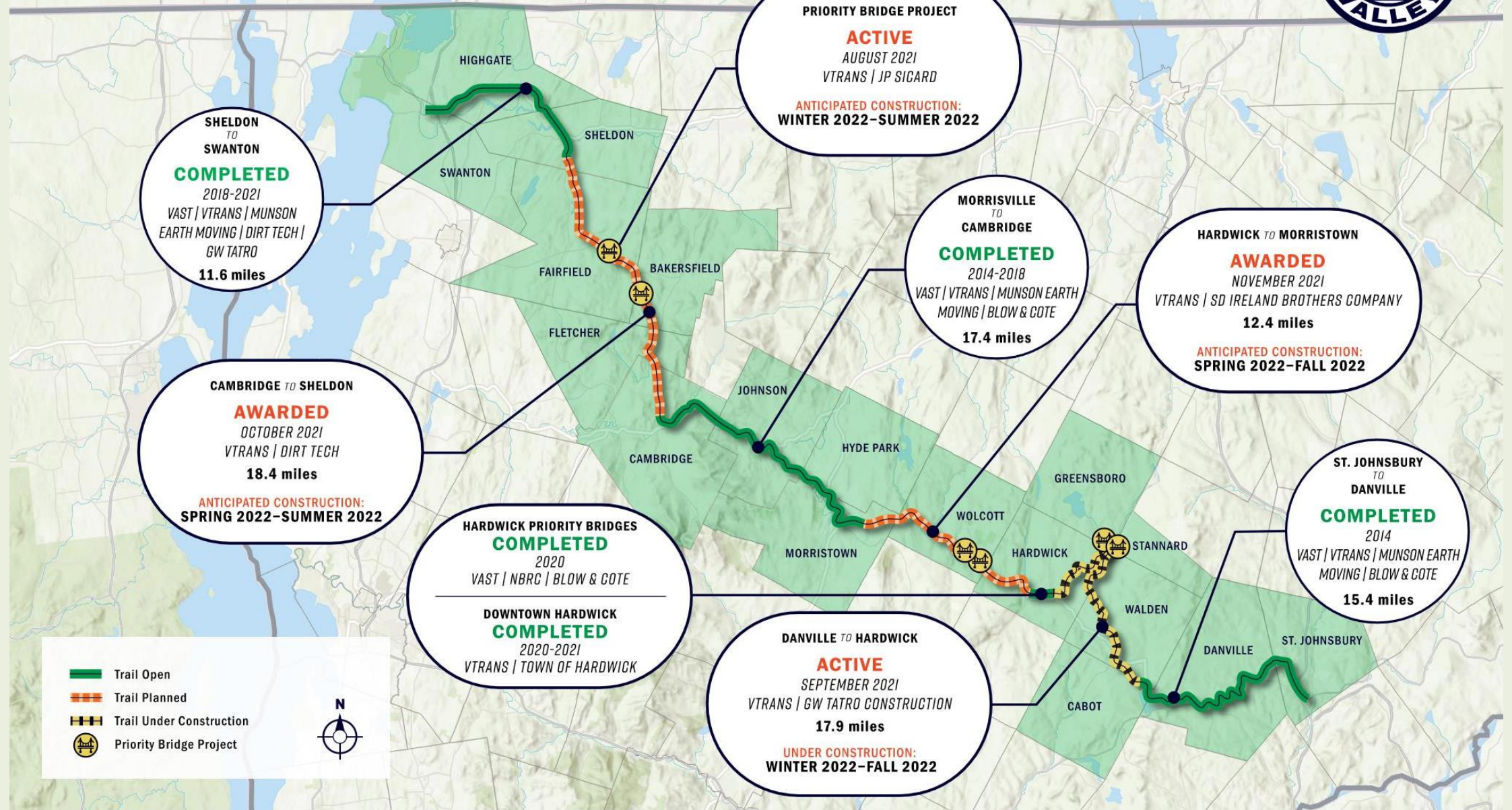
- **2013-2018:** VAST completed 33 miles of trail
- **2018:** VTrans assumed responsibility for constructing remaining 49 miles
- **July 1, 2022:** Management shifts to VTrans



Construction Update



Construction Progress to Date



- Trail Open
- Trail Planned
- Trail Under Construction
- Priority Bridge Project



Trail Construction Update

Projects-Segments	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
St. Johnsbury TO Danville 15.4 MILES	Completed by VAST/VTrans Munson Earth Moving Blow & Cote								
Danville TO Hardwick 17.9 MILES							Awarded: GW Tatro Construction, September '21 Under Construction	ACTIVE VTrans	
Hardwick TO Morristown 12.4 MILES							Awarded: SD Ireland, November '21 Anticipated Construction Spring '22	ACTIVE VTrans	
Morristown TO Cambridge 17.4 MILES			Completed by VAST/VTrans Munson Earth Moving Blow & Cote						
Cambridge TO Sheldon 18.4 MILES							Awarded: Dirt Tech Company, October '21 Anticipated Construction Spring '22	ACTIVE VTrans	
Sheldon TO Sheldon Junction 1.5 MILES					Completed by VAST/VTrans Munson Earth Moving				
Sheldon Junction TO Highgate 6.2 MILES							Completed by VAST/VTrans Dirt Tech		
Highgate TO Swanton 3.9 MILES							Completed by VAST/VTrans GW Tatro		
Priority Bridges Project							Awarded: JP Sicard August '21 Under Construction	ACTIVE VTrans	



Trail Construction Update

LVRT(10) – Bridge project; Contract awarded to J. P. Sicard, Inc. Removal of abutments and site prep work is underway and will continue through the winter with bridge construction beginning Spring of 2022. Construction contract amount: \$3,472,258.50. Completion date August 31, 2022.

LVRT(11) – Sheldon Jct. to Cambridge; Contract awarded to Dirt Tech Company, LLC. Dirt Tech would like to begin stockpiling materials in their yard, however no work is expected to begin until the end of the VAST season. Construction contract amount: \$2,476,651.15. Completion date November 12, 2022.



Trail Construction Update

LVRT(12) – Morrisville to Hardwick; Contract awarded to S. D. Ireland Construction. Pre-Construction Conference held 1/24/22. Some tree clearing and grubbing may begin this winter, but the majority of work is not expected to begin until the end of the VAST season. Construction contract amount: \$6,986,878.50. Completion date November 10, 2022.

LVRT(13) – Hardwick to West Danville (Joes Pond); Contract Awarded to G. W. Tatro Construction, Inc. Tree clearing, grubbing, and other preparatory work is underway and will continue through the winter with culvert, cattlepass, bridge, and trail work commencing in Spring of 2022. Construction contract amount: \$2,254,046.00. Completion date November 12, 2022



Sign Project – LVRT (14)

What it IS



- Review of best practices from other trail systems throughout the country.
- Recommendations for a cohesive set of off-facility signs including how to find the trail from the State Highway and Local Roads and on-trail signs including mile markers, town lines, and geographic destinations.
- Solicitation of input from RPC's, VAST, VTrans and other important stakeholders.
- Development of plans, specifications and an estimate for this project be bid.

Sign Project – LVRT (14)



What it is **NOT**

- Temporary traffic control during construction
- Signs pointing users to individual businesses, services or attractions.
- Interpretive signage detailing features of historic or environmental significance along the trail.

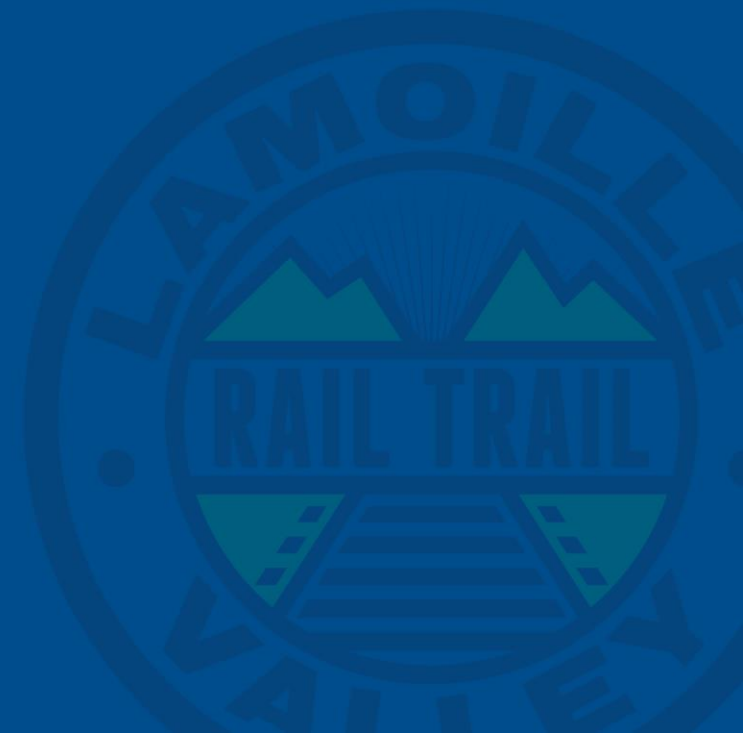


Sign Project – LVRT (14)

Timeline

- Complete review, outreach and development of plans, specifications and estimate Fall of 2022.
- Bid for construction Winter 2022/Spring 2023.
- Construction begins Spring 2023.

Existing Conditions





LVRT By the Numbers



94.3 Miles of Trail



96 Crossings



53 Bridges



5 Tunnels



525 Culverts



34 Cattlepasses



6 Fishery Accesses



26 Trailheads



29 Historic Sites



1700' Highest Elevation



157' Lowest Elevation



36 Miles Adjacent to Lamoille River



Connecting Communities

- Once complete, trail will be longest rail trail in New England
- Spans across 5 counties connecting 18 towns
- Provides connections to:
 - Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST)
 - Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail
 - Long Trail
 - Catamount Ski Trail
 - Northern Cross Vermont Trail
 - And many other trails and spurs

LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL TRAIL

TRAIL COURTESY

Yield to other user groups above your own as shown below

WINTER	SUMMER
<p>SPEED LIMIT 35</p>	<p>Keep to the right, single file in groups</p> <p>Respect other users regardless of sport, speed, or skill level</p> <p>Keep pets under control and on leash; clean up after your pet</p> <p>When approaching a horse, announce yourself by voice</p> <p>Travel at a safe and reasonable speed</p> <p>Respect all landowners along the trail</p>

Connecting Communities

- Several town plans propose improvements to create LVRT connections
- Some examples:
 - Revitalizing Danville train station as a Welcome Center
 - Wayfinding improvements (signs and info kiosks, destination and trail maps)
 - Bicycle and pedestrian improvements in village centers to provide connection with trail

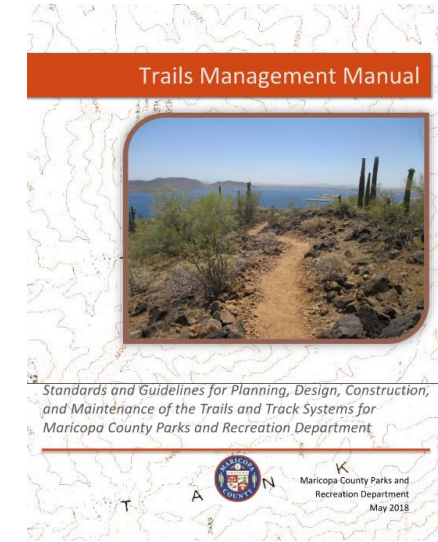




Best Practices Scan

■ Management Plans

- Capital District Trails Plan
- Tahoe Rim Trail Management Plan
- Tobacco Heritage Trail
- Cuyahoga Valley National Park
- East Central Regional Rail Trail
- Maricopa County Trails
- VA Department of Conservation and Recreation Toolbox
- Rails to Trails Conservancy Toolbox





Best Practices Scan

- Management
 - Policies and liabilities
 - Planning and budgeting
 - Surveys and counts
- Maintenance & Operations
 - Coordination at all levels
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Routine and remedial maintenance
 - Scheduled condition assessment and maintenance tasks
 - Security and enforcement
- Economic Development
 - Community connections
 - Services and amenities
 - Align with local and regional planning initiatives



Capital District Trails Plan

Advancing a Vision for Connecting Communities



Recent Appropriations

- 2021 - Received allocation of \$2.8M + \$11.3M Federal match
- 2022 - Pending congressionally directed spending request of \$2M



Management Plan Overview





LVRT Management Plan

- Existing VAST Management Plan adopted in 2016
- Management responsibilities shifting from VAST to VTrans on July 1, 2022
- Plan needed to:
 - describe a cohesive vision for the completed trail
 - identify long-range strategies for the management, maintenance, and operations of the trail
 - support opportunities for community economic development efforts along the LVRT



LVRT Management Plan

- The LVRT Management Plan will:
 - Articulate a comprehensive vision for trail
 - Identify ways to:
 - Improve user experience
 - Provide connections to existing and planned facilities
 - Connect to communities
 - Offer range of transportation and recreation options
 - Spur or complement economic development efforts
 - Establish a long-range strategy to manage, maintain, operate, and enhance the trail
 - Provide a model Management Plan framework for the management of other rail trails in Vermont



Public Engagement

Gather input from the community and stakeholders to:

- Define grassroots vision for corridor
- Guide development of the management plan:
 - Identify issues and opportunities for trail improvements
 - How can connections between communities and trail be improved?
 - What places along trail should be highlighted?
 - What are the economic development opportunities?

Gather input via:

- Public meetings
- Stakeholder interviews
- Website
- Crowdsourcing Mapping Tool
- Social Media

Public Input





Vision & Goals

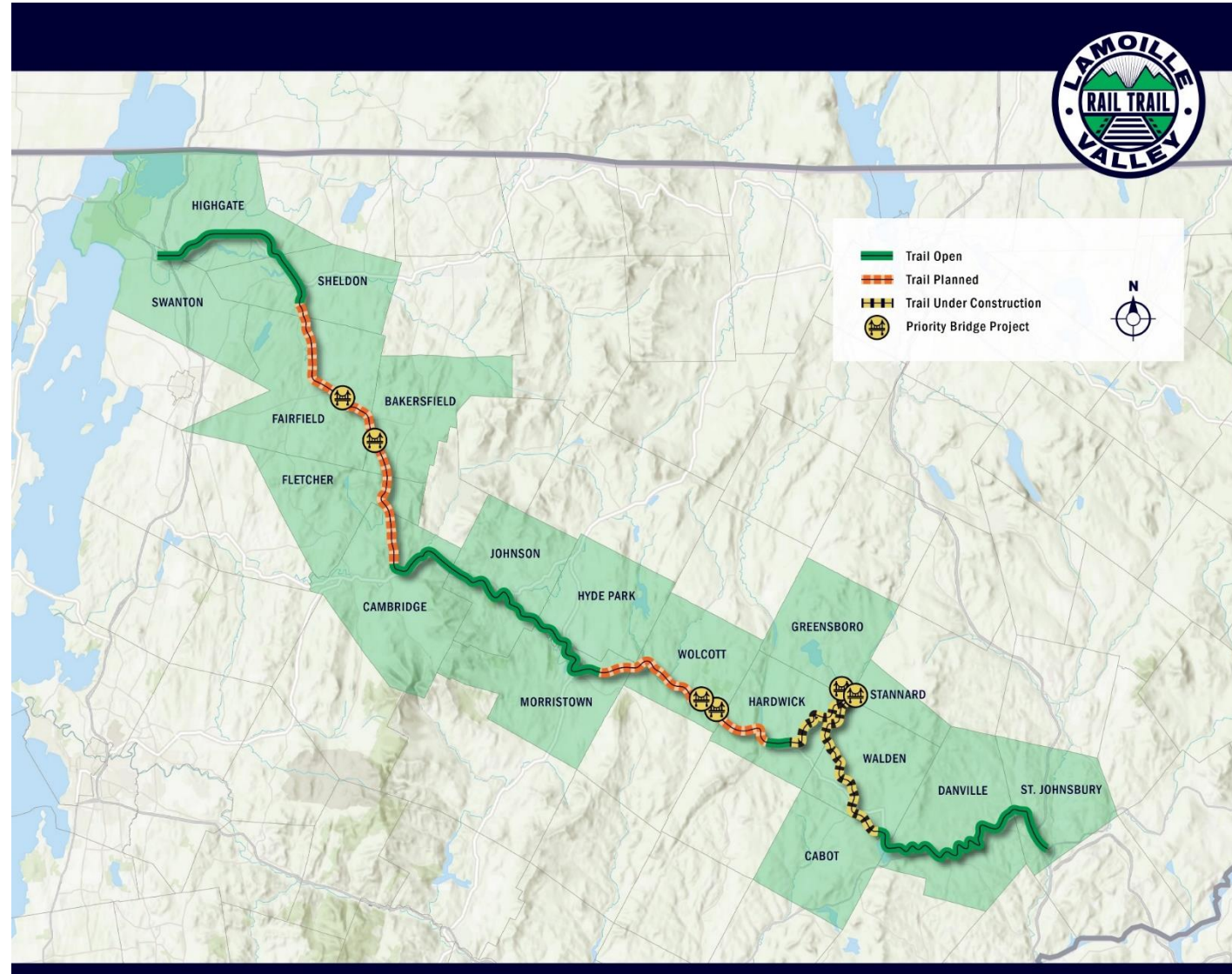
From the VAST Management Plan (2016):

- “...to produce and maintain a premier year-round multi-use recreation and alternative transportation facility that will have national and international recognition as one of the finest Rail-Trails in the US and Canada. We envision a rural alternative transportation facility that will allow all users to enjoy the natural, scenic Vermont landscape to its fullest...”



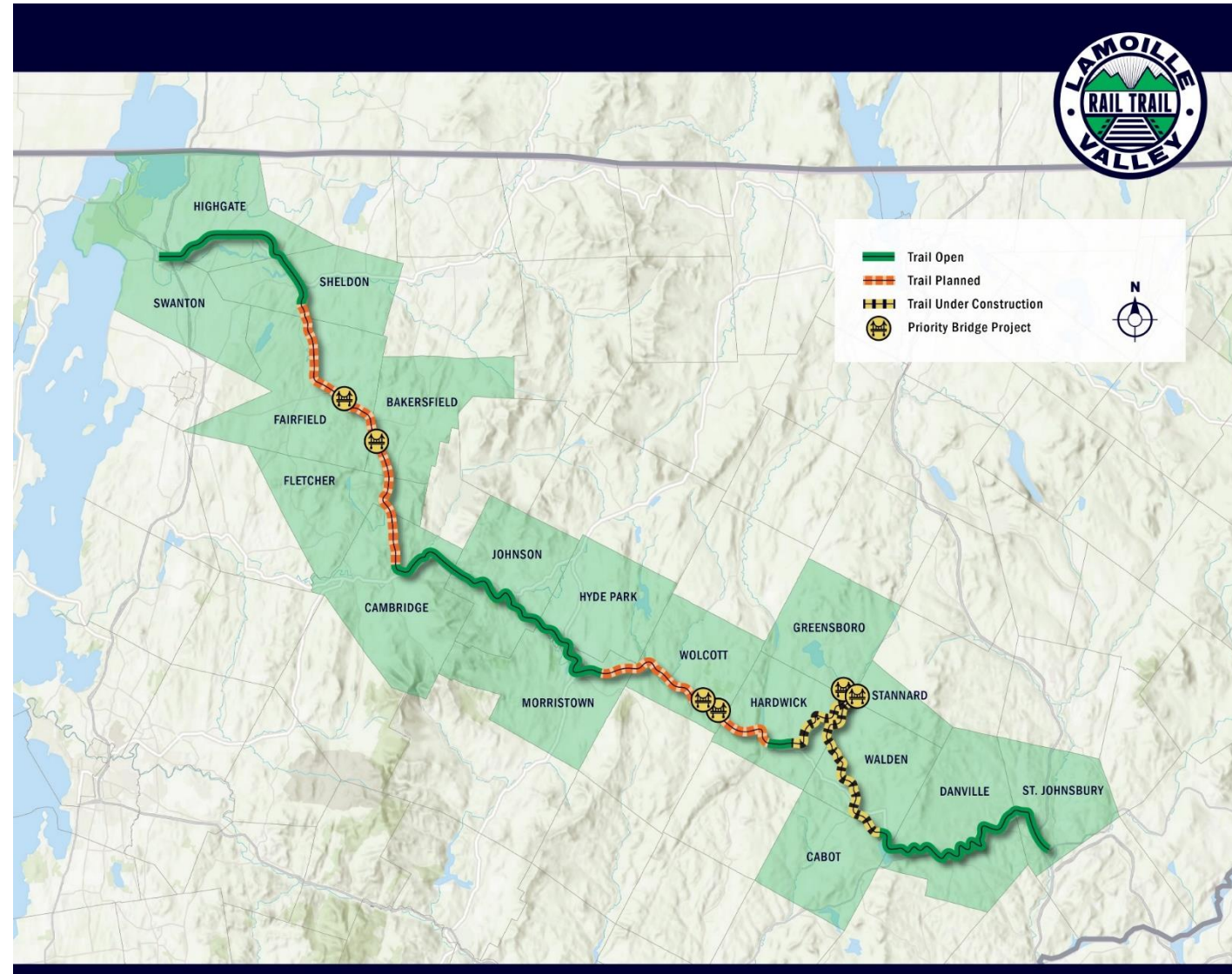
Vision & Goals

- What is **one key word** or **phrase** that comes to mind when you think about the completed LVRT?



Issues & Opportunities

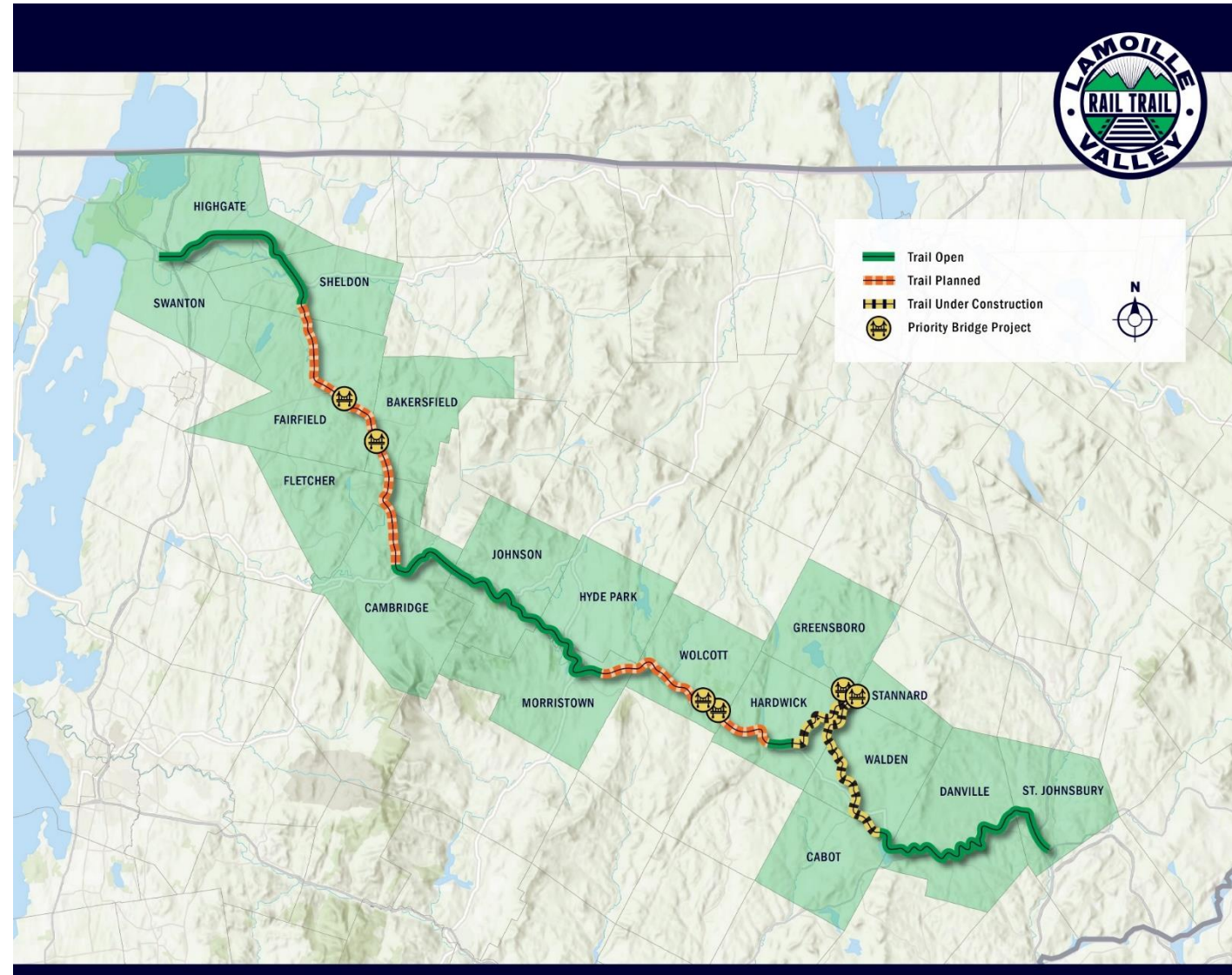
- What *issues* do you experience on the existing LVRT segments?
- What *issues* do you anticipate when the trail is complete?





Issues & Opportunities

- What *opportunities* do you see for the LVRT?





Crowdsource Input Tool

- Do you have specific places or ideas in mind?
- Please provide feedback via the mapping tool!

LVRT Issues & Opportunities Feedback

Karen Sentoff

LVRT Comments

+ Add Comment

Cool Playground!	4♥
Add signage to brewery	1♥
Add signage for Cambridge Greenway	0♥
Informal Parking- Approx. 6 spots	0♥
Formal Parking- Approx 50 spots	0♥
Public Bicycle Repair Station	0♥



Provide Input & Stay Informed

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail

VTrans Homepage

LVRT.org

Construction

News & Updates

About the Project

Schedule

Multimedia

Document Library

Contact Us

LVRT Management Plan

About the Project

Schedule

Document Library

Public Input



LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL TRAIL (LVRT)

Introduction

The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) is a four-season, multi-purpose recreation and transportation corridor across northern Vermont following the former 93-mile Lamoille Valley Railroad (LVRR) rail line from St. Johnsbury to Swanton. The trail extends across five counties connecting 18 towns including St. Johnsbury, Danville, Cabot, Walden, Stannard, Greensboro, Hardwick, Wolcott, Morristown, Hyde Park, Johnson, Cambridge, Fletcher, Bakersfield, Fairfield, Sheldon, Highgate, and Swanton. Once complete, the LVRT will provide an important link between several significant recreational trails in Vermont and Canada, including connections to the VAST snowmobile trail network, the Long Trail, the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, the Three Rivers Path, and the Cambridge Greenway.

The trail has a 10-foot-wide firm compacted crushed stone surface with 2-foot grass shoulders and wheelchair-accessible grades. The trail is open year-round to non-motorized uses. In the warmer months, the trail can be utilized for walking, jogging, hiking, cycling, and horseback riding. Local snowmobile clubs maintain and groom the trail through winter, allowing for snowshoeing, Nordic skiing, snowmobiling, and dog sledding. Additional recreational opportunities can be found along the trail at designated fish and wildlife waysides. Trail parking is

Stay Informed

To sign up for the LVRT Project Mail List [Click Here!](#)

Contact Us

Jenn Conley

Public Information Consultant

802.345.2321

jconley@vhb.com

LVRT Alerts

LVRT Management Plan Public Meeting January 25th at 6:30PM. Click [here](#) for details.

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt>

Next Steps





Next Steps

- Wrap up **Existing Conditions** | January
- Conduct **Stakeholder Interviews** | February
- **Gap Analysis & Needs Assessment** | March
- *Public Meeting* | March
- *Public Meeting* | April
- **Recommendations & Implementation Plan** | May
- **Final Management Plan** | June





Keep in touch!

Amy Bell, VTrans Project Manager
802-279-0783 | amy.bell@vermont.gov

Karen Sentoff, VHB
802-497-6130 | ksentoff@vhb.com

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt>



Meeting Notes

Date: March 3, 2022

Notes Taken By: Elisabeth Sundberg

Place: Zoom Meeting

Project No.: 58600.06

Re: LVRT Management Plan Stakeholder Session – Group 4

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Management Plan Stakeholder Session – Group 4

David Upson
Eric Remick
Senator Jane Kitchel
Ken Linsley
Joe Fox
Amy Bell
David Saladino
Karen Sentoff
Elisabeth Sundberg

Introductions

David Upson with the town of Hardwick. He is interested in highlighting history on the LVRT. When the railroad was rebuilt in the '70s, his stepmother was a female foreman on the job, which was unheard of at the time. He would like to find a way to highlight stories like that on the corridor.

Senator Jane Kitchel is the chair of the Appropriations Committee and sits on the Transportation Committee. She also is involved with the Snowmobile Council. She shared that Senator Mazza had the foresight to encourage the state to retain ownership of the railroad, which turned out to be a wise investment even though it was not popular at the time. She recognized the tremendous potential with the trail and has been involved since its infancy.

Eric Remick is on the Selectboard in Hardwick. The town has been involved in the LVRT trail development, including helping to secure funds for redecking bridges in Hardwick and resurfacing 1.5 miles of trail in downtown Hardwick. He is looking forward to the trail being end to end and providing connections to downtowns and existing trails.

Ken Linsley is on the Danville Selectboard and the NVDA Board. He is most looking forward to the potential economic stimulus completion of the trail will bring to the area at large. He wants to know more about what volunteers can do and what towns can do.

Joe Fox works for St. Johnsbury Academy as the Director of Recreation, but also has an entrepreneurial aspect of this with Noble Fox, which is a trail guided tour company. He is also involved in the Caledonia Trail Collaborative. He is excited about human power trails. Locally he has been working on new trails including a new trail in the Town Forest and they just flagged a new trail this fall. He recognizes the LVRT will be a key link in the Velomont system and is interested in linking trail networks. He noted that the local trails are on Strava and AllTrails.

Place: Zoom Meeting
Date: March 3, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 2

Senator Kitchel offered that there are two elements that are essential to the planning and development of the completed trail, and those are parking and restroom amenities. She emphasized that parking and restrooms cannot wait until after the trail is completed.

Dave asked if there are hotspots where you see folks parking where we might identify a need for additional capacity.

A good example offered up was trail users park at Good Fellows restaurant. Not providing sufficient parking can certainly impact local businesses by occupying the business intended parking capacity.

And on the restroom issue, complaints are logged at Joe's Pond. The port-a-potty at the Park and Ride is constantly overwhelmed, which is unsanitary. We don't want to turn folks off their experience on the trail because they are offended by the experience using the restroom.

Ken suggested that parking needs to be addressed. He noted that cars park on the shoulder at the Route 2 crossing near Larabee's and park on the side roads like Kittredge Road.

Senator Kitchel noted that if we wait to see where the demand or issues are we will be reacting instead of engineering it in. She suggested that folks will park any place that is easy to access the trail by highway. In Joe's Pond, they park on a private road.

Joe anticipates there will be a crunching need for long term parking to facilitate the end-to-end users. He noted it is his personal dream to have to have the linear state park. He hopes that it can be a singular experience and not different from town to town. He noted that parking for 10 cars at the terminus would be wholly inadequate for this. And that there may need to be some designation between day parking and long-term parking. He noted there is a potential entrepreneurial market for shuttle services. He also mentioned that they should be strategic regarding pieces of land adjacent to the trail that could be developed for amenities adjacent to the trail.

Eric suggested that signage and branding needed to be consistent, so that you know it is the LVRT regardless of where you pull off in Hyde Park or Johnson. As far as what they have planned for in Hardwick, the focus has been on trail connections. They have had some success securing funding through USDA.

Dave S. asked if there had been an engineering assessment for the trail connections in Hardwick yet. He also asked about the location of the parcel where the new trail was flagged in Hardwick.

David Upson

Facilitate conversations with private landowners now rather than when the trail is fully up and running.

VAST has worked to identify parking opportunities, entering into agreements with businesses to allow for snowmobilers to park. The year-round, multi-use of the trail will entail a different user market and the parking needs or locations of parking are likely to be different.

Place: Zoom Meeting
Date: March 3, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 3

The rail line from St. Johnsbury and into NH is owned by PanAM. Would be great to be able to connect with that corridor and do something similar.

Joe Fox noted that adding an extension would allow for a century ride.

Eric offered that beyond the Hardwick projects already mentioned, they are thinking about rest stops and connections to the village. Rest stops should include restrooms, picnic areas, and shade.

Ken noted that there is an effort in Danville to revitalize the train station. Currently they have a spigot for water outside, an area for seating, and a bike repair station. One problem is that there is very limited parking. A committee is working on the development. They are looking to have restroom facilities and vendor space.

Question 4 – What concerns you the most about the completed trail? Are there issues you anticipate for your community?

In response to Question 4, David U. offered that his concerns include calls for service from the local police and their ability to respond and gain access to the trail. Camping on private property. The possibility of segments or areas being frequented by the homeless population. General public safety concerns. Accessibility to the trail for enforcement. Will there be patrolling? Some local forces have bikes for enforcement, and some do not. What about medical emergency access for response?

Joe offered that his concerns are focused on user conflicts. He sees fat biking taking off and the potential for the fat bike and snowmobile communities to both want to be using the groomed sections of trail. It needs to be clear what the expectations are for how to use the trail. Food for thought – should folks on foot be with or against traffic? He noted that his dog heels on the left, as you would on the shoulder of the road walking against traffic. Why would it not be the same for walkers on the path from a safety perspective, so you see the bike or snowmobile approaching?

Dave asked about the group's thoughts on motorized uses – ATVs or scooters? The consensus was motorized uses should not be allowed. And that there is statute to back that up.

Joe offered that he thinks Class II electric bikes should be allowable. Class II e-bikes are pedal assisted up to 20 mph. The electric motor does not assist above 20 mph. This is a reasonable accommodation for those with mobility needs.

Someone noted that there are VOREC grants submitted to support some of this work for both St. Johnsbury and Hardwick.

Senator Kitchel suggested that e-bikes be treated as a bike. We should look to what is already in place on this issue. E-bikes make sections like the climb from St. Johnsbury to Danville possible for folks that might not be able to bike that section comfortably otherwise.

Joe offered that he had shifted his thinking about e-bikes. What changed his mind? He was trail building by hand and had concerns that e-bikes, with their heavier weight, would cause more wear to hand-built trail features (i.e.

Place: Zoom Meeting
Date: March 3, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 4

berms in mountain biking). However, if the trail is built in anticipation of that use (or “vehicle”) then it is a win, win, win. More people buy trail memberships and use the trails, because allowing e-bikes makes it more accessible to more users. The e-bikes cost more, so more tax revenue for the state.

Dave S. asked for more detail on the VOREC Grant applications that were submitted. Joe offered that St. Johnsbury was looking to create a lending library of mountain bikes. They also were planning on a public art installation between downtown and the trail to make the path between more attractive and welcoming. And they were looking to support an open bike shop which will be going in to the vacated Kaplans building. NY Times did a story on it worth looking up.

Senator Kitchel noted that in St. Johnsbury there is still an active railyard. Connections to downtown via Bay Street and the honking tunnel (one-way tunnel) are being pursued. They are looking in to commissioning an artist to brighten the tunnel connection and have weighed making the honking tunnel pedestrian only. RK Miles is on just the other side of the honking tunnel and that connection provides access to their store.

The group asked if there was any update on the VOREC grant submissions. Amy responded that recommendations have gone to the commissioner.

Danville’s submission to VOREC would support accessible bathrooms.

Eric offered that the pedestrian bridge in Hardwick is closed due to a broken cable, so they are looking for support for that bridge. When the pedestrian bridge is in place it will provide access to the park and visitor center. Conceptual engineering for the bridge and landscape for the design were included in the VOREC grant application.

As far as events are concerned, Eric offered that AWARE does a fundraiser walk from East Hardwick to Hardwick. It is an annual event that usually has at least 20+ people. The Hardwick to Woodbury rail trail would be a connection to another Farmer’s Market.

Joe offered that St. Johnsbury’s Farmer’s Market is very close to the rail trail.

Senator Kitchel noted that there may be different types of amenities for the bike user group or other new user groups of the full length of trail.

David U. offered that the trail offers a family event, where shorter trips with a destination might be how the trail is utilized. He noted they ride a section as a family to Morrisville for coffee and back.

Senator Kitchel also offered that there is a public beach with close access to the trail where there is an opportunity for combining biking and swimming. Hardwick has a town beach at Caspian Lake, but it is not on the rail trail. Are there other locations where swimming opportunities exist?

David U. offered that there are many swimming holes on the Lamoille.

Place: Zoom Meeting
Date: March 3, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 5

Eric noted that connections to downtown are high priority. There are a lot of communities that will be scrambling to make these connections and create the opportunities for the economic drivers.

David U. suggested an interactive way of getting information out to the potential users. Canada's trail system uses an app to get information on trip planning, services, and amenities and charges \$3 for the app. Even the groomers are fitted with GPS so you can see where the groomers are and where they have been.

Senator Kitchel offered a few other points. The snowmobile clubs have been the community touchpoints. They coordinate picking up litter (even in the summer), cutting brush, and all volunteer activities associated with the trail.

Joe noted that St. Johnsbury and Danville co-purchased a tractor for mowing operations along the trail in those two towns.

Ken offered that the mowing happens twice per year and that each municipality cuts the segments within their jurisdiction (i.e., Danville cuts Danville territory and St. J cuts St. J territory).

Joe also noted that there is a volunteer day at St. J where the group goes out to tackle routine maintenance like clearing culverts.

Eric asked whether maintenance responsibilities would get shifted to VTrans or districts in the new management structure. Would the burden be off the individual municipalities?

Amy asked about the annual budgeting for the LVRT.

Kitchel asked about making the connection with the MVRT.

David brought up the idea of using trail ambassadors.

Amy Bell made a point to emphasize the importance of volunteers and the role that the public will have on the trail. The public being tuned into everything going on along the trail. Amy shared that they will be hiring a rail trail manager who will be the primary contact.

Joe suggested that there be a map available of all the completed sections.

Amy suggested a web-based outreach to show where the trail is currently under construction.
Web based outreach to show where the trail isn't yet

Eric asked about what type of count data will be recorded.

Amy agreed that count data is important and having a set schedule for condition assessment is important.

START LVRT Stakeholder Session

Welcome to the LVRT Management Plan Stakeholder Session for the Northeast Region!

Meeting Goal:
Gather insights, ideas and concerns regarding the long term management of the 93-mile trail system.

Purpose of the Management Plan:

- Describe a cohesive vision for the completed trail
- Identify long-range strategies for the management, maintenance, and operations of the trail
- Support opportunities for community economic development efforts along the trail and in trailside communities
- Provide a framework for management of other rail trails in Vermont



Background

- Railroad built in 1877
- Railbanking approved in 2004
- VAST began rehabilitation of the corridor in 2006
- 2013-2018 VAST completed 33 miles of trail
- In 2018 VTrans assumed responsibility for construction of remaining segments
- July 1, 2022 the management shifts to VTrans
- Completion of the trail Fall 2022
- Corridor spans across 5 counties connecting 18 towns
- Once complete, the trail will be the longest rail trail in New England



Introductions

Please introduce yourself

- What is your name?
- What organization do you represent?
- What do you look forward to most regarding the completed LVRT?



David Smedek Executive Director NVDA	Eric Remeick Hardwick Selectboard/ Recreation Committee	Geoff Sewalke Hardwick Community Development Coordinator	Dan Predvall Greensboro Planning Commission	Randolph Walden Walden Selectboard	Ken Linsley Danville Danville Selectboard	Senator Jane Kitchel NVDA Board
Chad Whitehead St. Johnsbury Town Manager	Joe Kasprzak St. Johnsbury Asst. Town Manager	Joe Fox St. Johnsbury Academy Director of Recreation Programs	Maria Roosevelt Executive Director Heart of VT Chamber of Commerce	Gillian Sewalke St. Johnsbury Downtown Coordinator	Denise McCann Executive Director Northwest Kingdom Chamber of Commerce	David Upson Hardwick Town Manager

1

When construction on the trail is complete, what is the one project/improvement/enhancement you see as most critical to your community?

Connections	Wayfinding	Market Development	Food Trucks
Commuter Stations	Parking	Long-term parking	Signage
Shuttle Service	Phone app	Connections to downtown	Seating
Phone app - trail info	Maintenance	User count data	

2

What do you anticipate being a barrier to your community using the trail or benefiting from users on the trail?

Lack of Biking	Accessibility		

3

Are there projects/improvements/enhancements that your community has planned for in anticipation of the trail being complete?

Tail Connections	Increased Parking at Trainheads	Connections to Towns	
St. Johnsbury Commuter Station	St. Johnsbury Commuter Station	St. Johnsbury Commuter Station	St. Johnsbury Commuter Station
Beet St. East Hardwick and Harriston	Connection from Village (Hardwick)	Chase Street Business on the rail trail	Hardwick Woodbury Rail Corridor
Pedestrian Bridge (Lodge Inn)	Park / Visitor Center	Nonprofit Bike shop in St. Johnsbury	

4

What concerns you the most about the completed trail? Are there issues you anticipate for your community?

User Conflicts	Maintenance	Homeless Encampments	Private Property calls to the local police
Long Term Parking	Public safety concerns	Enticement	Natural Emergencies
Corridor Rules/ Right of way			

5

Are there programs, educational opportunities, or events related to the trail that your community has planned for or you would like to see?

St.	Stewardship Programs	Farmer's Market	Fundraise walk or bike for domestic violence awareness
St. Johnsbury	St. Johnsbury Saturday Farmers Market	Connections to walking for counting	Tax Anticipation
Volunteer groups			

6

Is there anything else we should know or that you wish we had asked about?

Idea Prioritization

Commuter stations	Parking
-------------------	---------

FINISH

Please reach out to us with any ideas, questions, or concerns.

Website: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt/>

Contact Info:
Elisabeth Sundberg
esundberg@vhb.com



Crowdsource Input Tool





Date: March 4th, 2022 at 2PM

Agenda Prepared By: Elisabeth Sundberg

Place: Teams Meeting

Project No.: 58600.06

Project Name: LVRT Management Plan

Meeting Agenda

1. **Review Existing Conditions Memo**
2. **Debrief of Public Meeting #1**
3. **Summary of Input Gathered to Date**
 - a. **Buckets: Management, Maintenance & Operations, Economic Development**
 - b. **Consolidate feedback, assign to buckets, and map (when possible)**
4. **Introduction to Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment Approach**
5. **Draft Vision and Goals**
6. **Next Steps**
 - a. **Project Schedule & Upcoming Meetings**

Teams Meeting Link

Join on your computer or mobile app: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only): +1 508-556-4407

Phone Conference ID: 955 985 695#

Current LVRT Websites

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt>

lvrt.org



Meeting Notes

Date: March 4th, 2022

Notes Taken By: Elisabeth Sundberg

Place: Teams

Project No.: 58600.06

Re: LVRT Management Plan Stakeholder Group Meeting

ATTENDEES:

David Saladino	Karen Sentoff	Elisabeth Sundberg
Ken Brown	Amy Bell	Chris Hunt
Melanie Riddle	Mark Fitzgerald	Nate Formalarie
Bethany Remmers	David Snedeker	Jon Kaplan
Jacqueline Dement	Rob Moore	Irene Nagle

Meeting began with everyone briefly introducing themselves and saying what organization they are representing.

Karen Sentoff presented the agenda which consisted of:

- Existing conditions memo
- Debrief of Public Meeting #1
- Summary of input gathered to date
- Introduction to Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment Approach
- Draft Vision and Goals
- Next Steps

Karen showed the overview of the project schedule. Key things that are coming up are stakeholder interviews through the month of March and a public meeting at the end of March.

Karen went over the Existing Conditions Assessment

- Historic context
- Corridor inventory
- LVRT management overview
- Existing document review looking at local and regional plans and incorporating what they have already outlines
- Funding sources- appropriations to date and bringing forward available resources
- Best practices
 - o Trail management
 - o Maintenance and operations
 - o Economic development
- Karen requested to let her know your thoughts by Friday, March 18th

Public Input to Date

- 1st Public Meeting was in January online and virtually
- There was a lot of information pulled from this meeting
- Smaller group sessions have begun
- Crowd source input tool as a way for folks to get in touch with VHB

Public meeting #1

- The hybrid meeting was hosted in Hyde Park
- There were 7 in person attendees and 7 project team members
- There were 84 virtual attendees and 3 project team

Karen shared that the next meetings are going to remain as a hybrid platform due to the length of the corridor, they want there to be equal opportunity for everyone to voice their ideas and concerns.

Next public meeting will be in St. Johnsbury and the final meeting at the western end of the corridor, the location and date is still being decided on. The goal is to reach people all along the trail. In the public meeting, one of the pieces was a visioning exercise by asking people for key word, key phrase that they associated with the LVRT.

- People contributed thoughts over chat and in person to draft the vision statement
- The group talked through issues and opportunities
- The word maps were developed from the chat log from the virtual side of the meeting
- A lot of good input we were able to filter through for the implementation of the plan

David Saladino continued to discuss the other mechanisms that are being used to reach people like the crowd source input tool to add their thoughts on a geographic interface. In the next meeting VHB and VTrans encouraging people to provide mappable points. David asked if this group could get this tool out as much as possible through each region of the trail to get more input on the map. David added that the sections that are already in use have more comments along the map than the segments undergoing construction. The last way to provide input is the comment box and emails when folks land on the website they have an opportunity to reach out to us

Stakeholder sessions (in progress)

- 5 groups
 - o Northeast- March 3rd
 - o Lamoille County- March 11th
 - o Northwest- March 17th
 - o Recreation and Transportation Organization/ Businesses/ Advocacy – March 14th
 - o State agencies- TBD
 - o Open sessions- March 22nd
- Methods for the stakeholder sessions
 - o Facilitated discussion with questions
 - o Mural- an online whiteboard for people to be able to interact during the session

Regional Questions that were asked during the first session are as follows. These questions were presented to the group on the virtual interactive whiteboard.

- When construction on the trail is complete. What is the one project/improvement/enhancement you see as most critical to your community?
- What do you anticipate might be a barrier to your community using the trail or benefitting from users on the trail?
- Are there projects/improvements/enhancements that your community has planned for in anticipation of the trail being complete?
- What concerns you the most about the completed trail? Are there issues you anticipate for your community?
- Are there programs, educational opportunities, or events related to the trail that your community has planned for, or you would like to see?

David Saladino began discussing the Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment. There are three guiding “buckets” for framing the document:

- Management
- Maintenance & Operations
- Economic Development

These three buckets are the guiding ideals for the management plan. David discussed what the Gap Analysis goal was, and it is to try to find what is missing in between the vision and goals

- What are the missing pieces?
- How can we make up the gaps?

- Desired state and current state
- The goal is to have these ideas filter through and make it through the funnel

Karen went on to describe how the public comments fit into each of the categories defined and how those overarching categories filter down into the three main buckets. There are currently 163 comments that have been received throughout the public engagement process. 119 of those comments were collected during the first public meeting. There has been less engagement through the other means of communication such as the Crowdsourc Input tool, online comment box, and direct emails. The data that is collected through the Crowdsourc Input Tool provides geospatial data. Many of the comments that are being collected are focused on recreation and services and trailside amenities. Below are examples of comments that have been received.

- "Connecting to our village and all recreational opportunities around each town - mountain biking, hiking, canoeing"
- "Low budget overnight accommodations"
- "Need good rest stops"
- "There needs to be some effort to better control ATVs."
- "Repairs are timely, summer mowing is regularly scheduled"
- "Dangerous crossing on Route 2 in West Danville. Need some flashing lights to slow down motor vehicles"

Karen presented relationship between Vision, Goals, and objectives of the Management Plan
Vision- the vision is a concise statement that paints a picture of the desired future for the trail
Goals- the goals support the vision and lay out desired long-range outcomes to be achieved by the plan
Objective- the objectives are defined outcomes that support their respective goal.

Draft Vision Statement

The vision for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is a year-round, well-maintained, multiuse recreation and alternative transportation corridor that supports economic vitality, fosters community connections, and promotes healthy lifestyles, across scenic northern Vermont.

Karen opened the discussion if anyone in the group had any thoughts or comments on the vision statement. Rob commented that well-maintained is properly addressed within the management plan.

Chris Hunt added that he likes the vision statement. David Snedeker stated that it should include that the trail is supported by the public community.

Draft Goals

- Support the economic vitality of northern Vermont communities
 - o Promote LVRT locally and regionally to draw visitors to the trail and trailside communities
 - o Improve connections to villages and town centers to encourage exploration of trailside communities
 - o Complement existing economic development plans in trailside communities
- Cultivate community culture along the trail and in trailside communities
 - o Foster trail stewardship opportunities to promote sense of community pride
 - o Encourage inclusive and respectful trail use
 - o Promote rural heritage, history, and educational programming
- Promote healthy and connected communities
 - o Encourage healthy and active lifestyles
 - o Provide meaningful opportunities for connection with the scenic, natural, and agricultural landscape
 - o Improve connections to recreational opportunities proximate to the LVRT
- Preserve the corridor and maintain trail condition
 - o Provide for routine asset condition assessments, maintenance, and preservation activities
 - o Support well-maintained facilities for health and safety

Place: Teams
Date: March 4th, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 4

- Provide convenient trail access points along the LVRT with clear directional signage and well-maintained parking areas
- Establish a well-managed trail system
 - Support and coordinate proactive trail management, maintenance, and operations activities
 - Identify stable sources of funding for management, maintenance, operations, enhancements, and programming

Karen opened the conversation for the group to provide feedback on the draft goals.

Bethany Remmers stated that recreation is important, but she does not want to lose sight that this is a transportation corridor as well and she would like to have that highlighted within the vision and goals. Ken Brown added that the trail encounters those busiest areas around the town centers.

Nate Formalarie states that he feels that the transportation aspect of the trail is being covered in the vision statement but needs to be highlighted in the goals.

Melanie Riddle thinks that using the commuting verbiage within the goals is a good idea.

Chris Hunt added that maintaining trail conditions and well managed trail system are a bit repetitive and could likely grouped together.

Amy Bell added that connectivity to other trail networks, so it is a cohesive system is another important factor of the management plan.

Rob Moore brought up the connectivity of the snowmobile trail systems in the Vermont and that could be a part of the narrative of the plan. He notes that the current use of the trail is frequently used to connect to other trails. Rob wanted to highlight that ongoing maintenance and relationship with local communities is a key factor to the success of the trail.

David Saladino agrees that publicly funded should fall within the well-managed trail systems

Karen Sentoff mentioned that in the best practices scan there was some focus on local partnerships, volunteer organizations, adopt a trail, etc. in a few of the documents. Amy Bell asked if that publicly funded section could fall under the well managed trail section.

Next Steps

- Stakeholder sessions
- Gap analysis and needs assessment ongoing March- April
- Public meeting #2
 - March 29th, 2022, 6:30 pm
- Public meeting #2
 - St. Johnsbury welcome center



Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Management Plan

Stakeholder Group Meeting #2
March 4th, 2022





Agenda

- Existing Conditions Memo
- Debrief of Public Meeting #1
- Summary of Input Gathered to Date
- Introduction to Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment Approach
- Draft Vision & Goals
- Next Steps

Existing Conditions





Existing Conditions Assessment

- Historic Context
- Corridor Inventory
- LVRT Management Overview
- Existing Document Review
- Funding Sources
- Best Practices Review
 - Trail Management
 - Maintenance & Operations
 - Economic Development

2

DRAFT Existing Conditions

The Existing Conditions section summarizes the current state of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) providing background on the history of the corridor, a brief inventory of the corridor assets and features, a summary of the previous management structure, a review of relevant plans and policies, and existing and potential funding sources.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The LVRT has a unique history and has changed significantly since its original development in 1877. A brief history of the trail as an operational railroad transporting freight and passengers, the path taken to transition the corridor to a rail trail, and the trail today as it connects with local communities are summarized below.

Railroad History

The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail occupies the former railroad corridor from St. Johnsbury to Swanton. The initial development of the railroad was championed by Horace Fairbanks, one of Vermont's wealthiest citizens, who developed an interest in railroads and proposed the line as an attempt to capitalize on commercial development that neighboring railways were bringing into the area. Contracts were secured by December of 1869 and construction was completed by June 1877. The line was originally known as the Vermont Division of the Portland & Ogdensburg Railroad which connected Portland, Maine with Ogdensburg, New York and points west. There was also a connection to Burlington along the Burlington and Lamoille railroad at Cambridge Junction. Over the years, the railroad operated under various management and names. In 1880, the railroad faced financial struggles and the line was reorganized as the St. Johnsbury and Lake Champlain Railroad (St. J & L.C.). In 1890, a spur line called the Granite Branch was extended from Hardwick to Woodbury to serve the granite industry in that town.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, freight and local passenger service sustained the rail line. Freight included asbestos, limestone, gravel, grain feed, lumber, and Christmas trees. Refrigerated rail cars allowed for the transport of milk and other dairy products but was not enough to make the line profitable. In the early decades, the line also transported passengers

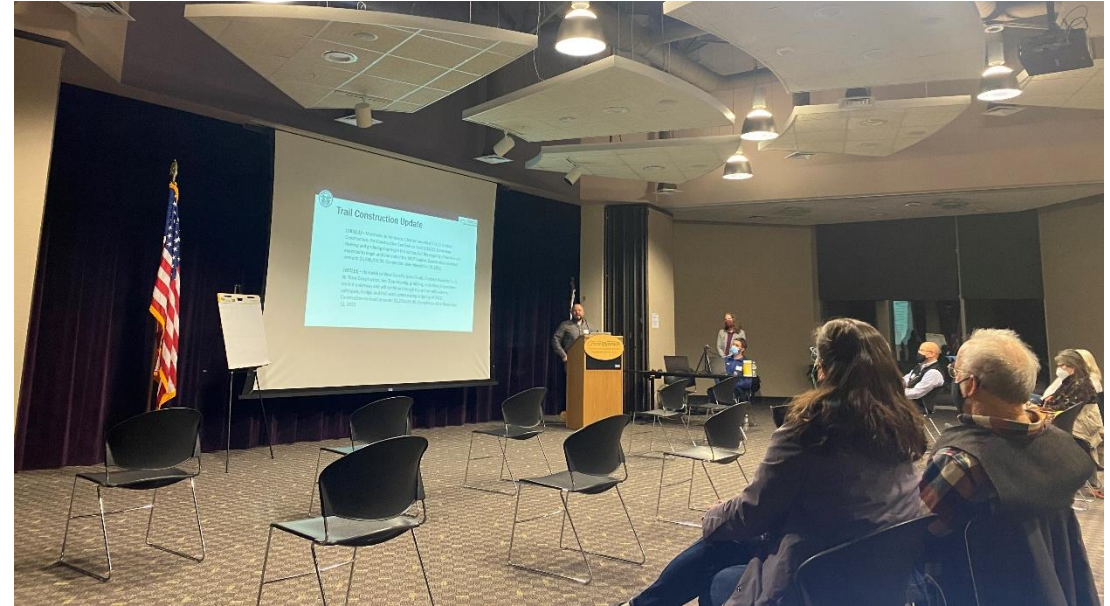
Feedback by Friday, March 18th

Summary of Input



Public Meeting #1

- Hybrid Meeting hosted in Hyde Park
- In Person Attendees: 7 + 7 Project Team
- Virtual Attendees: 84 + 3 Project Team





Crowdsource Input Tool

VERMONT AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION LVRT Issues & Opportunities Feedback Sign In ?

LVRT Comments

+ Add Comment

With a rail trail of this length it will be a desti...	6♥
It might be a good idea to stress the opportu...	4♥
The Sheldon junction connecting the MVRT a...	4♥
Ongoing efforts to control invasive Japanese...	3♥
With all the varied users, it makes sense for ...	2♥
Public Bicycle Repair Station	1♥
Highly suggest the trail be paved because it ...	1♥
It would be wonderful to connect this to the ...	1♥
Add signage for Cambridge Greenway	0♥
Informal Parking- Approx. 6 spots	0♥
Formal Parking- Approx 50 spots	0♥
Possible site for restored bridge to connect L...	0♥

POWERED BY esri



Comment Box & Emails

Other Comments or Questions?

Do you have other ideas or general comments about the future of the LVRT? We want to hear from you!

Comments and Questions *

Email Address *

SUBMIT



Stakeholder Sessions (In Progress)

- 5 Groups +
 - Northeast - March 3rd
 - Lamoille County - March 11th
 - Northwest - March 17th
 - Recreation and Transportation Organizations/Businesses/Advocacy - March 14th
 - State Agencies - TBD
 - Open Session - March 22nd
- Methods
 - Facilitated Discussion
 - Mural



Stakeholder Sessions (In Progress)

■ Regional Questions:

- When construction on the trail is complete. What is the one project/improvement/enhancement you see as most critical to your community?
- What do you anticipate might be a barrier to your community using the trail or benefitting from users on the trail?
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Stakeholder Sessions (In Progress)

START LVRT Stakeholder Session



Welcome to the LVRT Management Plan Stakeholder Session for the Northeast Region!

Meeting Goal:
Gather insights, ideas and concerns regarding the long term management of the 93-mile trail system.

Purpose of the Management Plan:
- Describe a cohesive vision for the completed trail
- Identify long-range strategies for the management, maintenance, and operations of the trail
- Support opportunities for community economic development efforts along the trail and in trailside communities
- Provide a framework for management of other rail trails in Vermont

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- Completion of the trail Fall 2022
- Corridor spans across 5 counties connecting 18 towns
- Once complete, the trail will be the longest rail trail in New England



Introductions

- Please introduce yourself
- What is your name?
 - What organization do you represent?
 - What do you look forward to most regarding the completed LVRT?



David Snadeker Executive Director MVDA	Eric Bernick Selectboard Recreation Committee	Coeff Senechal Headwick Community Development Coordinator	Dan Prescott Greenboro Planning Commission	Randolph Wilson Walden Selectboard	Kan Linsley Dumville Selectboard	Senator John Kitchel MVDA Board
Chad Whitehead St. Johnsbury Town Manager	Joe Kasprzak St. Johnsbury Asst. Town Manager	Just For St. Johnsbury Academy Director of Recreation Programs	Wesley Spooner Essex Director of VT Chamber of Commerce	Cliffen Senechal St. Johnsbury Downtown Coordinator	David McCann Hartford Member of House of Representatives of Vermont	David Upson Hardwick Town Manager

1

When construction on the trail is complete, what is the one project/improvement/enhancement you see as most critical to your community?



2

What do you anticipate being a barrier to your community using the trail or benefiting from users on the trail?



3

Are there projects/improvements/enhancements that your community has planned for in anticipation of the trail being complete?



4

What concerns you the most about the completed trail? Are there issues you anticipate for your community?



5

Are there programs, educational opportunities, or events related to the trail that your community has planned for or you would like to see?



6

Is there anything else we should know or that you wish we had asked about?



Idea Prioritization

FINISH

Please reach out to us with any ideas, questions, or concerns.

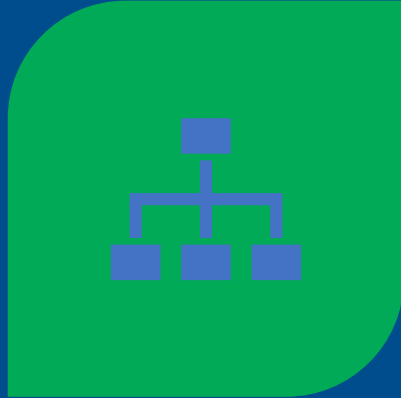
Website: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt/>

Contact Info:
Elisabeth Sundberg
esundberg@vnh.com

Crowdsource Input Tool

Gap Analysis & Needs Assessment





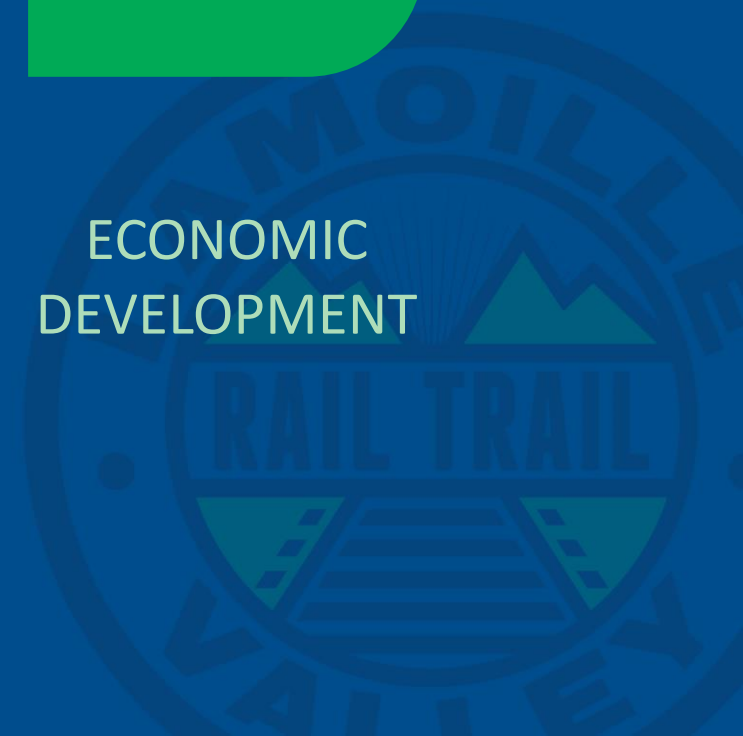
MANAGEMENT

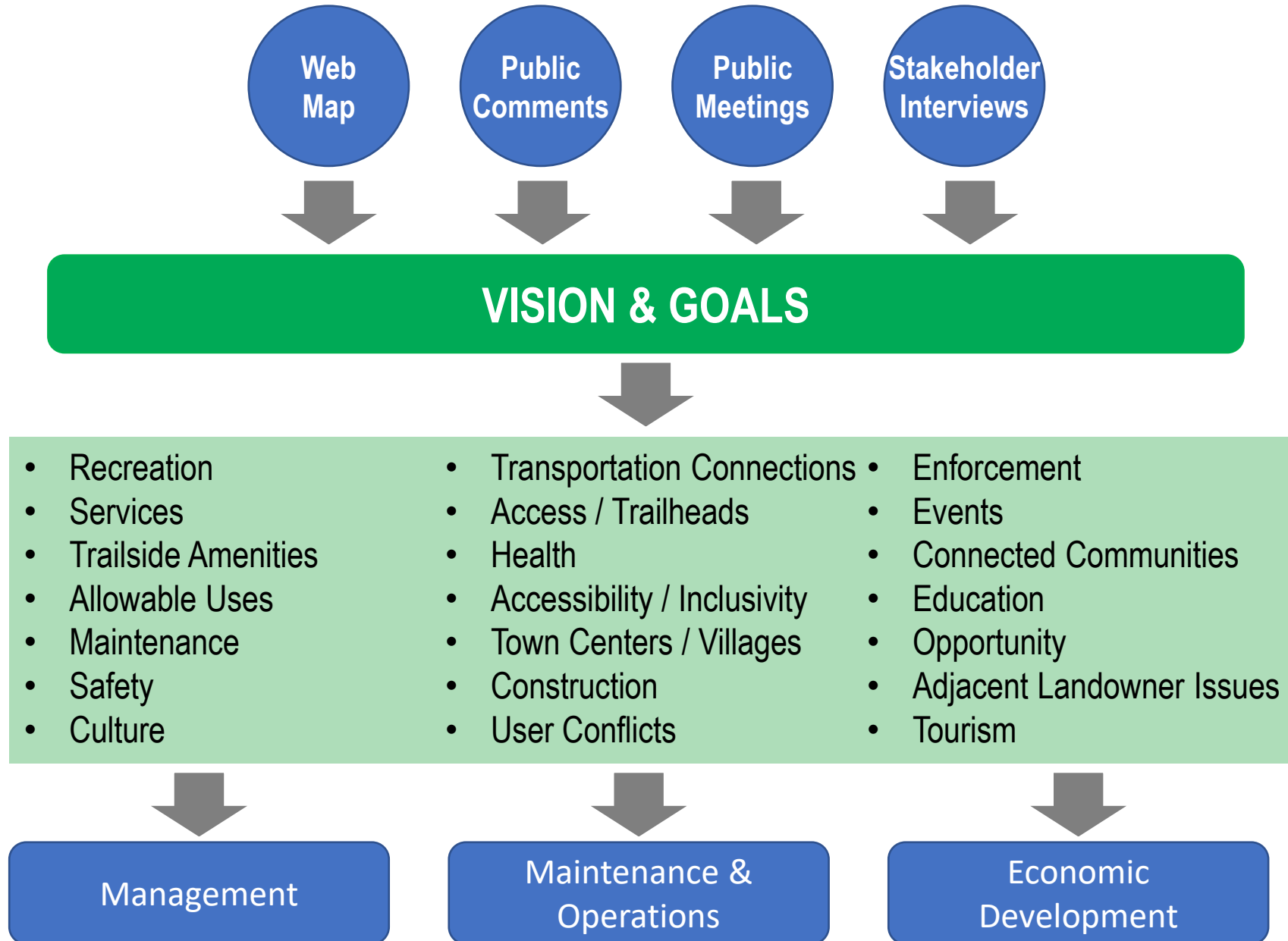


MAINTENANCE &
OPERATIONS



ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT





1. Stakeholder Input
2. Identify Gaps Between Vision & Stakeholder Input
3. Summarize Input by Categories
4. Develop Recommendations by "Bucket"



Categorization

- 163 Comments

Public Meeting	119
Crowdsource Input Tool	14
Public Meeting Notes	13
Comment Box	10
Direct Email	7

Recreation	26
Services	13
Trailside Amenities	13
Allowable Uses	13
Maintenance	13
Safety	10
Culture	9
Transportation Connections	8
Access / Trailheads	7
Health	6
Accessibility / Inclusivity	5
Town Centers / Villages	5
Construction	5
User Conflicts	4
Enforcement	4
Events	4
Connected Communities	3
Education	3
Opportunity	3
Adjacent Landowner Issues	3
Tourism	3
Management	2
Agricultural	1



Categorization

- “Connecting to our village and all recreational opportunities around each town - mountain biking, hiking, canoeing”
- “Low budget overnight accommodations”
- “Need good rest stops”
- “There needs to be some effort to better control ATVs.”
- “Repairs are timely, summer mowing is regularly scheduled”
- “Dangerous crossing on Route 2 in West Danville. Need some flashing lights to slow down motor vehicles”

Recreation	26
Services	13
Trailside Amenities	13
Allowable Uses	13
Maintenance	13
Safety	10
Culture	9
Transportation Connections	8
Access / Trailheads	7
Health	6
Accessibility / Inclusivity	5
Town Centers / Villages	5
Construction	5
User Conflicts	4
Enforcement	4
Events	4
Connected Communities	3
Education	3
Opportunity	3
Adjacent Landowner Issues	3
Tourism	3
Management	2
Agricultural	1

Draft Vision & Goals





Relationship of Vision, Goals, & Objectives

Vision: The *vision* is a concise statement that paints a picture of the desired future for the trail.

Goals: The *goals* support the vision and lay out desired long-range outcomes to be achieved by the plan.

Objective: The *objectives* are defined outcomes that support their respective goal.

Vision

Goal 1

Goal 2

Objective 1

Objective 2

Objective 1

Objective 2

Strategy/Action
1.1

Strategy/Action
1.2



Relationship of Vision, Goals, & Objectives

Vision: The *vision* is a concise statement that paints a picture of the desired future for the trail.

Goals: The *goals* support the vision and lay out desired long-range outcomes to be achieved by the plan.

Objective: The *objectives* are defined outcomes that support their respective goal.

Vision: The Vision for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is a year-round, well-maintained, multiuse recreation and alternative transportation corridor that supports economic vitality, fosters community connections, and promotes healthy lifestyles across scenic, northern Vermont.

Goal: Support the economic vitality of northern Vermont communities

Goal 2

Objective: Promote LVRT locally and regionally to draw visitors to the trail and trailside communities

Objective 2

Objective 1

Objective 2

Strategy: Develop regional marketing package targeting out of state visitors

Strategy/Action 1.2



DRAFT Vision Statement

The Vision for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is a year-round, well-maintained, multiuse recreation and alternative transportation corridor that supports economic vitality, fosters community connections, and promotes healthy lifestyles across scenic, northern Vermont.





DRAFT Goals



Support the economic vitality of northern Vermont communities

Promote LVRT locally and regionally to draw visitors to the trail and trailside communities

Improve connections to villages and town centers to encourage exploration of trailside communities

Complement existing economic development plans in trailside communities



Cultivate community and culture along the trail and in trailside communities

Foster trail stewardship opportunities to promote sense of community pride

Encourage inclusive and respectful trail use

Promote rural heritage, history, and educational programming



Promote healthy and connected communities

Encourage healthy and active lifestyles

Provide meaningful opportunities for connection with the scenic, natural, and agricultural landscape

Improve connections to recreational opportunities proximate to the LVRT



Preserve the corridor and maintain trail condition

Provide for routine asset condition assessment, maintenance, and preservation activities

Support well-maintained facilities for health and safety

Provide convenient trail access points along the LVRT with clear directional signage and well-maintained parking areas



Establish a well-managed trail system

Support and coordinate proactive trail management, maintenance, and operations activities

Identify stable sources of funding for management, maintenance, operations, enhancements, and programming

Next Steps





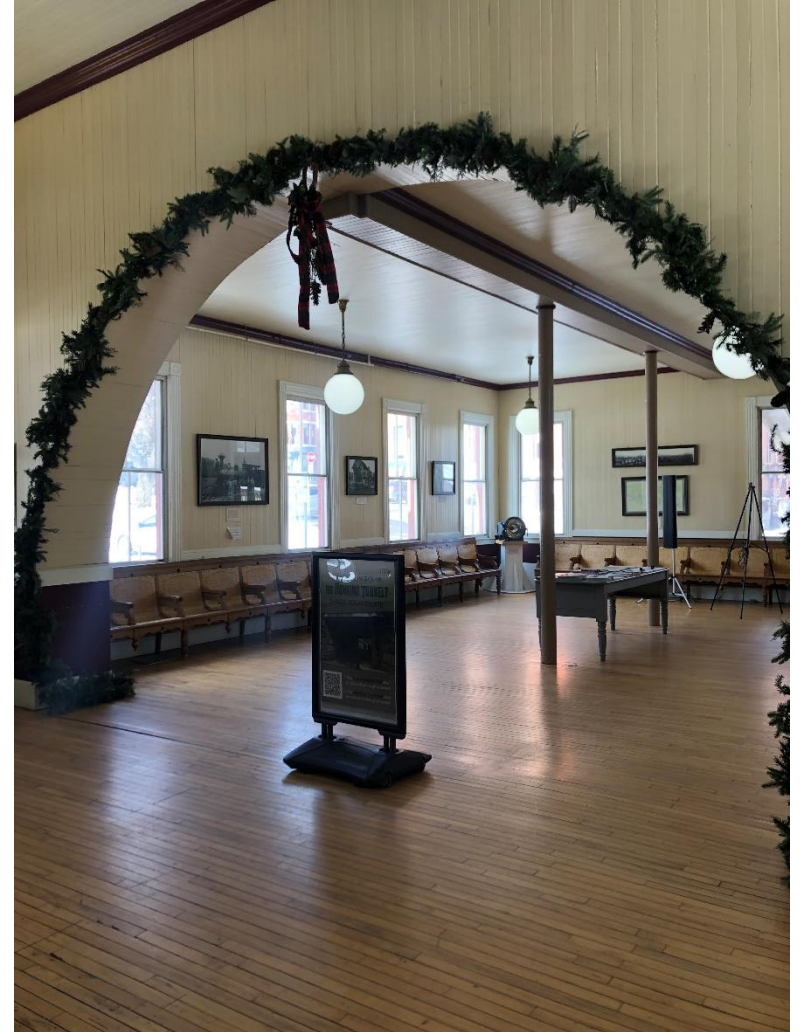
Next Steps

- Stakeholder Sessions | March
- Gap Analysis & Needs Assessment | March-April
- Public Meeting #2
 - Save the Date: March 29th, 2022, at 6:30 PM



Public Meeting #2

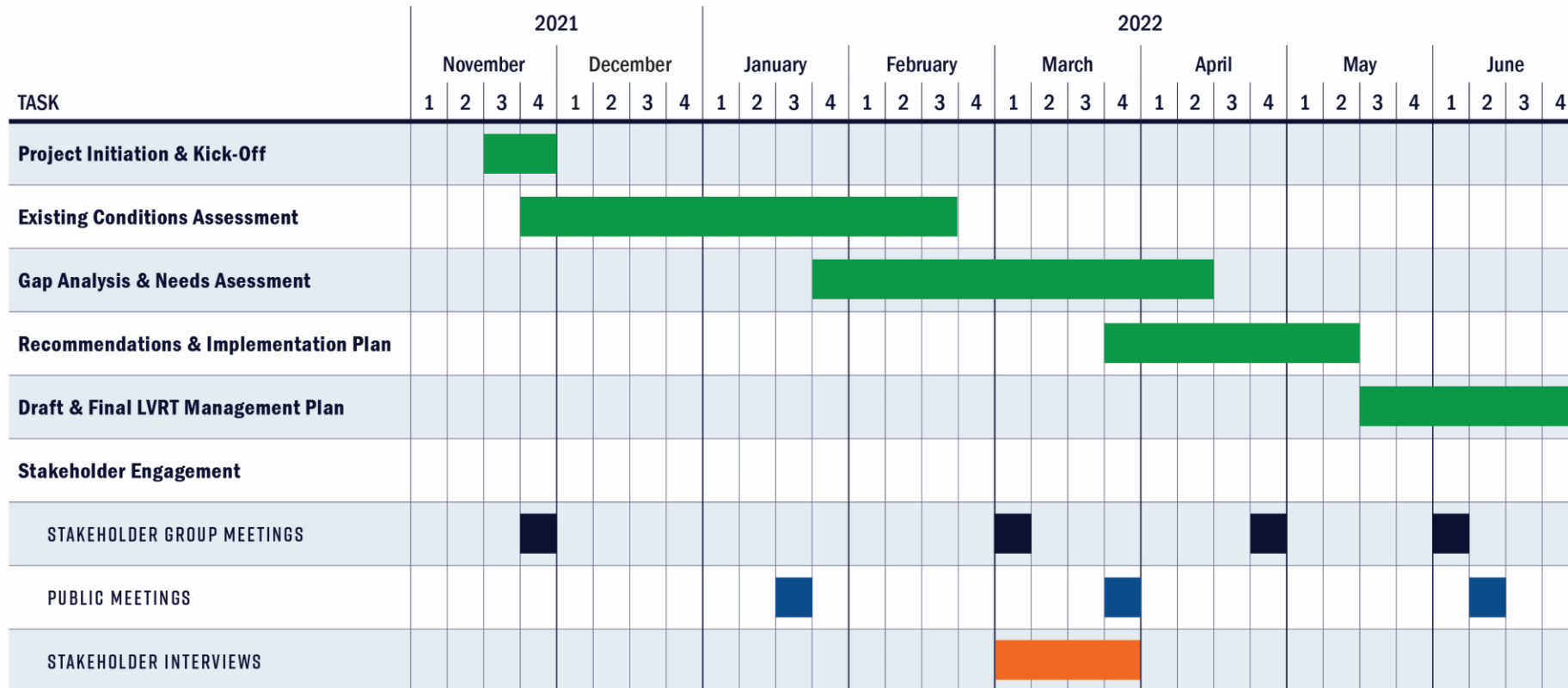
- Hybrid Meeting
- St. Johnsbury Welcome Center
- March 29th, 2022, at 6:30 PM





Schedule

LVRT Management Plan Project Schedule





Thank you!

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt>



Meeting Notes

Date: March 11th, 2022 Notes Taken By: Elisabeth Sundberg

Place: Zoom

Project No.: 58600.06 Re: LVRT Stakeholder Session Group 3

ATTENDEES:

David Saladino	Karen Sentoff	Elisabeth Sundberg
Amy Bell	Tricia Follert	Robert Moore
Laird MacDowell	Lisa Crews	Jonathan DeLaBruere
Melanie Riddle	Maxfield English	Ron Rodjenski

Amy Bell started with introducing the group to the management plan and the purpose of the management plan development process.

Karen Sentoff began sharing about how to use the online whiteboard, mural. She gave a background of the history of the LVRT Plan and how this will shape the future of the trail. She explained with the anticipation of the trail opening later this year, the management plan will outline all the policies and procedures that need to be in place when the trail is officially open.

The group introduced themselves and stated what organization that are representing.

David Saladino introduce himself, Project Manager with the consulting firm, VHB.

David Saladino asked the group, **“when construction on the trail is complete, what is the one project/improvement/enhancement you see as most critical to your community?”**

Robert Moore stated that in Lamoille County, most schools are within a close distance of the trail and that should be a safe connection. Some of those schools are:

- o Hyde Park
- o Johnson
- o Morrisville
- o Danville

Maxfield English added that there is an old road in between the rail trail to the town recreation park and then up through the woods, school street, Flat Iron Road.

Amy Bell asked if they applied for a VOREC grant for the trail connection?

Laird MacDowell stated that the trailhead we built, they wanted to add a water fountain from the pump house building, but we were told we need a full wastewater system to implement one. There is a local bike shop that provides water to trail users. Wastewater rules are very specific for those regulations.

David Saladino asked the group, **“What do you anticipate might be a barrier to use of the trail?”**

Rob Moore added that there are safety concerns where the trail crosses VT route 15 in Johnson and would like to engage VTrans to make safety at road crossings a priority. Opportunity to improve crossings when there is already work going on. VTrans has carried out some improvements so far. The communities are hoping for even more enhancement. Capital budget project that will be right there.

Amy Bell asked whether they are local or state crossings.

Place: Zoom
Date: March 11th, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 2

Rob Moore added that the town road locations where safety would be a concern would be the school crossing in Wolcott.

Tricia Follert added that where the trail crosses Brooklyn Street in Morrisville there are blind areas, especially where the new bridge is located where it crosses Brooklyn Street in Morrisville. This spot is a little bit blind especially with the new bridge.

Rob Moore seconded Tricia stating that Brooklyn Street does have a vertical line of sight issue.

Tricia continued stating that they wanted to put in flashing lights and have some of the required funding. They would like to implement the type of crossing where you hit a button and the lights flash as you cross.

Dave Saladino asked the group if there are any places that could use parking?

Tricia Follert shared that in Morristown, when you look at Pleasant Street the parking is leased out to a business owner and heard that lease is coming up soon. That would be excellent parking with possibility to add signage for where to park.

Laird MacDowell added that the park and ride in Jeffersonville has demand for additional parking. The trailhead in Cambridge Junction has 18 parking spots, in summer those spots are filled. One unique solution is a piece of property across the Lamoille River where they got permission from the landowner to park in 20 parking spaces. That solved the parking issue, although on a weekend both parking lots get full. The Park and Ride off Route 15 connects to the greenway path and spur of LVRT and leads people into Jeffersonville. Offers additional parking, parking is well solved in Jeffersonville.

Lisa Crews added that Railroad Street and Lendway Lane create a general area of safety concern. She continued to share that there are a lot of exciting things happening in Johnson.

Ron Rodkensi shared that there is a proposed art installation at 70 Depot Street and is undergoing the fund-raising process but have currently raised \$10,000 from a Vermont grant. The goal is to have it installed by the fall of 2022.

It was added that they tried to get the trail to connect to the high school but were unsuccessful due to costs. The high school has integrated the rail trail into their science classes and clubs. Haven't been able to engage the school and know the issue will come. Have tried to get a speed study to lower the speed in this location. There may be an opportunity to move the crossing to the 40 mph zone and connect the village to the high school that way.

Amy noted there has been a larger to connection to trail and speed is a concern. Something must be done so I am hopeful for the future on this issue.

Rob Moore shared that there are three schools on the one campus and he is not sure if people use the school parking to get to the trail. The Cricket Hill Trail system is in the woods behind the campus and there are thoughts about connecting the two.

Ron Rodjenski shared that the Hyde Park portion of the trail is the only area with a grade on the trail. A power assist wheelchair couldn't get up the hill. The grade may not be compliant with ADA regulations. Knotweed is a problem on Depot Street. Speeding is an issue there and when people come up on crossing they can barely see the crossing. Local group is working on the maintenance plan- asked for help from VTrans for signage or limited sight if it's not controlled.

Ron Rodjenski shared that they should get in touch with Johnson Conservation Committee because they have successfully eradicated knot weed at a local park.

It was added that the proposed signal at the school crossing did not meet the requirements to undergo further safety precautions.

Place: Zoom
Date: March 11th, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 3

Maxfield commented that the end of Elmore Pond Road could cause possible crossing/parking issues, adding that on Corley Road there is "rogue" parking potential.

Laird MacDowell shared that there is snowmobile parking. This is somewhat solved in Jeffersonville. He has been clearing the field in the back of his property and has opened parking for users. Connection from the Greenway and LVRT. That has been a positive thing, I know Morrisville there is some parking next to the motel.

It was added that there should be a trailer that travels end to end so people can bike in just one direction rather than the entire trail back and forth.

Someone added that the Fish and Wildlife access across the river on Elmore Pond Road hits on the concept of multimodal including waterway travel. Corley Road seems inviting as a low volume dead end road that might be tempting for folks to pull over on the shoulder to access the trail.

Maxfield English added that the low volume road where people are parking could be an issue for emergency vehicles to get by.

David Saladino asked the group, **"What concerns you the most about the completed trail? Are there issues you anticipate for your community?"**

It was added that motorized vehicles, like ATVs could potentially cause conflict.

Rob Moore shared that access to drinking water, bathrooms, and places for people to stay will be the biggest hurdles.

It was added that frequency in mowing is a concern across the corridor. The biggest complaint from trail users is the lack of mowing- they expect the trails to be well maintained. Once a month is an absolute minimum.

Ron Rodjenski shared that in Hyde Park with the annual roadside mowing plan, they mow twice a year, but monthly would be good.

Laird MacDowell shared that Cambridge uses a local contractor to maintain and mow the sides of the path with a riding mower once a month May-September.

Lisa Crews added that they mow 3 times a year with public works but would prefer it be taken over by LVRT.

Laird MacDowell noted flooding is an issue. Gravel budget is necessary – well maintained rail beds hold up well when it floods. There needs to be budget for gravel. Currently budgeting for that locally to replace gravel. There may be significant disasters from time to time from flood damages and we need to know we are able to work through disaster while funding programs as appropriate. Heavy rainfall events, new parking, and new impervious surfaces along the trail will be more and more important to be looking at.

David Saladino asked the group, **"Are there programs, educational opportunities, or events related to the trail that your community has planned for or you would like to see?"**

Rob Moore shared that Cambridge has a farmer's market.
Hyde Park community vitality exercises and they may be ongoing in the future.
Johnson strong local interest in community character and youth programs.
Morristown has all sorts of things going on at Oxbow Park.

Laird offered that Cambridge sponsors a bike a thon on the trail to raise funds where we have it on one day.
Elementary school is putting on a 5k race on the rail trail.

Place: Zoom
Date: March 11th, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 4

Amy noted in Hyde Park there are already activities occurring. Folks in the community recognizing the trail becoming more useful for fundraising, fun runs, incorporating into their programs, organizing races from the school. It was noted that permitting these events depends on how many people you anticipate participating. They are organizing without permissions and with more lately, each town should have a point of contact for this.

We need follow up with the school supervisory union for middle and high school. They may need more collaboration.

Rob noted that he has connected with folks in the department of tourism and marketing. This area would be good to have them involved at the state level even for local events that attract a large number of people. Come up with ideas and promote beyond the state boundaries.

Laird noted that he has been updating the rails to trails folks about the progress in building out the rest of the LVRT. All remaining sections have been contracted out. 80,000 followers on the rails to trails Facebook page to share this information with. He received a call from a someone writing an article for the rails to trails magazine which has over 400,000 members. This is good promotion.

The person writing the article has interviewed Amy, Michele, and Ken Brown. This is very exciting.

Boots of the ground perspective is in all of our interest to present a welcoming and safe facility. Mowing, maintenance, parking, access, experience, all come back to umbrella issue that it is a state level asset. We appreciate VTrans stepping up- I think we need to have further conversations about how this is all going to look. We need to be working together towards mutual compromise. For costs associated with all of this stuff, is VTrans willing or capable of funding everything associated with the trail. There are different extremes - the way it has been done with the community to the degree that they choose means a lack of consistency that can impact the user experience. We need to dig into a strategic and thoughtful approach along the entire trail. VTrans and municipalities should come to an agreement on costs and who puts in what.

Amy Bell added that it is going to take a joint effort to make sure that the trail meets the needs of community and community groups, civic groups, those partnerships are critical. We are going to be responsible, but we may not be able to do it to the level that you want. Looking at funding sources that are available to do some of things as well. Really important that we will have to partner to create the visitor experience everyone would like to have.

It is looking like a centralized management with connection points to each of the communities.

Lisa Crews took a moment to say thank you for these meetings and emphasized that communication is SO IMPORTANT, and many have the attitude that since LVRT is being taken over, they will be taking over all responsibilities. This document will help everyone understand exactly what that will look like.

David Saladino asked if there are any other ideas?

Laird MacDowell added the idea of creating the LVRT as a linear state park once complete. This could mean parks and recreation would take over maintenance.

Amy Bell added that they underwent a legislative study, and the model FPR uses is successful with the collection of user fees. Under state management responsibility we will continue to have those conversations. No vision on this currently. It is noted that this is the type of infrastructure they are more accustomed to. There is more to be determined on that point.

Ron noted that the 2020 Hyde Park Study regarding Rt 15 is on the town home page (hydeparkvt.com).



START

LVRT Stakeholder Session

Welcome to the LVRT Management Plan Stakeholder Session for the Northeast Region!

Meeting Goal:

Gather insights, ideas and concerns regarding the long term management of the 93-mile trail system.

Purpose of the Management Plan:

- Describe a cohesive vision for the completed trail
- Identify long-range strategies for the management, maintenance, and operations of the trail
- Support opportunities for community economic development efforts along the trail and in trailside communities
- Provide a framework for management of other rail trails in Vermont

Background

- Railroad built in 1877
- Railbanking approved in 2004
- VAST began rehabilitation of the corridor in 2006
- 2013-2018 VAST completed 33 miles of trail
- In 2018 VTrans assumed responsibility for construction of remaining segments
- July 1, 2022 the management shifts to VTrans
- Completion of the trail Fall 2022
- Corridor spans across 5 counties connecting 18 towns
- Once complete, the trail will be the longest rail trail in New England



Introductions

Please introduce yourself

- What is your name?
- What organization do you represent?
- What do you look forward to most regarding the completed LVRT?

★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★

★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
Rob Moore	Melanie Riddle	Tessa White	Salvador Morales	Laird Macdonald	Peter Ingestad	Clayton Zake Zuck	Jonathan DeLaBore	Peter Sigurdson	Lee Crow
Brian Story	Alan Rodzinski	Carol Robertson	Allen Spitzer	Eric Dodge	Inna Folbert	Linde Merrin	Mafield English		

1 Most Critical Improvement

When construction on the trail is complete, what is the one project/improvement/enhancement you see as most critical to your community?

Connectors	Wayfinding	Connectivity to school	Shower, changing room, bike rack
Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Johnson T-shirted (at school)	Water improvements at school	parking access
composting and composting effort			

★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★

2 Barrier

What do you anticipate being a barrier to your community using the trail or benefitting from users on the trail?

Lack of Parking	Access to Restrooms	Administrative safety concerns of contractors in the area
water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)
composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort

★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★

3 Planned Improvements

Are there projects/improvements/enhancements that your community has planned for in anticipation of the trail being complete?

Trail Connectors	Overlook parking at Cambridge Junction in State	Wayfinding signage at trailhead	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)
Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)
composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort

★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★

4 Concerns & Issues

What concerns you the most about the completed trail? Are there issues you anticipate for your community?

User Conflict	Harassment	Notes from roadblock sign-off	Harassment of people using the trail
Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)
composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort

★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★

5 Programs & Events

Are there programs, educational opportunities, or events related to the trail that your community has planned for or you would like to see?

D.K.	Farmers Market	Cambridge Elementary School	Wade Community Center
Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)
composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort

★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★

6

Is there anything else we should know or that you wish we had asked about?

Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	composting and composting effort	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	composting and composting effort
Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)
composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort

Idea Prioritization

moving	improving and enhancing infrastructure and operation	parking access and maintenance	with additional water infrastructure	composting and composting effort
Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)	Water fountain at the pump house (trailhead)
composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort	composting and composting effort

FINISH

Please reach out to us with any ideas, questions, or concerns.

Website: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt/>

Contact Info:
Elisabeth Sundberg
esundberg@vthb.com

Crowdsource Input Tool



Date: March 14th, 2022

Notes Taken By: Elisabeth Sundberg

Place: Zoom

Project No.: 58600.06

Re: LVRT Management Plan Stakeholder Session Group 5

ATTENDEES:

Karen Sentoff	David Saladino	Elisabeth Sundberg
Amy Bell	Jacqui DeMent	Nancy Banks
Nick Bennette	Ken Brown	Kelly Stoddard-Poor
Kelly Ault	Hans Huessy	Yva Rose

Amy Bell started off with background on what the Management Plan is for, and how VTrans will be taking over management of the trail later this year. She added that VTrans is also taking on the maintenance of other rail trails in the state. There are 149 miles statewide of rail trails that VTrans will be managing.

Karen Sentoff introduced herself and gave a brief overview of whiteboard feature, Mural, and how people can utilize the platform to engage during the meeting. Then she gave background on the history of the LVRT.

Karen Yacos introduced herself and she with Local Motion.

Kelly Ault introduced herself and noted this is going to be a legacy resource and is excited for the opportunities it will create.

Nick Bennette shared that he is excited to be here and contribute to conversation. He wants to create a great recreation community.

Yva shared that is nice to see the huge benefit the trail has on her community. She started a mobile business and is excited for the continued economic development opportunities for community members. She is working with businesses to make tours to link, breweries, tea house, adventure tours with the goal to show this great trail to the community and national audience.

Ken Brown is the LVRT manager with VAST. On personal level is excited to see the whole trail completed and built.

Hans represents VAST and bunch of other trail organizations. He rides the trail at least once every two weeks. Can't wait until the whole trail is finished. Excited for the trails to tie into each other. D&H starts in Castleton and connects all the way down to NY.

Nancy is the treasurer of the Friends of Lamoille Valley Rail Trail - working with VAST and other stakeholders to complete the trail. Work with communities to showcase what amenities exist. Here to support the state in any role we can help. A primary concern is maintenance. It is important to have strong relationships with municipalities so the trail can be useable through all seasons.

Kelly Stoddard Poor is most excited about the overall connectivity it will provide. Highlighting the maintenance piece, wayfinding, accessibility, amenities, seating, bathrooms, eateries, etc. Opportunity for more place making along the trail. Excited about the full implementation plan of how to make it successful.

Jacqui Dement from VTrans introduced herself and is helping back Amy Bell up in this effort.

Dave Saladino asked the group, **"When construction on the trail is complete, what is the one project/improvement/enhancement you see as most critical?"**

Place: Zoom
Date: March 14th, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 2

Dave Saladino shared that on the Mural platform some ideas have been filled in, bathrooms, trailheads, lean-tos/ informal camping options, links to town centers/ amenities.

Kelly Ault added that connection between information, gear, and experience can compliment their activity on the trails. Connectivity to the towns and businesses.

Dave Saladino asked ways to make that happen, is it an app with information on what you are proximate to in regards to trailside amenities?

Yva Rose responded with any way that takes people from the trails to the local businesses. She shared that she would be happy to share information and help in that capacity. Figuring out what to do see, eat, and buy and locate bathrooms. She already has that resource; we are in the process to do that already.

Nancy Banks added we should increase lodging, there is not a tremendous number of places to stay. She said the goal for 2023 could be a good inventory of what lodging exists.

Hans Huessy added that he strongly recommends that we reach out to large rail trails in Quebec and other places that have amenities like, charging, working stations, places to fix bikes, picnic tables, benches, etc. He also added that the LVRT currently has bike shirts for sale at Earl's bike shop in Burlington and would like to continue to use things like that to raise money for the trail for maintenance, etc.

Ken Brown shared that the LVRT.org interactive map has businesses on there, asking businesses to sponsor the trail. The website offers free listing on the VAST map including every business you can access by snowmobile. Bike access would be different than snowmobile. There is an online form that businesses can fill out to be added to that. He would be happy to share that, it is a comprehensive map without charging the businesses.

Helping residents embrace cycling visitors. Karen noted that we are working in places where we are putting cyclists that were not there prior. The poster child for this is South Hero at the other end of ferry drop off. Encourage communities to embrace cyclists before you get too far in the development. Tendency to not yet understand that folks that are coming to town are adding to their community, before people are in the wrong places. Try get out in front of that. Kingdom trails experienced that.

Nick Bennette added to make sure there is feedback and ways to provide input. Manual survey or outreach. Lodging ensuring that we are capturing different types of options. Hostiles, hotels, Vermont huts, thinking about that there is not just one type of user.

Nancy Banks offered one way to get communities engaged when you start the construction when the bridges arrive, etc., having opportunities for community members to participate. Get people to be excited. Encourage folks about what will happen in the future.

David Saladino asked if anyone has heard concerns about the trail from end to end being opened?

Yva Rose added that bike lanes are severely lacking in all these towns that the trail run throughs. You are not supposed to be on the sidewalk with a bike. Make biking in the villages more bike friendly for hesitant riders. She added to prioritize bike lanes from LVRT to business centers.

Karen Sentoff added that businesses will need to be leaders and we want to get people safely from trails to the communities to support those businesses.

Nick Bennette added that there should be connections to mountain bike trails and provide them with safe parking so there are no adverse experiences. Nick Bennette continued to ask about how to add organizations to connect with and ways people can informally and formally connect.

Place: Zoom
Date: March 14th, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 3

What do you anticipate might be a barrier to use of the trail?

Kelly Ault wants people that are new to using e-bikes or are bringing families to trail to feel safe and well prepared. Kelly wants to encourage diversity on trail and make sure everyone feels engaged and prepared.

Dave Saladino asked if there has been any negative feedback around the usage of e-bikes?

Yva Rose said at first no one knew what they were. Time to time she has had some questions raised surrounding e-bikes, but overall, they have been well received. She added that technically only class 1 bikes were allowed. So, once we educated the public, pedal the whole time, level 1. Now there are different types of e-bikes growing on the rail trail. Lots of classes of bikes, no one is policing the trail. Once in a while we hear someone having issues. There is an educational component, once they understand they love them.

Ken Brown added that he has never had a complaint about an e-bike, and shared that a skilled biker is typically moving faster than e-bikers.

Are there parking locations that come to mind that may be under capacity?

Ken Brown added that the folks from Cambridge / Jefferson have had their parking expanded 3 or 4 times. Don't think I see that happening elsewhere, but that portion of the trail is closest to Chittenden County.

Yva Rose shared that safe overnight parking will be important. She is doing a shuttle program to get people to travel the state and take advantage of all the opportunities across Vermont. B&B hop along the trail and places where there is safe overnight parking spaces so people can continue to explore by bike.

David Saladino asked the group, "What do you anticipate might be a barrier to economic development associated with the trail?"

Nancy Banks shared that spur connections are important, always critical, and bike lanes that are well identified are essential.

It was mentioned that getting people to shop locally and not online and creating a website that informs the public of the businesses in the village would be critical.

Kelly offered that marketing or information that folks can use to plan at home or when they arrive to pick up a few things. That creates an opportunity to build a relationship and maybe buy a bigger item later. Quality of life for communities for employers, employees, creates vibrancy, feedback loop. Something to keep in mind for those folks to recreate, go on their lunch break, or free time. They will be a user of the trail.

Nick Bennette said that they ran a membership recently, support for local businesses, people want to buy local. 800 or so folks, if you inform people they will come.

It was added that a previous group mentioned a stamp card as you go to each community you get more discounts the more locations you visit, something like an LVRT passport.

David Saladino asked the group, **"What concerns you the most about the completed trail? Are there issues you anticipate?"**

Some of the items that came up in discussion were adjacent landowner issues and ongoing maintenance.

Place: Zoom
Date: March 14th, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 4

Nick Bennette brought up several concerns including not enough signage so users won't know the proper rules and regulations. There is potential for people to generate their own trails or trail connections. Nature will do its thing and you can't stop flooding in some areas.

Existing and potential lodging are priorities. Education for property owners and trail users.

Yva Rose added that she is unaware of anyone else planning to do this, but they are planning shuttle services. This is not only beneficial for trail users but also for the villages, restaurants, future lodging places. If you want to tour Vermont having these resources is essential.

Nancy Banks shared the hospital does a gravel ride along the trail and it could be useful to add a rail trail loop.

Ken Brown shared that there has been couple of groups apply for permit to use the trail for events. They are typically a fundraiser type of event.

START **LVRT Stakeholder Session**

Welcome to the LVRT Management Plan Stakeholder Session

Meeting Goal:
Gather insights, ideas and concerns regarding the long term management of the 93-mile trail system.

Purpose of the Management Plan:

- Describe a cohesive vision for the completed trail
- Identify long-range strategies for the management, maintenance, and operations of the trail
- Support opportunities for community economic development efforts along the trail and in trailside communities
- Provide a framework for management of other rail trails in Vermont



Background

- Railroad built in 1877
- Railbanking approved in 2004
- VAST began rehabilitation of the corridor in 2006
- 2013-2018 VAST completed 33 miles of trail
- In 2018 VTrans assumed responsibility for construction of remaining segments
- July 1, 2022 the management shifts to VTrans
- Completion of the trail Fall 2022
- Corridor spans across 5 counties connecting 18 towns
- Once complete, the trail will be the longest rail trail in New England



Introductions

Please introduce yourself

- What is your name?
- What organization do you represent?
- What do you look forward to most regarding the completed LVRT?

Karen Yocco	Kim Galt	Geoff Hodges	Nancy Banks	Bob Chubb	Helen Hanley	Frank Glowack	Caleb Magoon	Yas Rhee
Josh Schroeder	Mark Wilson	Kerry Woodard	Nick Parsons	Greg Hayward	Kate Blumenthal (VAST)	Benny Bishop	Amy Spear	Nick Saranese (VTrans)

1 Most Critical Improvement
When construction on the trail is complete, what is the one project/ improvement/enhancement you see as most critical?

Restrooms	Trailhead	Lighting	Water	Signage	Trail markers	Trail safety	Trail maintenance
***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***

2 Projects & Improvements
Are there projects/improvements/enhancements that you would like to see in specific communities along the trail?

Colchester	Winooski	Windsor	Windsor	Windsor	Windsor	Windsor	Windsor
***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***

3 Trail Use Barriers
What do you anticipate might be a barrier to use of the trail?

Trailhead	Trail safety	Trail maintenance	Trail signage	Trail lighting	Trail water	Trail restrooms	Trail parking
***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***

4 Economic Barriers
What do you anticipate might be a barrier to economic development associated with the trail?

Trailhead	Trail safety	Trail maintenance	Trail signage	Trail lighting	Trail water	Trail restrooms	Trail parking
***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***

5 Concerns & Issues
What concerns you the most about the completed trail? Are there issues you anticipate?

User Confusion	Trail Safety	Trail Maintenance	Trail Signage	Trail Lighting	Trail Water	Trail Restrooms	Trail Parking
***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***

6 Programs & Events
Are there programs, educational opportunities, or events related to the trail that your organization has planned for or you would like to see?

Trailhead	Trail safety	Trail maintenance	Trail signage	Trail lighting	Trail water	Trail restrooms	Trail parking
***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***

7
Is there anything else we should know or that you wish we had asked about?

Trailhead	Trail safety	Trail maintenance	Trail signage	Trail lighting	Trail water	Trail restrooms	Trail parking
***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***

Idea Prioritization

Trailhead	Trail safety	Trail maintenance	Trail signage	Trail lighting	Trail water	Trail restrooms	Trail parking
***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***

FINISH

Please reach out to us with any ideas, questions, or concerns.
Website: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt/>
Contact Info: Elisabeth Sundberg
esundberg@vthb.com



Crowdsource Input Tool





Meeting Notes

Date: March 17, 2022

Notes Taken By: Elisabeth Sundberg

Place: Zoom

Project No.: 58600.06

Re: LVRT Management Plan Stakeholder Session Group 2

ATTENDEES:

Karen Sentoff	David Saladino	Elisabeth Sundberg
Amy Bell	Tim Smith	Elisabeth Nance
Amy Adams	Heidi Britch- Valenta	Brian Savage
Dave Stanley	W Gray	Ty Choiniere

Amy Bell introduced the project and the history behind it.

Karen Sentoff added that VAST started the rehabilitation of the corridor in 2006. They constructed three of segments of the trail between 2013-2018 and July 1st is when VAST will pass the management over to VTrans. There are 5 counties, 18 towns that are impacted by the corridor and once trail is complete longest rail trail in New England.

Introductions

Brian Savage introduced himself as Town Administrator of Swanton and he is looking forward to the completion of the entire trail. He spent many years on the legislator and helped get the funding passed to get this project going. He is excited about the opportunities it will provide our area. He is trying to get the trailhead going and applying for another grant.

Tim Smith is Director of FCIDC. FCIDC is working on economic development for the trails in order to grow the tourist sector and he added he is engaged in this conversation and willing to assist where we can.

Dave Stanley has been a member of Fairfax MVRT since 1993, council chair more than 15 years. He had the opportunity to work with VTrans and NRPC. He said the biggest challenge will be looking at how to involve the community more.

Elisabeth Nance with FCIDC worked for town of Swanton and remains very interested in what the corridor it can do for the region.

Heidi Britch-Valenta is the Highgate Town Administrator and has been dreaming of this for many years. She would like to speak about what they are doing once the trail is complete to secure funding. The recreation department has secured a bike rental program. They also have a committee looking at our village core.

Amy Adams works for the NRPC and involved with the Northwest Rail Trail Council. She is interested in the regional connection of MVRT to LVRT.

Bill Gray with VTrans Rail and Aviation Department. He has worked on many trails throughout Vermont and all the other rail trails that VTrans is managing. He is involved in the construction that has been going on so far along the corridor. He is excited to see this completed trail, he feels it is going to benefit the towns and state.

Ty Choiniere with Highgate Recreation Department is looking forward to a uniform trail with kiosks and their own unique town information centers. He has lived along the trail for 40 years and is looking forward to working with VTrans to maintain the trail.

Place: Zoom
Date: March 17, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 2

David Saladino asked them, **“When construction on the trail is complete, what is the one project/improvement/enhancement you see as most critical?”**

Brian Savage stated that last year Swanton applied for grant for parking, picnic tables, bike repair station, but the grant was not approved. He said they are continuing to put in a grant request as well as finding other funding sources. They feel that is a critical need and something they would like to get constructed. He said there is talk about continuing the conversation of another trail in that direction.

Elisabeth Nance noted that the last one mile portion is paved.

Dave Stanley noted you can go to St. Albans and it does produce a nice loop. One thing we did on the MVRT on the website is created loop rides. Reception area and playground at Cambridge Junction gets a ton of use. Real nice to connect to MVRT and LVRT. Kids use the area during the winter too.

Has there been discussions about amenities or parking? How to signify this junction?

Bill noted they are very much in favor of the trails being built. Not just MVRT and LVRT, for all of the rail trails we have discussed the rail trail parking improvements needed. Tremendous number of options to improve the parking. Coordination with Bordeaux brothers and Agency to make this happen. Can be challenging to access this area. We have had some discussions coming off of 105 in another location where we could have a pavilion, parking, toilets. Haven't crossed that bridge yet. Concentrating on the construction of the LVRT. I have worked directly with the business for many years and we found a safe way to not hinder business but allow people to enjoy the trail.

Brian Savage is the restaurant owner – serves the MVRT and with the LVRT opening is looking forward to it.

Tim Smith noted that there should be signage or some sort of business finder for convenience store locations, restaurants, etc. so people know where to go. Those type of directional signs are useful. There should be Missisquoi and LVRT promotional materials for both bikers and river access focused on recreation. Promoting both to expand that level of interest for people heavy into recreation.

It was noted that Northern Champlain bikeway runs part of Route 36 in Swanton.

In terms of directing users to businesses, are there thoughts on electronic guidance/website? Who maintains it? Have you seen ways to do this? Do you think people want a one stop shop?

Elisabeth suggested the QR code approach could send you to website like Chamber of commerce. Needs to be coordinated for multiple counties. Doesn't make sense for multiple apps.

Ty suggests LVRT updates on the website.

Dave Stanley noted that we do have digital map made through a grant worked on for 4 years. We were going to have trail friendly business sticker where people can see the trail logo on the door and encourage them to go in.

Does it make sense for LVRT to have something different or could we bring them together for efficiency?

MVRT currently uses Ride GPS. Still in beginning phases. Service out on the trail is a concern.

Are they paying for the MVRT page? This is free.

Are there barriers you see in your community that will keep people from using the trail. Is lack of parking an obvious barrier, either potentially or existing?

Elisabeth suggested maintenance could be a barrier. There has been some issue with maintenance of the MVRT. Ongoing maintenance of vegetation and surface could be an issue.

Is the mowing a contract on the MVRT?

Brian noted that it has been done through the state for a number of years and has been fantastic. We usually have a cutting end of June before 4th of July. This cuts poisonous parsnip so it does not spread as much. Surface coordinator who has ridden along with a VTrans representative and bikes the trail to note problems. There are red squirrel holes going down 3 feet. VTrans has done a great job maintaining the integrity of the trail.

Bill noted since I have been doing it the last few years, VTrans has been dedicated. We do not use our district forces. We deal with pre-approved contractors. Signage, notifications, they are extremely helpful so people know we are going to be mowing this week. I try to take care of all the animal holes and trees that fall. Tremendous amount of other maintenance activities besides mowing. I think since I took that over, we have improved, and we want to keep them open. Surface on MVRT that was done a few years ago and we may be looking to resurface in the future. Funding is an issue.

Ty noted that mowing twice a year is great, but it is not enough. Are they willing to work with municipalities?

There are issues around having towns doing the mowing along the trails. Something we want to have more discussions about.

There are some atv tire tracks where they have been. We will probably wait to resurface so it does not get torn up. Some municipalities have the funding to smooth the trail yearly which is a great thing.

With this management plan, these are the kind of issues we want to bring forward. LVRT will apply to another rail trail. This is the framework to have these conversations.

Heidi noted ATV use is a deterrent. Not sure what the answer is. They are out there and most behave nicely.

Kathy noted a discussion around promotion of the trail between communities – providing information about what is coming down the trail. Regarding the signage about what is and what is not allowed. There are various groups in Swanton that want to have signs and have come up with criteria. Trying to see if there is a marketing plan that each community can do.

Amy suggested that yes, it is important and that is one of the points of discussion. Individual communities that have chosen slightly different ways that are different. It needs to be consistent. That is one of the items that must be addressed. Basic trail signage more finding your way in context of the trail. Not yet at how to get into towns, but it is on the list.

Kathy noted that in regional planning the public will ask and we are educating folks on how it does have to be done.

Heidi noted roads leading to the trail are a deterrent based on speed and width of the lanes. I won't ride on a road to get to the rail trail and parking. Most people won't ride a bike to a trail.

Are there parking lots?

The one past the Abbey is often full. Ace Hardware has a parking lot. Not really any rail trail parking.

Are there planned improvements that we should be factoring?

Place: Zoom
Date: March 17, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 4

Are there community trail organizations, bike/ped improvements, sidewalks planned?

Elisabeth noted Swanton is looking at putting in a bike repair station at the trailhead on Robin Hood Drive where the trail meets the Swanton rec path and one in the village that would be separate.

Heidi noted a repair station in Highgate and bike loan program. They have a \$31,000 grant. They have bikes and they are on site. The storage shed that is part of village core is storing the bicycles. Village core redevelopment project should be noted. Bike repair station would be going up near the school. She also referenced a kayak place in Highgate Springs and noted they are becoming more bike friendly.

Suggestions of organic farm stops on a tourist loop were offered. Someone noted a possible connection to the municipal parking lot.

It would be good to have loops that tie into other historic features and loops with defined trail connections.

Concerns and issues include trail maintenance or mowing and ATV use.

Dave noted that a builder will cross the rail and build a house. Easier to pay the fine then deal with not using that lot. Twice where this has happened where they have laid a driveway onto trail. VTrans did a census of all the rail crossings that have been grandfathered in. It is also noted that farmers going underneath a bridge to access fields and changed where the stream was flowing. In that case the state had to put a culvert in. There are also instances of people developing land in the right of way.

It was asked if there are planned events that are tapped into the trail?

Heidi noted the memorial celebration in municipal park in Highgate.

Brian noted the annual car show in the park in downtown Swanton. There are bike lanes to the park. There is also a farmers market on regular basis held in the downtown and other frequent events. John Riley recreation field has numerous events- softball, little league, etc.

Kathy asked if the website will be taken over by the state with an administrator at each town so they can update in real time.

Dave noted that an open question is how to figure out how this will function. New rail trail manager position was just filled.

Amy noted how VTrans is structured and functions regarding the trails is yet to be determined. One thing that is very critical is collaboration with the towns. It is critical have the local eyes and ears on the trails. We anticipate that we will be digging deeper on this.

Dave noted a pedal to paddle event on the Missisquoi River down to Richford.

In winter VAST is critical - grooming and so much skill helping on projects.

Any other thoughts? Anything else you hope we hear today?

Amy noted that MVRT had farm crossings issue. Has that been resolved? Curious to get your reaction.

Place: Zoom
Date: March 17, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 5

Dave suggested Jim Smith who worked for VTrans inventoried all farm crossings around 1999/2000 so we knew where they were. Not so much a problem. For instance, a farmer was using the trail to get into a barn, and somebody would go discuss with farmer. That requires local eyes on the ground.

Bill has spoken with farmers and deals with encroachments. Some of the conversations have gotten better. I feel like we have made gains over the last couple of years getting people to comply. A crossing is a crossing. Still some problems and we will continue to make those gains. It is a challenge. Vermont is rural and part of the reason people love the trails is because of that. Inevitably we encounter farmers.

Amy suggested that the more the trail is used as a trail the more respect there is. More working order. Paved crossings have been implemented in some spots to improve crossings.

Heavy equipment is tough on trails. I think biggest challenge in the field is that the trail has not been used in 50 years. Once people learn the way of the trail and acknowledge what it means to the state you develop that respect. The problems get resolved over time.

Someone noted logging operations. Crossing over the corridor.

Kathy offered that she has always thought about the entire distance of the trail having a day or two a year that are committed to the entire trail and have planned events. Include our ag community and they have product they could possibly be sharing and advertising. Include farm tours. Make an effort to make LVRT day and celebrate trail and business. Clean up day too.

Elisabeth noted that one or two years ago there was a meeting with all municipalities along the trail regarding cohesive signage and messaging along the whole corridor. How do you know when you are on the trail unless it is all cohesive?

Kathy noted that with NRPC there are things we want to get back to the municipalities on. A lot of that was around the signage. Opportunity to do outreach and teaching in what those protocols will be.

Amy Adams noted with wintertime use there is a lot of usage getting in and out of areas. From experience if you are going to use the trail for an event you do need to fill out a special permit for events.

START **LVRT Stakeholder Session**



Welcome to the LVRT Management Plan Stakeholder Session for the Northwest Region!

Meeting Goal:
Gather insights, ideas and concerns regarding the long term management of the 93-mile trail system.

Purpose of the Management Plan:
- Describe a cohesive vision for the completed trail
- Identify long-range strategies for the management, maintenance, and operations of the trail
- Support opportunities for community economic development efforts along the trail and in trailside communities
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- Corridor spans across 5 counties connecting 18 towns
- Once complete, the trail will be the longest rail trail in New England



Introductions

Please introduce yourself
 • What is your name?
 • What organization do you represent?
 • What do you look forward to most regarding the completed LVRT?



Anthony Santoro	Ben Williams	Blair George	Joel Clark	Paul Blinn	Ty Chubbuck	Lee Bickel	Sam Houghton	Cathy Reynolds	Laura Long	Elizabeth Welch	Liamson Goodwin	Bill Gray
Harold Church	John Boudy	Chris Dodge	Neil O'Brien	Jeff Chubbuck	Yveson Proulx	Emily Marks	Conrad Marks	Adam Pearson	Tim Smith	Ang Adams	David Stearns	Felix Larkin

1 Most Critical Improvement

When construction on the trail is complete, what is the one project/improvement/enhancement you see as most critical to your community?

Connective	Multifunction	Open Space with Views	Paved Paths
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

2 Barrier

What do you anticipate being a barrier to your community using the trail or benefiting from users on the trail?

Lack of Parking	Accessibility (Physical, Visual, Auditory)	Seasonal Closures (Weather, Snow, Ice)	Wildlife (Deer, Moose)
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

3 Planned Improvements

Are there projects/improvements/enhancements that your community has planned for in anticipation of the trail being complete?

Trail Connections	Connective Infrastructure (Bridges, Overpasses, Tunnels)	Multifunction Open Space (Views, Recreation)	Paved Paths (Multi-Use)
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

4 Concerns & Issues

What concerns you the most about the completed trail? Are there issues you anticipate for your community?

User Conflict	ATV use on trails and adjacent roads	Impacts on local agriculture and forestry	Impacts on other trails
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

5 Programs & Events

Are there programs, educational opportunities, or events related to the trail that your community has planned for or you would like to see?

Trail	Formal Market	Multifunction Open Space (Views, Recreation)	Seasonal Closures (Weather, Snow, Ice)
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

6

Is there anything else we should know or that you wish we had asked about?

★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

Idea Prioritization

Blank area for idea prioritization.

FINISH

Please reach out to us with any Ideas, questions, or concerns.

Website: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt/>

Contact Info:
 Elisabeth Sundberg
 esundberg@vhb.com

Crowdsource Input Tool





Meeting Notes

Date: March 22, 2022

Notes Taken By: Elisabeth Sundberg

Place: Zoom

Project No.: 58600.06

Re: LVRT Management Plan Stakeholder Session Group 6

ATTENDEES:

David Saladino	Karen Sentoff	Elisabeth Sundberg
Amy Bell	Linda Martin	Gillian Sewake
Joe Kasprzak	Chad Whitehead	Randy Connelly
Casey Romero	Al Spitzer	Robert Moore
Dan Predpall	Carol Hodges	RJ Thompson
Lee Barrett		

Introductions

The group took a moment to introduce themselves, provide the group with what organization they are representing, and one thing they are excited for once the corridor is completed.

Chad Whitehead shared he is the Town Manager of St. Johnsbury.

Casey Romero shared they have been on the Trails Committee in the Town of Johnson and is very excited for the potential of the trail and how to continue to participate.

Al Spitzer shared he has worked on the trail for 12 years and would like to see it completed.

Linda Martin is the Chair of Wolcott Selectboard and is very excited. They recently bought land near the rail trail and hope to have economic development impacts on the community.

RJ Thompson Executive Director of Vermont Huts Association shared he is interested collaborating Morrisville and St. Johnsbury to create end to hut trail network and is seeking out potential hostel locations.

Joe Kasprzak is the Assistant Town Manager of St. Johnsbury and is most excited for economic and community development, healthy and happy residents

Gillian Sewake represents St. Johnsbury and is excited for people from all over the world to travel the length of the trail and experience what we have to offer in Vermont.

Carol Hodges from St. Johnsbury and represent Friends of Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. She wants to know how they can visualize what their role will be moving forward. Non-motorized trail users can put more effort into promoting the trail and towns along the trail.

Randy Connelly is from the Highgate Recreation Commission and is looking forward to a safe place for people to recreate

Lee Barrett is representing Highgate Parks and Recreation and is very excited about the connection it brings to the communities. He also shared they have secured fleet of bikes for community members to utilize.

Rob Moore represents Lamoille County Planning Commission and is excited about the economic benefits, healthy lifestyles the completed trail will provide communities.

Place: Zoom
Date: March 22, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 2

David Saladino asked them, **“When construction on the trail is complete, what is the one project/improvement/enhancement you see as most critical?”**

Gillian Sewake added that she would like to see solid mapping on digital platforms as well physical maps along the trails.

RJ Thompson added that he found strong wayfinding important.

Chad Whitehead added that maintenance is important, so things don't get overgrown. Also, to ensure it is it stays user friendly.

Carol Hodges would like to see good signage, so users know when they need to get off before the next parking.

David Saladino added that consistent mile markers along the trail is essential.

RJ Thompson added that the list of amenities, locations, restaurants is important. RJ also added to partner with private owner adjacent, hostels in downtown setting, for affordable lodging to capitalize on the traffic.

Rob Moore added that drinking water is important along with bathrooms.

RJ Thompson added pet waste management.

David Saladino asked, **“Are there projects/ improvements/enhancements that you would like to see in specific communities along the trail?”**

Linda Martin added she would like her town owned property to provide picnic tables, benches, bike racks, and trail kiosks.

Chad Whitehead in 2012 there was 4,000 ft of trail built called Two Rivers Trail Path. They have a couple projects in the works. The trail starts up at the welcome center and goes through the honking tunnel. Constructed new pavilion, water fountain, picnic tables, constructed 1,500 feet of cross county path along the river, connects down to the parking lot. Did receive funding that came from norther borders, congressionally delegated spending. They would like to continue the cross-country section along the river so you don't have to pop out. This could include river access, areas provided for art displays, make it a destination, and provide lighting along that section so it can be used into the evening hours. Railroad street still exists as a connection for those who don't mind on road biking. This connection at the end of the trail gets you into the downtown, connections to stores and amenities. We want to appeal to different types of bikers.

There are plans for a path to continue down Gore Road. Walking path that brings you to 78.

Casey Romero added that in Johnson besides their trail there is a second access west that does have some parking trailside and store across the street. Crossing with the Long Trail to get off and take the Rail Trail. Opportunities for the crossing of traffic.

Rob Moore expressed the importance of partnership and focusing on things the public would want. Overnight hiking and then connect back to the LVRT.

Casey Romero asked who to follow up with after the meeting for a way to add some things about the improvements we have already added to trail on the online map.

David asked Al Spitzer if anything was in the works for connecting your town recreation field to the trail? Is there a way to get people downtown without having people to have to go down the sidewalks?

Place: Zoom
Date: March 22, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 3

Al Spitzer added he is working LCPC but can't put a pedestrian bridge there in between the two municipal parks. He added that sidewalk improvements would eventually be coming to Railroad Street.

David Saladino asked the group, **"What do you anticipate might be a barrier to use of the trail?"**

Gillian Sewake noted some of this will be alleviated by tour operations, but transportation between the various trailheads to serve round trip travelers. St. Johnsbury and Danville to take the commuter bus. Private tour operators will spring up to do that.

RJ Thompson added that long duration visitors will need places to sleep, such as camping, huts, hostels, etc.

David Saladino asked the group, **"What do you anticipate might be a barrier to economic development associated with the trail?"**

Gillian Sewake added that staff chambers of commerce capacity is potentially a barrier.

Linda Martin added that in Wolcott there is a lack of municipal wastewater, and she sees that as the biggest barrier.

Rob Moore added that consistent maintenance across the entire length of the trail is needed.

Chad Whitehead mentions that different communities may have different needs. He also added that the trail will need sides mowed down, dog waste bags will accumulate, and this can be a challenge and there needs to be partnership with municipalities.

David Saladino added that the Management Plan is working with VTrans to develop these regulations of who do you call, how does the mowing get managed?

Someone added that safety along the trail could be a barrier and is worried for the homeless population along the trails with tent encampments – it may give folks an uneasy feeling. We want to encourage positive experiences across the entire trail.

RJ Thompson added that equitable access to the trail and that the trail should include all economic backgrounds. There should be free or affordable rentals, partnerships so everyone can access the trail.

Joe Kasprzak wants to know how to determine what types of signs are appropriate.

Dave Saladino added that it would require a permit. There needs to be some consistency and there won't be any advertising along the trail.

Amy Bell added that OBDS Signs not permitted on trail but on the connecting roadways. How do we make people aware of things off the trail is one of the things we need to refine and is a really important feature. There are some communities that have put up some signs, but we want consistent signage for communities and trail users.

David Saladino asked the group, **Are there programs, educational opportunities, or events related to the trail that your organization has planned for or you would like to see?**

Gillian Sewake added that there is a nonprofit organization that offers a bike rental program, bike library, located in downtown St. Johnsbury. Local Recreation department is doing bike clinics. Food truck pop up at their trailhead pavilion. There is a long-standing bike meet up on Tuesday evenings with one of our big local bike celebrities. Trying to connect some other low key fun rides on a regular basis. LINK is the organization, e-bike rentals.

Place: Zoom
Date: March 22, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 4

Chad Whitehead added that they have mapped out several gravel rides and there are some rides that were organized downtown in previous years. NEK Gravel.

Carol Hodges added that relay for life walking event to raise money is a once-a-year event.

Lee Barrett stated that there is a summer concert series coming together this year. Working on grant funding for a mobile stage.

Linda Martin added that they host a free community BBQ, mini municipal park, community park, benches, play games. Pop up food trucks on the weekend is something they are working on.

Rob Moore added that schools tend to use the trails, both for sports and part of the curriculum.

Linda Martin noted Wolcott has a grant to build down from the school to the trail.

Chad Whitehead shared that Get Downtown will host an art festival followed by concert, in collaboration with St. Johnsbury Commerce, Welcome Center on Railroad Street.

Gillian Sewake added that there will be bike activities in association with the event.

Casey Romero suggested that there be affordable local access, like state park passes with the library you could have a program for free bike rental. Use libraries as a network.

Gillian Sewake added that communities along the trail work with each other to learn how to benefit each other through collaborative marketing. Having the communities work with bike tour providers.



START LVRT Stakeholder Session

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- July 1, 2022 the management shifts to VTrans
- Completion of the trail Fall 2022
- Corridor spans across 5 counties connecting 18 towns
- Once complete, the trail will be the longest rail trail in New England



Introductions

Please introduce yourself

- What is your name?
- What organization do you represent?
- What do you look forward to most regarding the completed LVRT?

Chad Wilburson	Cathy Barrett - Johnson Trails Committee	Al Spitzer - Hyde Park - Grand Mountain Snowy	Linda Martin - Wiscasset	RJ Thompson - Vermont Hills	Joe Knappek - St. Johnsbury	Gilbert Swaine - St. Johnsbury CC	Carol Hodges - Friends of LVRT	Stacy Curvey - Hygate Res. Commission	Lon Bennett - Hygate Res. Dept.
Bob Moore - LCPC	Dan Prouty - Wiscasset - member, associated								

1 Most Critical Improvement

When construction on the trail is complete, what is the one project/improvement/enhancement you see as most critical?

Detritus	Tracks	Accessibility of trail			
Moving detritus and tracks	Shedding	Clear road shoulders	Clearing water	Clearing water	Clearing water
Project Management	Organize detritus tracks	Clear of obstructions	Clear and maintain	Clear and maintain	Clear and maintain
Get more participation					

2 Projects & Improvements

Are there projects/improvements/enhancements that you would like to see in specific communities along the trail?

Detritus, detritus to roadside	W. Johnson - detritus and tracks	Hygate - walking path	Wiscasset - trackbed
Accessibility	Light trails	Light trails	Light trails

3 Trail Use Barriers

What do you anticipate might be a barrier to use of the trail?

Timing	Construction	Weather	Trail quality
Timing	Construction	Weather	Trail quality

4 Economic Barriers

What do you anticipate might be a barrier to economic development associated with the trail?

Funding	Technical assistance to government/business	Self-organizing community organizations	Marketing/branding/awareness
Funding	Technical assistance to government/business	Self-organizing community organizations	Marketing/branding/awareness

5 Concerns & Issues

What concerns you the most about the completed trail? Are there issues you anticipate?

User Conflict	Accessibility	Quality of trail	Security
User Conflict	Accessibility	Quality of trail	Security

6 Programs & Events

Are there programs, educational opportunities, or events related to the trail that your organization has planned for or you would like to see?

Trail	Stamps/Merch	How do we want to be perceived?	How do we want to be perceived?
Trail	Stamps/Merch	How do we want to be perceived?	How do we want to be perceived?

7

Is there anything else we should know or that you wish we had asked about?

Accessibility	Marketing	Trail quality	Security
Accessibility	Marketing	Trail quality	Security

Idea Prioritization

FINISH

Please reach out to us with any ideas, questions, or concerns.

Website: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt/>

Contact Info:
Elisabeth Sundberg
esundberg@vnhb.com



Crowdsource Input Tool





LVRT Management Plan **Public Meeting**



Date:
March 29, 2022



Time:
6:30PM



Hybrid Meeting
(In Person or Virtual)



Project Website:
<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt>



With the anticipated completion of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail through Northern Vermont in 2022, VTrans is looking for your input on the ongoing maintenance and management of this important recreation and transportation corridor.

Please join us to help shape the vision for the 93-mile corridor and share your ideas for maintaining, enhancing, and connecting your community to this vital resource.

Requests for interpretive or translation services, assistive devices, or other accommodations should be made to Karen Sentoff at 802-497-6130 or ksentoff@vhb.com at least 3 business days prior to the meeting.

In Person Details

Location:
St. Johnsbury Welcome Center
51 Depot Square, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

For more information contact:

Amy Bell, Project Manager
802-279-0783 | amy.bell@vermont.gov

Virtual Details

Please click the link to join the webinar:

<https://tinyurl.com/4crkr7wd>

(note: if typing, all lowercase)

Or, head to <https://zoom.us/join> and enter

Webinar ID: 862 8076 3332

Passcode: 068784

Via Telephone: +1 301 715 8592



Meeting Notes

Date: March 29th, 2022

Notes Taken By: Elisabeth Sundberg

Place: St. Johnsbury Welcome Center & Zoom

Project No.: 58600.06

Re: LVRT Management Plan Public Meeting #2

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Management Plan Public Meeting #2 Summary

Welcome and Introductions

Matt Hogan started the meeting and provided an overview of how the hybrid meeting will work. Shaye Hallee opened the virtual meeting and oriented the virtual participants to the meeting. Karen Sentoff introduced herself and provided some ground rules on how to participate during the meeting, including a demonstration on the virtual polling Pollev with a practice question – what town are you from? Karen then reviewed the agenda for the evening and kicked off the welcome and introductions.

Michele Boomhower welcomed everyone and shared that it was exciting to see the construction happening along the trail on the drive up along VT Route 15. She noted that she has worked on this project for 20 years in different capacities and that in her role now as Director of Intermodal Development she works with a diverse group of folks, including with legislators. She acknowledged the \$5 million earmark from Senator Sanders for construction and the more recent \$2 million earmark, noting that they are working now on how those funds will be deployed to support the communities along the trail. She acknowledged VAST has been fundamental in bringing the project to this point. As the project steps into the next phase, she acknowledged folks coordinating how to manage and maintain this trail and others throughout Vermont, like Amy Bell, Senior Planning Coordinator focused on the Management Plan, and Bill Gray, the on the ground trail person making sure that when there is a washout that it gets addressed. She acknowledged they are looking to replicate this effort across the State.

Michele introduced Jackie Cassino, the new VTrans Rail Trail Manager. Jackie noted that it felt like coming back home to VTrans to work with the rail team after a short time working with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. She noted that she lived in Lamoille County and worked there for many years, witnessing excitement build for what is happening with the LVRT. It is an exciting time for towns, community members, visitors coming to check it out, and outdoor recreation along the trail.

Karen acknowledged the rest of the project and tech team supporting the meeting and the Stakeholder Group that has helped shepherd this management plan development process. She noted that the management plan development was happening now in anticipation of the trial completion later this year. VAST has been managing the corridor and has a management plan that was adopted in 2016. The management plan currently in development looks to the next chapter of this trail, with VTrans taking over the management role on July 1st. A management plan for the entire, 93-mile corridor looks different than for the existing segments. The plan will identify the long-range strategies for the management, maintenance, and operations of the trail. It will also identify ways to support community economic development efforts along the LVRT and provide a model management plan framework for the other rail trails in Vermont.

Karen reviewed the project schedule, noting that we are in the middle of the process. The first public meeting was in Lamoille County, the second public meeting was held here in the northeast at the eastern terminus of the trail, and the third public meeting will be held in the northwest near the western terminus. Currently, the project is in the gap analysis and needs assessment stage of the development process.

Construction Update

Chris Hunt provided a construction update. He noted it was a busy time for construction. There are approximately 44.4 miles of trail completed since 2014, including a small section completed in the Town of Hardwick. The priority bridge projects are happening. Looking at the construction schedule, the remaining segments of trail will be completed between now and the end of the year. This provides a sense of how busy construction this season will be to get to our goal. The projects underway include LVRT(10) – Bridges, LVRT(11) – Sheldon Junction to Cambridge, LVRT(12) – Morrisville to Hardwick, LVRT(13) – Hardwick to West Danville. If you drive along VT 15 you will see these projects are under active construction – all the contractors are ready to get to work. Following completion of construction, there

will be a need for a cohesive set of signs across the entire trail, so in addition to the projects underway, LVRT(14) – Sign Project is in development. Looking at other statewide signs we coordinated with stakeholders to see how people will find mile markers, town markers, etc. The sign project does not include traffic control, signs pointing users to individual businesses, services or attractions, or interpretive signs. The expected construction start for the Sign Project will be Spring 2023.

Summary of Progress to Date

Karen provided a review of the developments since the first public meeting. An existing conditions assessment was assembled, including historic context, corridor inventory, existing LVRT management overview, existing document review to align with what folks are doing at the regional and municipal levels, and a best practice review to understand best practices for trail management, maintenance, and spurring economic development, community connections, and revitalization. She summarized the stakeholder outreach and public input that has been ongoing for the effort, including the first public meeting, stakeholder interviews, stakeholder group meetings, and the website and crowdsource webmap.

Karen reviewed the draft vision and goals for the trail. The vision and goals are the guiding principles for the corridor and how it will be managed into the future. She noted the visioning exercise from the first public meeting where we asked participants for key words or phrases regarding the LVRT and those words and phrases was used to craft the vision statement. Input from the public outreach process was used to define the goals and will help to guide the prioritization of needs.

Draft Vision Statement

The Vision for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is a year-round, multiuse recreation and alternative transportation corridor that is well-maintained and supports economic vitality, fosters community connections, and promotes healthy lifestyles across scenic, northern Vermont.

Karen asked for reactions and feedback to the vision statement. Many folks in person gave the thumbs up. The virtual participants also gave some thumbs up. Comments included: “really great vision statement” and “I like that alternative transportation corridor is in there.”

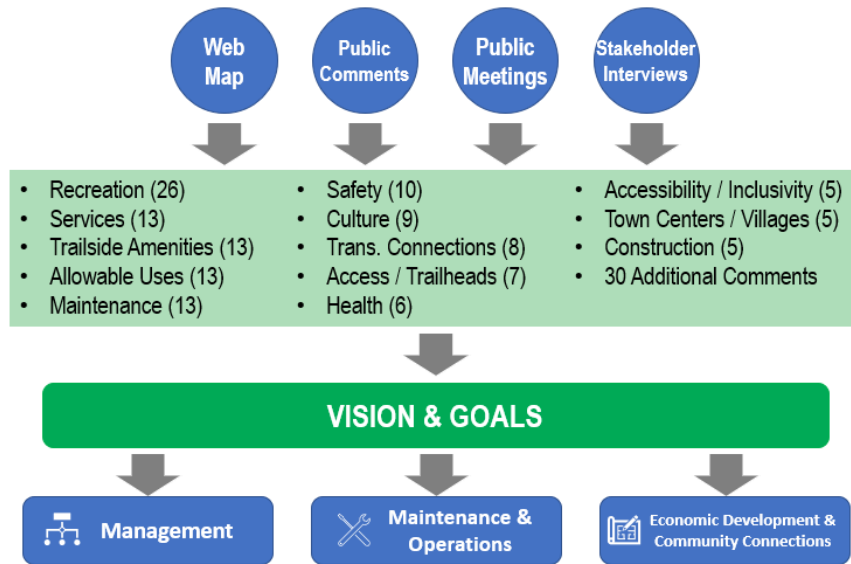
Draft Goals

- *Support the economic vitality of northern Vermont communities*
- *Cultivate community and culture along the trail and in trailside communities*
- *Promote healthy and connected communities*
- *Preserve the corridor and maintain trail condition*
- *Establish a well-managed trail system*

Karen asked for reactions and feedback on the overarching draft goals. Helen Beattie asked if Vermont history could be highlighted in the goals. Karen noted that under the goal to cultivate community and culture there is an objective to promote history of the corridor. Karen encouraged folks to go to the website and share any other thoughts or comments on the goals after the meeting.

Management Plan Development

Dave Saladino described the approach the project team is taking in developing the management plan. He noted that all the comments received have been categorized. The next step is to screen those categorized comments through the vision and goals. Comments or topics that align with vision and goals move to one of the three buckets: management, maintenance and operations, or economic development and community connections.

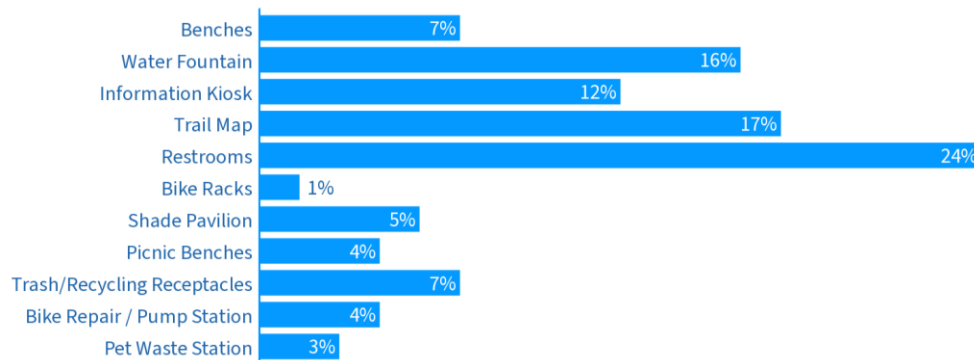


As management of the trail system moves over to VTrans under Jackie Cassino leadership, a new structure for how the trail is managed and maintained will need to be defined. Within the management chapter, we will define the roles and responsibilities, how to plan and budget for the trail, the process for right-of-way use agreements and special use permits, and allowable uses and resolving user conflicts. Maintenance and operations covers asset condition assessments, maintenance plans, and trail access points and amenities.

For trail access, the aim will be to have some consistency at trailheads along the trail. Dave asked **what basic amenities do you hope to see at a formal LVRT access point or trailhead?** In order to get a sense of prioritization, the PolleEV question asked for participants to select their top three choices.

The top responses were restrooms, trail map, water fountain, and information kiosk (see full PolleEV responses below).

What basic amenities do you hope to see at a formal LVRT access point or trailhead? Please choose your top 3.



Place: St. Johnsbury Welcome Center & Zoom
Date: March 29th, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 4

Meeting Notes

Dave asked **what additional amenities would you like to see at more significant access points and trail junctions?** This was an open ended PolLEV question looking beyond the amenities that were listed for the first question.

Gillian Sewake suggested public art. That idea was seconded by another participant.

Ideas coming through the PolLEV included parking, wifi access (2), ice cream (2), electric vehicle and bike charging stations (4), local food and drink vendors (3), public art (3), playground structures or kids play areas (2), picnic tables and picnic areas (4), pump track, resting spots, bike repair stations (2), snowshoe and ski rentals, bike rentals, pavilions or shade structures, list of community amenities/local businesses/cultural resources with information and distance from trailhead (2), historic and natural area descriptions (2), snack machines, and trail counters.

Helen Beattie asked who will be building and managing these resources? Dave responded that in the railroad right of way any amenities would require agreements with VTrans and any amenities or improvements outside the right of way communities could contribute.

Dave summarized that for the economic development and community connections bucket, some of the topics include trailheads and trail access points, connecting paths/sidewalks/trails, wayfinding, trip planning and information sharing through a website or mobile app, and events and programming. He described the types of community connections to the trail. There are 20 Village Centers or Downtown Districts along the LVRT. The types of connections to the trail vary, with the trail passing directly through some villages/downtowns (e.g. West Danville), within ½ mile of some villages/downtowns (e.g. Johnson), or within 2 miles of some villages/downtowns (e.g. Fairfield). There may be different treatments based on the distance from the trail.

Dave asked when thinking about community connections to the LVRT, **what barriers exist to getting users into trail towns?** This was an open-ended PolLEV question.

Responses included safety concerns, lack of signage (2), lack of knowledge of available amenities/businesses (2), parking for snowmobile trailers and trucks, bike parking/racks/locks in downtown areas (3), lack of awareness of opportunities and wayfinding (3), bike routes marked on streets/roads, lack of safe routes/connections between trail and village (2), lack of connector sidewalks/paths/adequate shoulders, lack of feeder/spur trails, rivers and busy roads (opportunities for bike/ped bridges), parking and routes for snowmobiles, lack of attractions or amenities in towns, and political inertia. Specific examples were offered for Hardwick where there are busy streets to get to village amenities and Danville where projects to improve connections (e.g. construct sidewalk) between the trail and village center were cost prohibitive. One participant offered that a potential barrier to access is a safe place to lock bikes or park snowmobiles.

Helen Beattie asked how wide the right of way is? Dave responded that it varies along the length of corridor and Chris noted that VTrans acquired the right of way that was established by the rail line when it was first put in. There is no standard width and it generally depends on the extent of side slopes. You can get a sense of the rail right of way and where it abuts different properties through the VTrans right of way viewer.

Dave asked **are there specific trail connections or access points that would benefit from a concept sketch?** He noted that there is an opportunity to develop a few concept sketches for improving these gaps in trail to community connections and estimate what the cost would be to bridge that gap. One example location provided was Railroad Street connecting the trail into Johnson. He asked folks to name the town and what that connection or location where it would be helpful to sketch out some potential solutions.

Responses included snowmobile parking within walking distance to St. Johnsbury and Hardwick, the trail crossing on Church Street in East Hardwick, switching LVRT and Route 2 in West Danville for safety, Highgate Ice Arena, the Danville Train Station and corridor improvements connecting to village center, Greensboro Bend was mentioned twice (noting the community is working on concepts and that there are complicated property ownership issues for the old station), identifying parking locations connecting directly or indirectly to the trail, the connection between the trailhead in St. Johnsbury and the Welcome Center, and the LVRT/MVRT trail junction in Sheldon.

Place: St. Johnsbury Welcome Center & Zoom
Date: March 29th, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 5

Meeting Notes

Gillian Sewake suggested an area that would benefit from a concept sketch would be connections to get people from the trail corridor to our welcome center in St. Johnsbury.

Dave asked **what design features can be used to draw users into trail towns?**

One idea that was offered was some sort of stamp book. Dave noted that in the Upper Valley, the Valley Quest is a great program that encourages people to find their way at each area along the trail. Other ideas offered by participants included community bulletin/amenity boards (3), beer/pubs/breweries with directory/signage (5), lodging/camping options (2), QR code and notice of current events, consistent/colorful/informational signs for attractions/amenities/restaurants/historic sites (5), trail kiosks (2), guidance for other trails or bike loops accessed from the LVRT, increase the number of access points with small parking areas that would bring people into areas for shorter rides, safe paths for bikes and pedestrians with list of services in town, volunteers stationed at trailheads on weekends, engage AmeriCorps volunteers, gelato pop up shop, restaurants that are bike friendly (e.g. provide bike parking), help with comprehensive marketing/communications plan, public art by local artists, interactive town maps (2), updated app or online trip planning tool with attractions/services/businesses (3). One specific example was offered to create a safe way to cross Route 2 to access the Red Barn Brewery. Another example was offered for a business directory with information at trail kiosks and interactive maps like those being developed for the MVRT. Dave noted that overall, the aim is to get people excited and go visit those communities along the trail.

Dave summarized the approach for the development of the management plan, where we will be taking those recommendations in each of the management, maintenance/operations, and economic development/community development buckets and describe how to put those into action. The implementation plan will articulate who is responsible, who are the partners, what are the costs, etc. and that will guide the VTrans team as the trail moves into VTrans control.

Dave described the next steps for the management plan development effort. With the gap analysis and needs assessment wrapping up in April and development of the recommendations and implementation plan in May, we will be back for a final public meeting hosted in the northwest region in early June and deliver the final management plan in July. Dave then opened it up for any general questions, comments, or feedback.

A participant from Danville offered that they are happy to hear that consistency along the trail regarding look and feel was a priority. They noted that towns along existing segments of trail have already made a big investment and towns are willing to make more investment but need some guidance as to what that consistent branding and other features should be.

Another participant commented that with a greater number of users and many different types of uses there needs to be guidance on the flow of traffic along the trail. Signage is needed to inform users who has the right of way and who is expected to yield, spelling out the appropriate trail etiquette.

Jon Kaplan suggested checking out the website for the Empire State trail.

Marcy Larrabee asked about whether there might be grant money for emergency services and response to the trail. Dave offered that this topic area regarding access to the trail for emergency services has come up and will be considered as part of the management plan.

One participant asked whether there has been any consideration for a couple of non-motorized days per week in the winter season. Dave responded that thus far there has not been discussion of this concept.

Another participant asked how landowner issues will be addressed. Dave offered that the process for handling these issues will be addressed in the management plan and Jackie Cassino will likely be the point of contact for directing these types of issues and other comments and concerns to the appropriate resources within VTrans.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy asked whether it is possible to get trail user counts this spring so that when the trail construction is complete, we can see what the increase in trail use has been? Dave responded that this would provide an interesting data point but would not necessarily be an apples-to-apples comparison. There has been some discussion on trail counters along the trail. Bill Gray offered that they have installed trail counters on the MVRT and monitor any increases or decreases in activity with those counters. He suspects that as the LVRT gets developed they will install counters and monitor those sites as well.

A participant asked how community groups should best coordinate with planning efforts? Dave suggested that Jackie Cassino will be the point person for this after July 1st, and in the interim reaching out to anyone on the panel today and/or the regional planning commissions for coordination.

Paul Weaver noted safety concerns at the Route 2 crossing in Danville near Larrabee's. He noted there are other crossings that have raised concerns for others, particularly where vehicle speeds are high. Dave noted that the team is aware of these concerns and looking in to some of those crossings in a bit more detail. Paul suggested installing flashing crossing signs at those locations.

One participant asked about the what the policies would be for submitting public art proposals along the rail trail. Dave noted that the team will be discussing this and similar topics over the next couple of weeks with folks within VTrans and documenting the appropriate processes for these types of programs. Jackie noted that there is a recently developed [policy document](#) for public art proposals on state transportation facilities that was developed in coordination with the Vermont Arts Council and that she is a good point of contact for those inquiries.

A participant asked if there will be opportunity for historical markers or if that is still in the planning phase? Bill Gray offered that there will be historical markers and that they are actively working with preservation on historical marking along the trail.

One question raised was whether we will be generating a communications plan to inform local efforts. Dave offered that one of the key roles that the VTrans rail trail manager and other VTrans staff will serve is to establish that open communication with trailside communities and stakeholders along the corridor.

Another question asked was whether there was a plan for funding beyond the appropriations. Dave offered that general transportation funds, likely some mix of federal and state dollars, will be used for ongoing maintenance. Federal Appropriations will likely go to one-time enhancements along the trail rather than ongoing maintenance.

Dave wrapped up the meeting thanking everyone for their participation and a reminder to visit the [website](#) and provide comments via the [Crowdsourcing Input Tool](#).

Project Team Attendees

Amy Bell, VTrans Project Manager
Chris Hunt, VTrans Construction Deputy Project Manager
Michele Boomhower, VTrans Director of Policy, Planning, and Intermodal Development
Jacqui DeMent, VTrans Deputy Project Manager (virtual)
Jackie Cassino, VTrans Rail Trail Manager
David Saladino, Project Manager with VHB (virtual)
Karen Sentoff, VHB
Matt Hogan, VHB
Shaye Hallee, VHB (virtual)
Elisabeth Sundberg, VHB

Place: St. Johnsbury Welcome Center & Zoom
Date: March 29th, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 7

Meeting Notes

Attendees

Jen Grant	Norma
Kate Whitehead	Paul Weaver
William Gray, VTrans	Jason Bahner
Gillian Sewake	Chesarek
Patty Conly	Ridgeline Outdoor Collective
P. Barra	Brendan
Bruce Markwell	Kristina Michelsen
Molly Markwell	Dean Pierce Northwest RPC
Laural Ruggles	Branden Roberts
Conrad Meadows	
Andrea Otto	
Robert Moore	
Northern Forest Center	
Tyrell Cirilo	
Mark FitzGerald	
Marcel Carrier	
Bethany Remmers	
SW Hallee	
Shaye	
Roger Fox	
Howard Romero	
Helen Beattie	
Ken Linsley	
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy – Tom Sexton	
Finn	
Jim Brown St. J. Planning Commission	
Roger Fox	
Leslie Smith	
Ingrid	
Kingdom Access	
David Gross	
Anonymous	
Irene Nagle NVDA	
Marcy Larrabee	
Jon Kaplan - VT Agency of Transportation	
Janice Gearhart	
Amy Adams	
Mike Burns	
Lois Parmelee	
Peter	
Ken Brown	
Richard	
Kellie Merrell	
Brian Gilmartin	
Casey Romero	
Andrew Luneau	



Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Management Plan

Public Meeting #2
March 29th, 2022



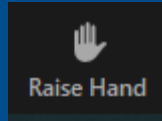
In Person Meeting Participation

1. Reminder that the meeting is being recorded.
2. If you would like to speak, please use the microphone to provide comment or ask a question.



Virtual Meeting Participation

1. Attendees are muted by default.
2. If you'd like to speak, please click or tap the "Raise Hand" button at the bottom of your screen and wait to be called on. Those dialing in by telephone can raise their hand by dialing *9.



Connecting by
Phone?



*9 to raise hand

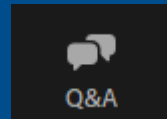
3. After you've been called on, click or tap the "Unmute" button to speak. Those dialing in by phone can unmute by dialing *6.



*6 to unmute



4. If you'd like to write in a question or comment instead, please click or tap the Q&A button to submit your question.



Polling Participation

1. To join the polling
pollev.com/vhbpolls501
2. Text VHBPOLLS501 to 22333



🌐 When poll is active, respond at pollev.com/vhbpolls501

📧 Text **VHBPOLLS501** to **22333** once to join

What town are you from?

St. Johnsbury
Danville
Walden
Cabot
Stannard
Greensboro
Hardwick
Wolcott
Hyde Park
Morristown
Johnson
Cambridge
Fletcher
Bakersfield
Fairfield
Sheldon
Highgate
Swanton
Other



Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- LVRT Construction Update
- Stakeholder Outreach & Input
- Draft Vision & Goals
- Development of the Management Plan
- Next Steps

Welcome & Introductions





Management Plan Introductions

■ Project Team

- **Amy Bell** | VTrans Project Manager
- **Jacqui DeMent** | VTrans
- **David Saladino** | VHB
- **Karen Sentoff** | VHB
- **Elisabeth Sundberg** | VHB

■ VTrans Rail Trail Manager

- **Jackie Cassino**

■ Stakeholder Group

- **Michele Boomhower** | VTrans Director of Policy & Planning
- **Jon Kaplan** | VTrans Bicycle & Pedestrian Program Manager
- **Joel Perrigo** | VTrans LVRT Construction Project Manager
- **Mark Fitzgerald** | VTrans Rail Property Management Section Chief
- **Ken Brown** | Vermont Association of Snow Travelers
- **Dan Delabruere** | VTrans Rail & Aviation Bureau Director
- **Nate Formalarie** | Department of Tourism and Marketing
- **Rob Moore** | Lamoille County Planning Commission
- **David Snedeker** | Northeastern Vermont Development Association
- **Bethany Remmers** | Northwest Regional Planning Commission
- **Nancy Banks / Carol Hodges** | Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail



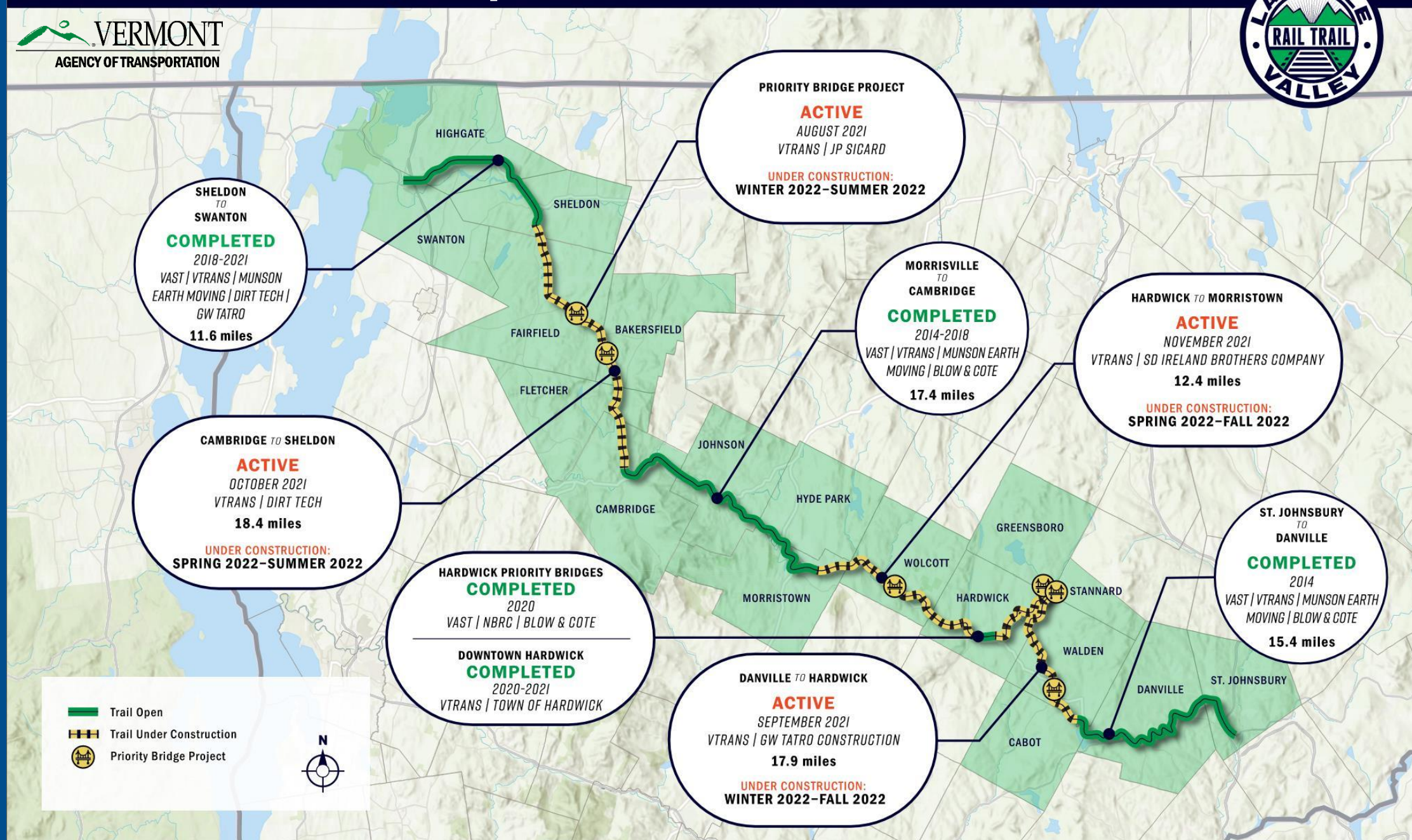
LVRT Management Plan

- Trail Completion in Fall of 2022
- Existing VAST Management Plan adopted in 2016
- Management responsibilities shifting from VAST to VTrans on July 1, 2022
- Management Plan needed to:
 1. Describe a cohesive vision for the completed trail
 2. Identify long-range strategies for the management, maintenance, and operations of the trail
 3. Support opportunities for community economic development efforts along the LVRT
 4. Provide a model Management Plan framework for the management of other rail trails in Vermont

Construction Update



Trail Construction Update



SHELDON TO SWANTON
COMPLETED
 2018-2021
 VAST | VTRANS | MUNSON
 EARTH MOVING | DIRT TECH |
 GW TATRO
11.6 miles

PRIORITY BRIDGE PROJECT
ACTIVE
 AUGUST 2021
 VTRANS | JP SICARD
UNDER CONSTRUCTION:
 WINTER 2022-SUMMER 2022

MORRISVILLE TO CAMBRIDGE
COMPLETED
 2014-2018
 VAST | VTRANS | MUNSON EARTH
 MOVING | BLOW & COTE
17.4 miles

HARDWICK TO MORRISTOWN
ACTIVE
 NOVEMBER 2021
 VTRANS | SD IRELAND BROTHERS COMPANY
12.4 miles
UNDER CONSTRUCTION:
 SPRING 2022-FALL 2022

CAMBRIDGE TO SHELDON
ACTIVE
 OCTOBER 2021
 VTRANS | DIRT TECH
18.4 miles
UNDER CONSTRUCTION:
 SPRING 2022-SUMMER 2022

ST. JOHNSBURY TO DANVILLE
COMPLETED
 2014
 VAST | VTRANS | MUNSON EARTH
 MOVING | BLOW & COTE
15.4 miles

HARDWICK PRIORITY BRIDGES
COMPLETED
 2020
 VAST | NBRC | BLOW & COTE

DOWNTOWN HARDWICK
COMPLETED
 2020-2021
 VTRANS | TOWN OF HARDWICK

DANVILLE TO HARDWICK
ACTIVE
 SEPTEMBER 2021
 VTRANS | GW TATRO CONSTRUCTION
17.9 miles
UNDER CONSTRUCTION:
 WINTER 2022-FALL 2022

- Trail Open
- Trail Under Construction
- Priority Bridge Project



Trail Construction Update

Projects-Segments	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
St. Johnsbury TO Danville 15.4 MILES	Completed by VAST/VTrans Munson Earth Moving Blow & Cote								
Danville TO Hardwick 17.9 MILES							Awarded: GW Tatro Construction, September '21 Under Construction	ACTIVE VTrans	
Hardwick TO Morristown 12.4 MILES							Awarded: SD Ireland, November '21 Under Construction	ACTIVE VTrans	
Morristown TO Cambridge 17.4 MILES			Completed by VAST/VTrans Munson Earth Moving Blow & Cote						
Cambridge TO Sheldon 18.4 MILES							Awarded: Dirt Tech Company, October '21 Under Construction	ACTIVE VTrans	
Sheldon TO Sheldon Junction 1.5 MILES					Completed by VAST/VTrans Munson Earth Moving				
Sheldon Junction TO Highgate 6.2 MILES							Completed by VAST/VTrans Dirt Tech		
Highgate TO Swanton 3.9 MILES							Completed by VAST/VTrans GW Tatro		
Priority Bridges Project							Awarded: JP Sicard, August '21 Under Construction	ACTIVE VTrans	



Trail Construction Update



LVRT(10) – Bridge project; Contract awarded to J. P. Sicard, Inc. Construction contract amount: \$3,472,258.50. Completion date August 31, 2022.

LVRT(11) – Sheldon Jct. to Cambridge; Contract awarded to Dirt Tech Company, LLC. Construction contract amount: \$2,476,651.15. Completion date November 12, 2022.

LVRT(12) – Morrisville to Hardwick; Contract awarded to S. D. Ireland Construction. Construction contract amount: \$6,986,878.50. Completion date November 10, 2022.

LVRT(13) – Hardwick to West Danville (Joes Pond); Contract Awarded to G. W. Tatro Construction, Inc. Construction contract amount: \$2,254,046.00. Completion date November 12, 2022



What it IS



- Review of best practices from other trail systems throughout the country.
- Recommendations for a cohesive set of off-facility signs including how to find the trail from the State Highway and Local Roads and on-trail signs including mile markers, town lines, and geographic destinations.
- Solicitation of input from RPC's, VAST, VTrans and other important stakeholders.
- Development of plans, specifications and an estimate for this project be bid



What it is **NOT**

- Temporary traffic control during construction
- Signs pointing users to individual businesses, services or attractions.
- Interpretive signage detailing features of historic or environmental significance along the trail.





Timeline

- Complete review, outreach and development of plans, specifications and estimate Fall of 2022.
- Bid for construction Winter 2022/Spring 2023.
- Construction begins Spring 2023.

Existing Conditions





Existing Conditions Assessment

- Historic Context
- Corridor Inventory
- LVRT Management Overview
- Existing Document Review
- Funding Sources
- Best Practices Review
 - Trail Management
 - Maintenance & Operations
 - Economic Development

2

DRAFT Existing Conditions

The Existing Conditions section summarizes the current state of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) providing background on the history of the corridor, a brief inventory of the corridor assets and features, a summary of the previous management structure, a review of relevant plans and policies, and existing and potential funding sources.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The LVRT has a unique history and has changed significantly since its original development in 1877. A brief history of the trail as an operational railroad transporting freight and passengers, the path taken to transition the corridor to a rail trail, and the trail today as it connects with local communities are summarized below.

Railroad History

The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail occupies the former railroad corridor from St. Johnsbury to Swanton. The initial development of the railroad was championed by Horace Fairbanks, one of Vermont's wealthiest citizens, who developed an interest in railroads and proposed the line as an attempt to capitalize on commercial development that neighboring railways were bringing into the area. Contracts were secured by December of 1869 and construction was completed by June 1877. The line was originally known as the Vermont Division of the Portland & Ogdensburg Railroad which connected Portland, Maine with Ogdensburg, New York and points west. There was also a connection to Burlington along the Burlington and Lamoille railroad at Cambridge Junction. Over the years, the railroad operated under various management and names. In 1880, the railroad faced financial struggles and the line was reorganized as the St. Johnsbury and Lake Champlain Railroad (St. J & L.C.). In 1892, a spur line called the Granite Branch was extended from Hardwick to Woodbury to serve the granite industry in that town.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, freight and local passenger service sustained the rail line. Freight included asbestos, limestone, gravel, grain feed, lumber, and Christmas trees. Refrigerated rail cars allowed for the transport of milk and other dairy products but was not enough to make the line profitable. In the early decades, the line also transported passengers

Stakeholder Outreach & Input







Public Input to Date

- Public Meeting #1 | January 25, 2022
- Stakeholder Group Interviews (5) | February – March 2022
- Stakeholder Committee | March 4, 2022
- Website & Web Map | Ongoing



Stakeholder Sessions

- 5 Groups
- February – March 2022
 - Northeast Region
 - Lamoille County Region
 - Northwest Region
 - Outdoor Recreation and Transportation Organizations & Businesses
 - Open Session

START LVRT Stakeholder Session


Welcome to the LVRT Management Plan Stakeholder Session for the Northeast Region!

Meeting Goal:
Gather insights, ideas and concerns regarding the long term management of the 93-mile trail system.

Purpose of the Management Plan:
- Describe a cohesive vision for the completed trail
- Identify long-range strategies for the management, maintenance, and operations of the trail
- Support opportunities for community economic development efforts along the trail and in trailside communities
- Provide a framework for management of other rail trails in Vermont

Background

- Railroad built in 1877
- Railbanking approved in 2004
- VAST began rehabilitation of the corridor in 2006
- 2013-2018 VAST completed 33 miles of trail
- In 2018 VTrans assumed responsibility for construction of remaining segments
- July 1, 2022 the management shifts to VTrans
- Completion of the trail Fall 2022
- Corridor spans across 5 counties connecting 18 towns
- Once complete, the trail will be the longest rail trail in New England



Introductions

Please introduce yourself

- What is your name?
- What organization do you represent?
- What do you look forward to most regarding the completed LVRT?

David Smedeker Executive Director NVDA	Eric Benick Hardwick Selectboard Recreation Committee	Geoff Seneker Hardwick Community Development Coordinator	Dan Priddy Greensboro Planning Commission	Randolph Wilson Walden Selectboard	Ken Lindsey Danville Selectboard	Senator Jane Kitchel NVDA Board
Chad Whitehead St. Johnsbury Town Manager	Joe Kasprzak St. Johnsbury Asst. Town Manager	Joe Fin St. Johnsbury Academy Director of VT Chamber of Commerce	Marie Rosemond Castell Director/Head of VT Chamber of Commerce	Gillian Seneker St. Johnsbury Downtown Coordinator	Shirley McCann Hardwick Director of Recreation	David Upson Hardwick Town Manager

1 When construction on the trail is complete, what is the one project improvement/enhancement you see as most critical to your community?

2 What do you anticipate being a barrier to your community using the trail or benefiting from users on the trail?

3 Are there projects/improvements/enhancements that your community has planned for in anticipation of the trail being complete?

4 What concerns you the most about the completed trail? Are there issues you anticipate for your community?

5 Are there programs, educational opportunities, or events related to the trail that your community has planned for or you would like to see?

6 Is there anything else we should know or that you wish we had asked about?


Idea Prioritization

FINISH

Please reach out to us with any ideas, questions, or concerns.

Website: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt/>

Contact Info:
Elisabeth Sundberg
esundberg@vth.com





Crowdsource Input Tool

VERMONT AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION LVRT Issues & Opportunities Feedback Sign In ?

LVRT Comments

+ Add Comment

With a rail trail of this length it will be a desti...	6♥
It might be a good idea to stress the opportu...	4♥
The Sheldon junction connecting the MVRT a...	4♥
Ongoing efforts to control invasive Japanese...	3♥
With all the varied users, it makes sense for ...	2♥
Public Bicycle Repair Station	1♥
Highly suggest the trail be paved because it ...	1♥
It would be wonderful to connect this to the ...	1♥
Add signage for Cambridge Greenway	0♥
Informal Parking- Approx. 6 spots	0♥
Formal Parking- Approx 50 spots	0♥
Possible site for restored bridge to connect L...	0♥

Draft Vision & Goals





Relationship of Vision, Goals, & Objectives

Vision: The *vision* is a concise statement that paints a picture of the desired future for the trail.

Goals: The *goals* support the vision and lay out desired long-range outcomes to be achieved by the plan.

Objective: The *objectives* are defined outcomes that support their respective goal.

Vision: The Vision for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is a year-round, well-maintained, multiuse recreation and alternative transportation corridor that supports economic vitality, fosters community connections, and promotes healthy lifestyles across scenic, northern Vermont.

Goal: Support the economic vitality of northern Vermont communities

Goal 2

Objective: Promote LVRT locally and regionally to draw visitors to the trail and traiside communities

Objective 2

Objective 1

Objective 2

Strategy: Develop regional marketing package targeting out of state visitors

Strategy/Action 1.2



DRAFT Vision Statement

The Vision for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is a year-round, multiuse recreation and alternative transportation corridor that is well-maintained and supports economic vitality, fosters community connections, and promotes healthy lifestyles across scenic, northern Vermont.





DRAFT Goals



Support the economic vitality of northern Vermont communities

Promote LVRT locally and regionally to draw visitors to the trail and trailside communities

Improve connections to villages and town centers to encourage exploration of trailside communities

Complement existing economic development plans in trailside communities



Cultivate community and culture along the trail and in trailside communities

Foster trail stewardship opportunities to promote sense of community pride

Encourage inclusive and respectful trail use

Promote rural heritage, history, and educational programming



Promote healthy and connected communities

Encourage healthy and active lifestyles

Provide meaningful opportunities for connection with the scenic, natural, and agricultural landscape

Promote development and improve connections to recreational opportunities proximate to the LVRT

Improve connections to alternative transportation networks and trail systems



Preserve the corridor and maintain trail condition

Provide for routine asset condition assessment, maintenance, and preservation activities

Support well-maintained facilities for health and safety

Provide convenient trail access points along the LVRT with clear directional signage and well-maintained parking areas



Establish a well-managed trail system

Support and coordinate proactive trail management, maintenance, and operations activities

Identify stable sources of funding for management, maintenance, operations, enhancements, and programming

Development of the Management Plan



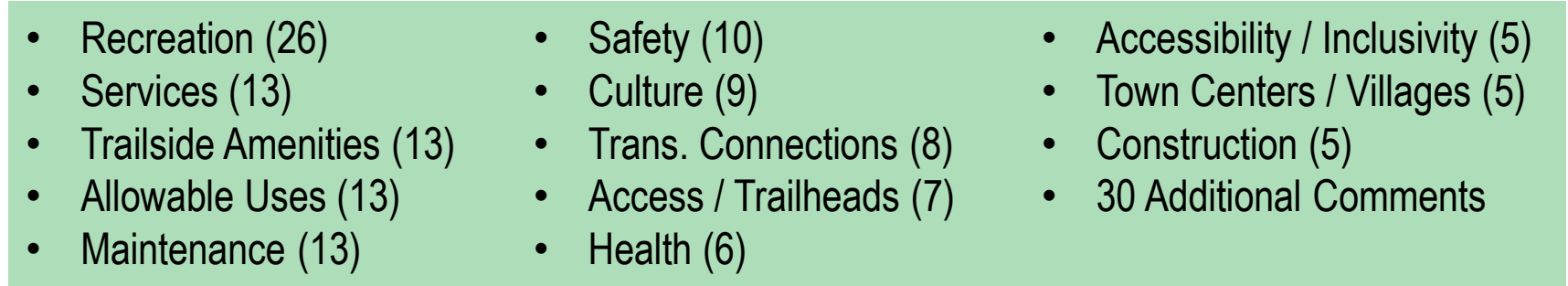


Development of the Management Plan

1. Stakeholder Input



2. Summarize Input by Categories



3. Screen Ideas through Vision & Goals



4. Develop Recommendations





Management

- Define Roles & Responsibilities
- Policies and Procedures
 - Planning & Budgeting
 - Right-of-Way Use Agreements
 - Special Uses & Permits
 - Allowable Uses & User Conflicts
- Coordination of Activities & Personnel
- Coordination with municipalities, trail and volunteer organizations, RPCs, contractors, and many others.

Maintenance & Operations

- Asset Condition Assessments
 - Frequency of asset inspection & routine maintenance
- Maintenance Plan
 - Seasonal Maintenance & Operations
 - Example: Mowing, tree clearing, surface management, grooming
 - Special Projects
 - Example: Surface management, bridge/culvert repairs, trail enhancements
- Trail Access, Trailheads, Trailside Amenities



Maintenance & Operations

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 - Special Projects
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- Trail Access, Trailheads, Trailside Amenities



Trail Access

- What **basic amenities** do you hope to see at a formal LVRT access point or trailhead?
- What additional amenities would you like to see at more significant access points and trail junctions?



Polling Participation

1. To join the polling
pollev.com/vhbpolls501
2. Text VHBPOLLS501 to 22333



🌐 When poll is active, respond at pollev.com/vhbpolls501

📧 Text **VHBPOLLS501** to **22333** once to join

What basic amenities do you hope to see at a formal LVRT access point or trailhead? Please choose your top 3.

Benches

Water Fountain

Information Kiosk

Trail Map

Restrooms

Bike Racks

Shade Pavilion

Picnic Benches

Trash/Recycling Receptacles

Bike Repair / Pump Station

Pet Waste Station



Trail Access

- What basic amenities do you hope to see at a formal LVRT access point or trailhead?
- What **additional amenities** would you like to see at more significant access points and trail junctions?



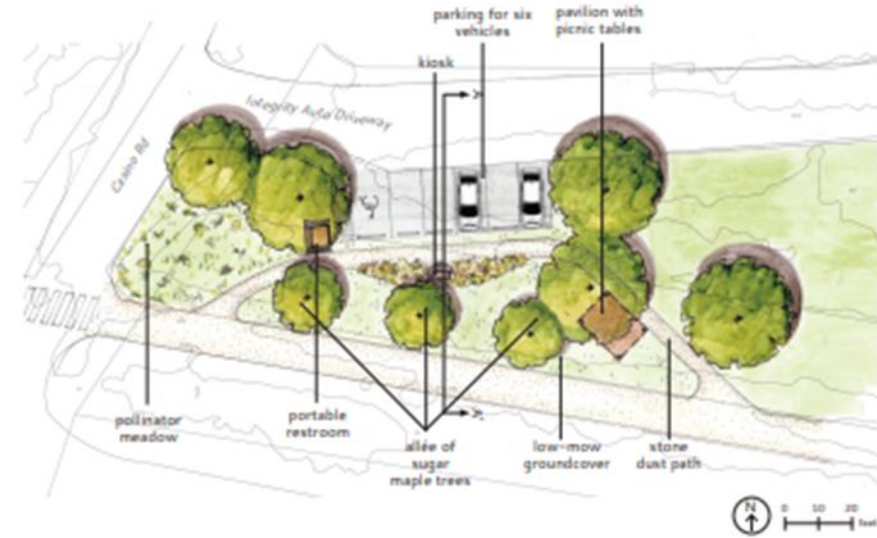


What additional amenities would you like to see at more significant access points and trail junctions?



Economic Development & Community Connections

- Community Connections
 - Trailheads & Trail Access Points
 - Connecting Paths, Sidewalks, Trails
 - Wayfinding
- Trip Planning & Information Sharing
 - LVRT Website
 - Mobile Apps
- Events & Programming





Economic Development & Community Connections

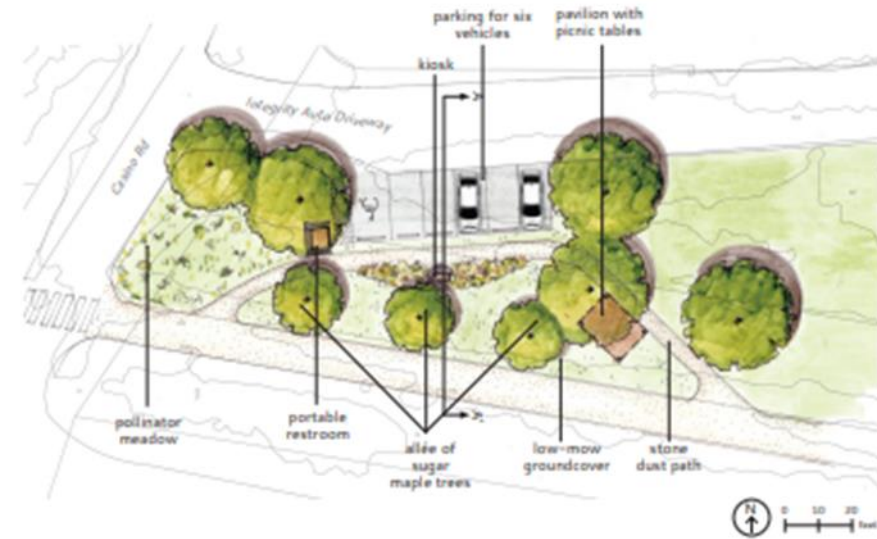
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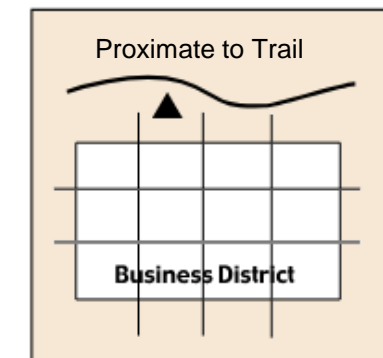
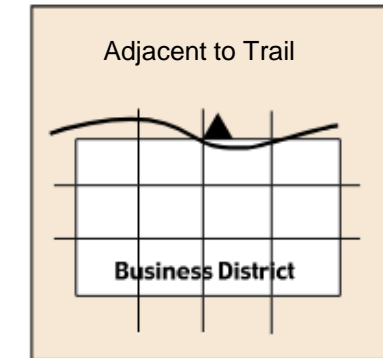
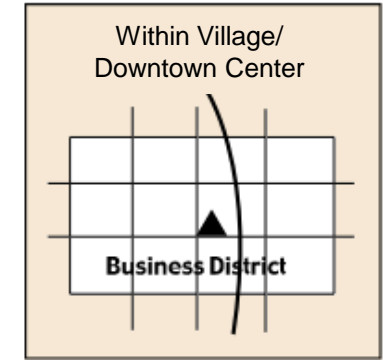
Events & Programming





Community Connections

- 20 Village Centers or Downtown Districts along the LVRT
 - **Within Village/Downtown Center:** Trail passes directly through village/downtown center (*Sheldon, Greensboro Bend, West Danville*)
 - **Adjacent to Trail:** Trail passes within ½ mile of village/downtown center (*Highgate, Wolcott, Hardwick, Danville, Johnson, St. Johnsbury*)
 - **Proximate to Trail:** Trail passes within 2 miles of village/downtown center and/or with existing or planned connecting trails (*Fairfield, Cambridge*)



Community Connections

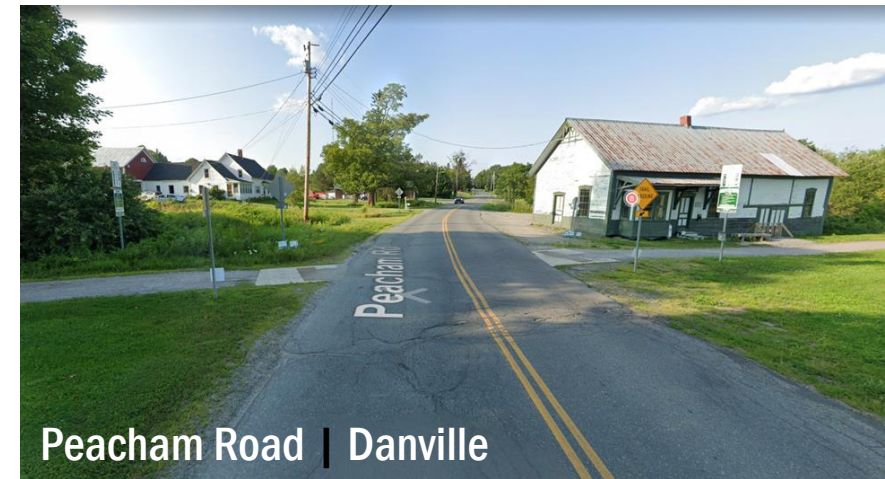
- What barriers exist to getting users into trail towns?
 - Are there specific trail connections or access points that would benefit from a concept sketch?
 - *Examples: Railroad Street in Johnson, LVRT/MVRT Junction*
- What design features can be used to draw users into trail towns?



What barriers exist to getting users into trail towns?

Community Connections

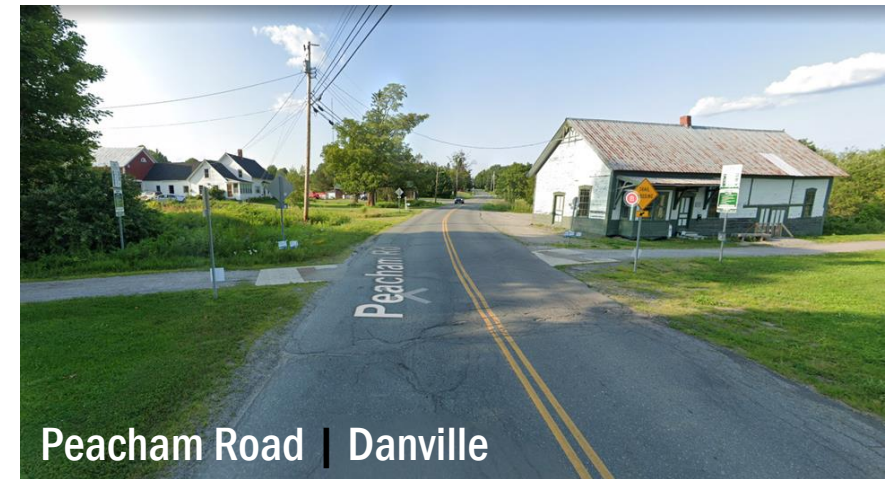
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Community Connections

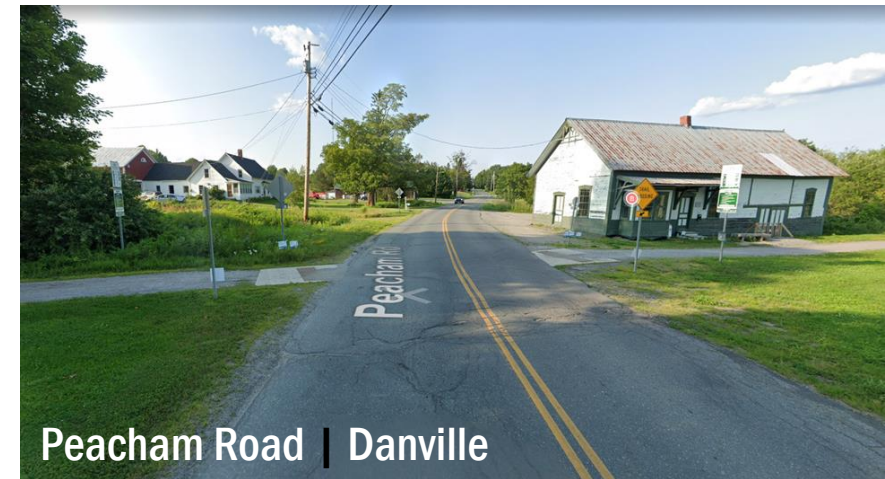
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What design features can be used to draw users into trail towns?

Community Connections

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Development of the Management Plan

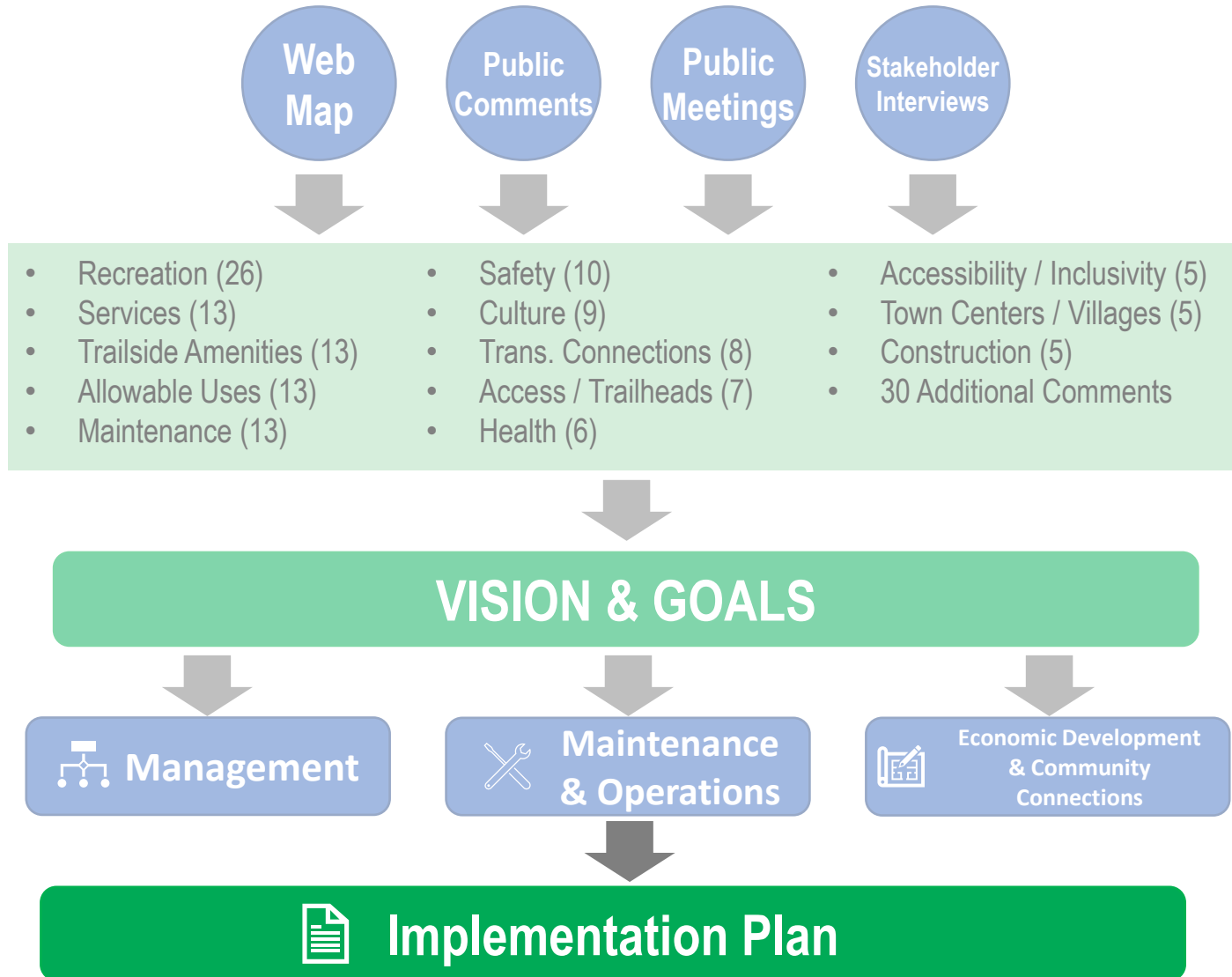
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2. Summarize Input by Categories

3. Screen Ideas through Vision & Goals

4. Develop Recommendations

5. Develop Implementation Plan



Next Steps





Next Steps

- **Gap Analysis & Needs Assessment** | April
- **Recommendations & Implementation Plan** | May
- **Public Meeting #3** | Early June TBD
- **Final Management Plan** | June / July



Questions?





Keep in touch!

Amy Bell, VTrans Project Manager
802-279-0783 | amy.bell@vermont.gov

Karen Sentoff, VHB
802-497-6130 | ksentoff@vhb.com

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt>

[Crowdsource Input Tool](#)



Thank you!

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt>

[Crowdsource Input Tool](#)



LVRT Management Plan **Public Meeting**



Date:
June 21, 2022



Time:
6:00PM



Hybrid Meeting
(In Person or Virtual)



Project Website:
<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt>



With the anticipated completion of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail through Northern Vermont in 2022, VTrans is looking for your input on the ongoing management of this important recreation and transportation corridor.

Please join us to share your feedback on the short and long-term strategies that will guide priorities for maintenance, operations, enhancements, and community connections.

Requests for interpretive or translation services, assistive devices, or other accommodations should be made to Karen Sentoff at 802-497-6130 or ksentoff@vhb.com at least 3 business days prior to the meeting.

In Person Details

Location:
Swanton Municipal Complex
120 First Street, Swanton, VT 05488

For more information contact:
Amy Bell, Project Manager
802-279-0783 | amy.bell@vermont.gov

Virtual Details

Please click the link to join the webinar:

<https://tinyurl.com/mr393ua3>

(note: if typing, all lowercase)

Or, head to <https://zoom.us/join> and enter

Webinar ID: 837 8665 1561

Passcode: 199438

Via Telephone: +1 312 626 6799



Meeting Notes

Date: June 21, 2022

Notes Taken By: Elisabeth Sundberg

Place: Swanton Municipal Complex

Project No.: 58600.06

Re: LVRT Management Plan Public Meeting #3

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Management Plan Public Meeting #3 Summary

Welcome and Introductions

Karen Sentoff introduced the project and welcomed the participants both online and in person to the meeting. Karen went over how to participate and provide comments during the meeting, so they are part of the record. Karen went over the agenda and introduced Michele Boomhower, who provided the welcoming remarks.

Michele Boomhower shared her excitement about the project and ability to be in person for all three of these public meetings. She shared the background of her career as she tracked how the project came to fruition, including partnership with VAST and many volunteers along the way. She shared that a \$2 million federal earmark from Senator Sanders will provide municipalities along the LVRT the ability to build connections to the trail, adding parking, kiosks, other amenities to the trailside. Communities have already begun the work of adding these connections and amenities. She acknowledged the benefit to communities and opportunities for economic development. She noted that VTTrans is working on the criteria and framework for the funding to be released in August. Specific eligible activities with the funds will be defined when the criteria are finalized.

Michele introduced the project team and stakeholders including Amy Bell (VTTrans), Jacqui DeMent (VTTrans), Chris Hunt (VTTrans), Jackie Cassino (VTTrans), Bill Gray (VTTrans), and Bethany Remmers (NRPC). Bethany introduced Amy Adams and Kathy Lavoie from the Northwest Rail Trail Council. Karen rounded out the introductions of the project consultant team and acknowledge the stakeholder group and many individuals that engaged in the process of the Management Plan development.

Construction Update

Chris Hunt shared that there are 48.7 miles of trail under construction this year, broken into 4 segments as follows:

- **LVRT(10)** – Bridge project; Contract awarded to J. P. Sicard, Inc. Construction contract amount: \$3,472,258.50. Completion date August 31, 2022.
- **LVRT(11)** – Sheldon Jct. to Cambridge; Contract awarded to Dirt Tech Company, LLC. Construction contract amount: \$2,476,651.15. Completion date November 12, 2022.
- **LVRT(12)** – Morrisville to Hardwick; Contract awarded to S. D. Ireland Construction. Construction contract amount: \$6,986,878.50. Completion date November 10, 2022.
- **LVRT(13)** – Hardwick to West Danville (Joes Pond); Contract Awarded to G. W. Tatro Construction, Inc. Construction contract amount: \$2,254,046.00. Completion date November 12, 2022.

Chris shared that there have been more trail miles completed this season than there has been since 2014. Chris went over the LVRT (14) signing project, noting the items that are and are not included in the effort. The sign project entails a review of best practices, recommendations for a cohesive set of trail signs including mile markers, town lines, and geographic destinations, recommendations for a cohesive set of off-facility signs including how to find the trail from State Highways and Local Roads, input from stakeholders, and development of plans, specifications, and cost estimates to bid the project. The sign project does not include temporary traffic control, signs for individual businesses, services, or attractions, and interpretative signage for natural or historical features. The timeline for design is Fall of 2022 and bid for construction in early 2023.

Management Plan Overview

Karen provided an update on the management plan development process, sharing the project schedule. One of the primary goals of the development process has been to engage the communities that touch the LVRT through stakeholder interviews, a crowd sourced input map, and public meetings. Early in the process, synthesizing the information gathered from those conversations helped to shape the vision and goals for the LVRT.

Karen provided an overview of what the Management Plan entails. The Management Plan sets a community led Vision and set of Goals for the cohesive trail system and defines strategies to guide the management, maintenance & operations, and opportunities for economic development & community connections for the trail. In developing the draft strategies and recommendations, the project team solicited stakeholder input and gathered information on best practices, then screened ideas based on the Vision and Goals, and aligned the resulting strategies by the three buckets or categories (management, maintenance & operations, economic development & community connections).

Vision Statement

The Vision for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is a year-round, multiuse recreation and alternative transportation corridor that is well-maintained and supports economic vitality, fosters community connections, and promote healthy lifestyles across scenic, northern Vermont.

LVRT Management Plan Goals

Karen summarized the goals and objectives of the Management Plan, as follows:

- **Support the economic vitality of northern Vermont communities**
 - Promote LVRT locally and regionally to draw visitors to the trail and trailside communities
 - Improve connections to villages and town centers to encourage exploration of trailside communities
 - Complement existing economic development plans in trailside communities
- **Cultivate community, culture, and history along the trail and in trailside communities**
 - Foster trail stewardship opportunities to promote sense of community pride
 - Encourage inclusive and respectful trail use
 - Promote rural heritage, history, and educational programming
- **Promote healthy and connected communities**
 - Encourage healthy and active lifestyles
 - Provide meaningful opportunities for connection with the scenic, natural, and agricultural landscape
 - Promote development and improve connections to recreational opportunities proximate to the LVRT
 - Improve connections to alternative transportation networks and trail systems
- **Preserve the corridor and maintain trail condition**
 - Provide for routine asset condition assessment, maintenance, and preservation activities
 - Support well-maintained facilities for health and safety
 - Provide convenient trail access points along the LVRT with clear directional signage and well-maintained parking areas
- **Establish a well-managed trail system**
 - Support and coordinate proactive trail management, maintenance, and operations activities
 - Identify stable sources of funding for management, maintenance, operations, enhancements, and programming

Karen provided a brief overview of the recommended strategies associated with each category.

Strategies and Recommendations: Management

- Human resources/staffing

- Implement a **staffing structure** to efficiently support continuity and strategic management, maintenance, and operations
- Volunteer staff management
 - Establish proposed **Regional LVRT Stakeholder Groups** to engage trail champions and coordinate local volunteers
 - Develop **training programs** to engage volunteers and partnering organizations (e.g. trail ambassadors, condition assessments, adopt a segment or trailhead programs)

These strategies focused on how to engage communities, have eyes and ears on the trail, and foster that sense of community pride in the trail. Some of this was modeled off of the success with the MVRT, where the Northwest Rail Trail Council helps to coordinate volunteers and serves to communicate information back to the Agency so that they can respond accordingly to needs or issues.

Strategies and Recommendations: Maintenance and Operations

- Asset management and inspection
 - Conduct routine inspections of all trail assets (trail surface, culverts, bridge structure, bridge surface, trailheads, signs)
 - Identify and prioritize system preservation
- Seasonal maintenance
 - Development annual maintenance plan
 - Identify contractors and procure services for annual seasonal maintenance activities (mowing, trail surface rehab, etc.)
- Best management practices
 - Adapt and adopt best management practices for trail specific maintenance activities including surface inspection, vegetation management, wildlife management, and flood mitigation
- Operations manual
 1. Allowable uses and use permits
 2. Resolving user conflicts
 3. Mitigating encroachment and encampment issues
 4. Agreements supporting trail connections and amenities for the public good
 5. Trail access, crossing and right-of-way use agreements
 6. Trail etiquette (incorporate in signage and promotional/ educational materials)
- User count and survey program
 - Develop count and survey program to gather visitor use and user feedback data

These strategies really focused on consistent maintenance along the 93 miles of trail and setting the framework for how the trail will operate.

Strategies and Recommendations: Economic Development and Community Connections

- Capital improvement projects
 - Pause places
 - Identify and support development of pause places
 - Trail connections
 - Support the development of connecting or spur trail systems
 - Support promotion of regional or destination loops connecting to the LVRT
 - Trailheads
 - Establish network of trailheads to provide trail access and trailside amenities at regular frequencies
 - Engage with local communities in the development and maintenance of trailheads and trailside amenities
 - That vital gateway between trail system and communities, every community can have localized information on the towns to get people in

Pause places create a place where folks can step off the trail and rest or engage with vistas or resources along the trail. Trailheads serve as gateways to the LVRT and to trailside communities. These locations would include signage that highlights opportunities to hop off the trail

and explore the adjacent communities. Backless benches might be appropriate at these locations to provide flexibility allowing users to view scenery in either direction.

Trailheads are envisioned at three amenity levels. Level 1 is a small trailhead with wayfinding, benches, and bike racks. Level 2 adds some parking availability and establishes a sense of arrival, whether to the trail or the community. Level 3 establishes locations with more anticipated activity, like at each terminus and strategically along the length of the trail, where more ample parking and other trailside amenities like water stations and restrooms are available.

Jeff Dube shared more detail on the trailhead levels and guidance developed around these types of trailheads (see slides for typical). Level 1 attempts to arrange the trailhead in a way that it feels like an entry into the LVRT. The features are setback enough to be separated from the roadway through plantings or trees. These locations provide an opportunity to create that trail identity while introducing trail users to the local community.

Level 2 trailheads provide more in the way of amenities. The differentiator being the addition of parking. With this trailhead type, placing the trailhead and amenities so that the space works for those arriving by car and by bike. The typical developed for this trailhead type brings forth the idea that the trailhead itself has a clear entrance into the trail and creates a sense of separation from adjacent roadway facilities. Flexible open space and places for picnicking or other activities are incorporated into the concept. This trailhead concept also looks to connect to the river in a way that works for both user groups, trail users and those accessing the river for canoeing or other activities.

Level 3 trailheads are generally larger and offer more amenities while making sure the various elements and spaces are connected and working together. Here, bathroom buildings might serve to integrate a trail map into the structure. Flexible open space, picnic areas, and opportunities for play structures or other features are oriented to maintain visual connections between different trailhead offerings. These locations might serve to connect to local and regional paths or trail networks. The concept formalizes these connections through signage and other placemaking, inviting exploration beyond the trailhead to other resources. The concept works for folks that arriving by car or from within the trail, creating that sense of arrival from either space.

Jeff also shared a collection of site amenities that fit that character of the trail (see slides for amenities). This menu of amenities will serve to provide that cohesive identity and aesthetic across the trail, bringing together a sense of place. A few of the elements shown introduce the LVRT logo to continue that cohesive look and vernacular along the trail.

Karen shared that the proposed LVRT trailhead spacing is based on the best practices and existing conditions. Designated trailheads are proposed along the trail at least every 8-10 miles, with this spacing occurring for some rural segments. Proposed trailhead locations provide trailside restrooms at an average spacing of 16 miles and parking at an average spacing of 5 miles. Establishing and maintaining trailheads and trailside amenities will require local initiative from municipalities and local stakeholders with support from Regional Planning Commissions and the State.

Karen shared a linear map that demonstrates the spacing of current trailheads and amenities along the trail and envisions the proposed set of trailheads and amenities. It is recognized that there are some amenities on the trail currently, but the proposed trailhead types and spacing look to strategically support the trail user experience by providing amenities trailside while encouraging trail users to explore off-trail in the adjacent communities.

Karen continued to highlight the recommended strategies for the LVRT.

- Tourism and marketing
 - o Build out LVRT visitor website and investigate integrating trip planning tools into the website
 - o Coordinate with partner agencies and organization to develop regional marketing campaign
 - o Leveraging recreation tourism opportunities through promotion of multisport synergies and coordinate with partner organizations (VAST, paddlers northern forests, GMC, Velomont, local trail stewards/ councils)

- Encourage camping and lodging opportunities in trailside communities to support multiday tourism opportunities
- Support development of trail friendly business program
- Support development of passport or quest program to encourage exploration
- Identify funding and support research to quantify economic impact of the LVRT

Economic impact research will allow for follow up to understand how the investment in the trail is impacting the towns and communities along the LVRT.

- Educational and recreational programming
 - Encourage local and regional trail-based educational and recreational programming
 - Support bike, ski, snowshoe lending libraries and/or rental opportunities
 - Support working lands educational and promotional opportunities to highlight Vermont farms and forests as part of the LVRT identity
- Cultural Resources
 - Coordinate with state and local historical organizations to identify historical site opportunities and develop interpretive signage plan

Developing opportunities for programming, art installations, or historic references might be through places like trail adjacent buildings. Creating spaces around these trail features where you can step off the trail and interact with a cultural resource can provide a unique experience. Ideas for fostering these experiences include book walks and other interpretive elements.

- Community assistance
 - Support communities seeking funding for development or enhancement projects (e.g. trailheads, amenities, wayfinding, services gateways, pathways to trailside communities)

To support municipalities in establishing trailheads and amenities, approximately \$2 million in grant funding will be made available for improvements along the LVRT. The program will support improving trail amenities and visitor experience. It is noted that a 20% local match will be required. Municipalities may work as a consortium and are encouraged to collaborate with their RPC on project refinement. The target is to open the process in August and have applications due in October.

- LVRT graphic identity
 - Establish a cohesive trail identity

A graphic guide was developed to create one cohesive look, so users recognize the LVRT logo and identify with the trail experience. The guide establishes a consistent brand and identifies ways the elements might be used along the trail system. Alternative lockups were created to apply the elements of the logo to different use cases.

Next Steps

The proposed timeline for management plan was discussed, with the draft coming together in June, a public comment period in July, and the final management plan issued in August.

Karen opened the meeting up for discussion and public input.

Paul Fix added a comment in the chat asking if some portions of the trail will open before the construction is fully completed? Chris Hunt responded that they will not be open until entirely complete in the fall of 2022.

Elizabeth Dow asked if the Hardwick depot might expect long lines of folks waiting to use the restroom. Karen noted that as more users come to use the trail, it will be important to assess these needs. As more folks are on the trail, it will be important to provide appropriate services for trail users.

A community member asked how the equestrian community will be accounted for. Karen responded that there are currently trail users using existing segments on horseback but there is no formal organization of equestrians involved with the LVRT. Equestrian use of the trail is encouraged. Another community member added that the Vermont Horse Council could be brought in the process.

Laural Ruggles asked about who will oversee maintenance of the trail. Karen responded that the management plan will outline what tasks will be coordinated by the program manager and what will be managed by others. It will also outline trailhead and volunteer opportunities but VTrans will serve as the primary coordination on maintaining the linear trail corridor and managing vegetation.

Another community member added that they appreciate back rests on benches in response to the amenity images proposed earlier in the presentation.

One community member asked how many proposed trailheads will be at each level? As proposed, there are 5 Level 1 trailheads, 13 Level 2 trailheads, and 6 Level 3 trailheads. Karen noted that there may also be opportunities to offer similar services or amenities at the connection to community spur trails or local trail networks.

Steve Avery asked if snowmobiling will be accounted for in the management plan? Karen responded that VTrans and VAST are working on an agreement for VAST to continue their role as trail operator in the winter season and that snowmobiling will continue to be a winter use of the trail.

Laural Ruggles asked about charging stations for E-bikes. Karen added that although this has come up, it is not one of the pieces we contemplated as the focus was on establishing the network of trailheads needed to support the trail. There may be future opportunities to look at where it might make sense to include EV charging stations.

One person added that dog waste receptacles and playsets would be desirable services.

Bruce Douglas asked will property owners be notified of construction along the LVRT? The project team noted that there has been outreach prior to starting construction and that neighbors and community members can stay informed by joining the LVRT email list.

Casey Romero asked how will you use the public input map? Karen shared that the platform is going to stop accepting new information from the public on the map at the end of the month. All of the information that has been gathered has been considered in this process and will be shared with the rail trail program manager.

Amy B asked how to report issues like reporting the location of downed trees. Will there be a GIS location option? Karen shared that the team is working on getting updated contact information on the website and at trailheads so folks can be in touch with VTrans on any issues. Karen shared that this is a priority as they greatly value trail users having their eyes out for issues and communicating them to VTrans. Michele Boomhower added that they will likely use a platform like see, click, fix where you can click on a point and add the information to share with the folks that need to know about it. She noted that they recognize there may be sections of the trail where reception may not be as reliable.

Helen Beatie asked what will be the funding mechanism? Supporting local fundraising? Coordinating with local communities? Can communities begin to design and proceed? Karen shared that the Management plan will provide recommended framework for trailheads and amenities and identify funding opportunities. She added that they will need local communities to spearhead the effort and put plans into motion both through the grant program and finding other ways to connect to other funding resources.

Chris Sweeney asked if restrooms be maintained by state staff. Karen responded that restrooms will be maintained through agreements with the towns.

Ty Choiniere asked if rest stop areas can have a group sponsor the area or put a bench in. Karen noted that there are ways to implement a bench and that memorial plaques and benches are requested regularly. The goal will be to maintain a consistent look with those benches and other amenities.

Ty also asked if the funding from Sanders will include emergency services. Jackie Cassino responded that coordination with emergency services is identified as a need, much like how emergency services serve highways or parks. Dianne Crane added that Sheldon has off road vehicles and most of rural towns have the appropriate equipment to help with those emergency response services.

Ty asked about bad cell service in rural areas and if that will be addressed. He also asked if there will be law enforcement present on the trail. Bill Gray noted that they are creating a number to call to report issues and complaints to assist in matters that might otherwise be called in to local law enforcement.

Ty asked how the sign off on construction is done. Bill Gray responded that construction is approved through VTrans and the management plan will provide a maintenance plan to help maintain the trail surface integrity.

One community member asked if there will be access to bike racks in town. Karen responded that bike racks in town would be up to the towns to provide and is strongly encouraged. Bike racks in front of a business provides an opportunity to get folks in door – these amenities should be thought about strategically.

Another community member asked if VAST will be responsible for signage with trail crossings. Jackie Cassino responded they will still be responsible for signage on the designated VAST trail system during the winter months.

A community member asked about charging availability for phones and cell service coverage. Karen shared that those topics had not been part of the discussion to date. She noted that it will be important that trail users are prepared for being in those places where cell coverage might be spotty.

Karen wrapped up the meeting thanking everyone for providing input and feedback throughout the process.

Project Team Attendees

Amy Bell, VTrans Project Manager
Michele Boomhower, VTrans Director of Policy, Planning, and Intermodal Development
Jacqui Dement, VTrans Deputy Project Manager
Jackie Cassino, VTrans Rail Trail Program Manager
Bill Gray, VTrans
Chris Hunt, VTrans Construction Deputy Project Manager (virtual)
Karen Sentoff, VHB
Matt Hogan, VHB
Elisabeth Sundberg, VHB
Jeff Dube, VHB (virtual)
Shaye Halle, VHB (virtual)

Attendees

Bethany Remmers
Amy Adams
Kathy Lavoie
Ty Choiniere

Place: Swanton Municipal Complex
Date: June 21, 2022
Ref: 58600.06
Page 8

Meeting Notes

Matt Parsons
Nicole Draper
Richard Stam
Steve Avery
Cyndy Sooch
Amy B.
Bruce F. Douglas
Melanie Riddle
Katharine Otto - VTrans
Elizabeth Dow
Anonymous
Jeannette Cole
Paul Fixx
Lisa Lafont
Casey Romero
Linda Fox
Kestrel Owens
Zoe Neaderland
Zoe
Norma Spaulding
Randal Toth
Garouleau
Chris
Fred Pond
Ken Linsley
Harriet
Doug Morton
Andy
Laural Ruggles
Dave
Laird MacDowell
Mary Walz
Robert Moore
Helen Beattie
Anonymous
Peter Chapin
Chris Sweeny
Linwood Mixer



Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Management Plan

Public Meeting #3
June 21st, 2022



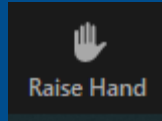
In Person Meeting Participation

1. Reminder that the meeting is being recorded.
2. If you would like to speak, please use the microphone to provide comment or ask a question.



Virtual Meeting Participation

1. Attendees are muted by default.
2. If you'd like to speak, please click or tap the "Raise Hand" button at the bottom of your screen and wait to be called on. Those dialing in by telephone can raise their hand by dialing *9.



Connecting by
Phone?



*9 to raise hand

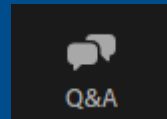
3. After you've been called on, click or tap the "Unmute" button to speak. Those dialing in by phone can unmute by dialing *6.



*6 to unmute



4. If you'd like to write in a question or comment instead, please click or tap the Q&A button to submit your question.





Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Project Update
 - Construction
 - Management Plan
- Draft Strategies & Recommendations
 - Vision & Goals
 - Strategy Development
 - Management
 - Maintenance & Operations
 - Economic Development & Community Connections
- Next Steps
- Public Input

Welcome & Introductions





Management Plan Introductions

■ Project Team

- **Amy Bell** | VTrans Project Manager
- **Jacqui DeMent** | VTrans
- **David Saladino** | VHB
- **Karen Sentoff** | VHB
- **Elisabeth Sundberg** | VHB
- **Jeff Dube** | VHB

■ VTrans

- **Jackie Cassino** | Rail Trails Program Manager
- **Chris Hunt** | Project Supervisor

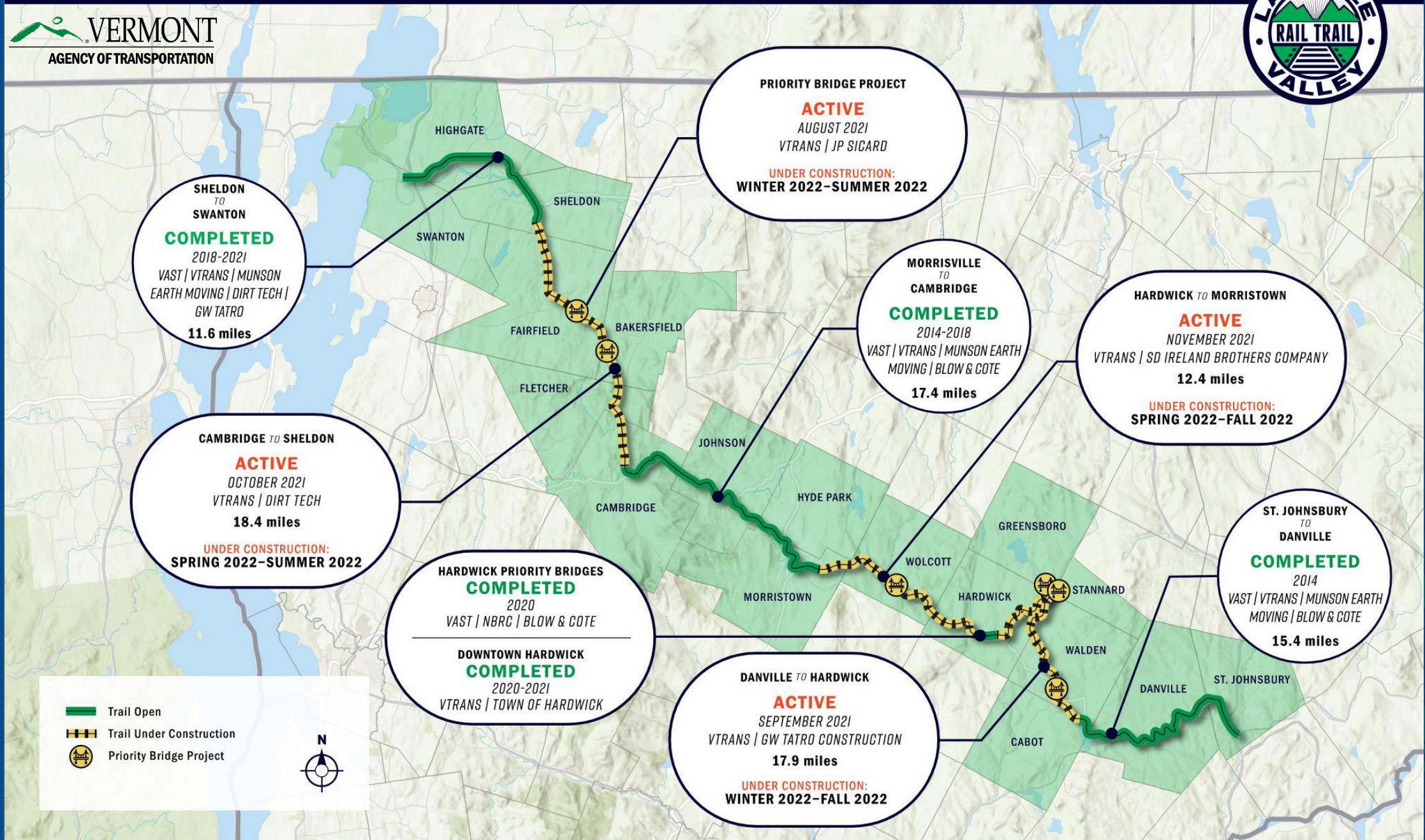
■ Stakeholder Group

- **Michele Boomhower** | VTrans Director of Policy & Planning
- **Jon Kaplan** | VTrans Bicycle & Pedestrian Program Manager
- **Joel Perrigo** | VTrans LVRT Construction Project Manager
- **Mark Fitzgerald** | VTrans Rail Property Management Section Chief
- **Ken Brown** | Vermont Association of Snow Travelers
- **Dan Delabruere** | VTrans Rail & Aviation Bureau Director
- **Nate Formalarie** | Department of Tourism and Marketing
- **Rob Moore** | Lamoille County Planning Commission
- **David Snedeker** | Northeastern Vermont Development Association
- **Bethany Remmers** | Northwest Regional Planning Commission
- **Nancy Banks / Carol Hodges** | Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail

Construction Update



Trail Construction Update



- Trail Open
- Trail Under Construction
- Priority Bridge Project





Trail Construction Update

Projects-Segments	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
St. Johnsbury TO Danville 15.4 MILES	Completed by VAST/VTrans Munson Earth Moving Blow & Cote								
Danville TO Hardwick 17.9 MILES							Awarded: GW Tatro Construction, September '21 Under Construction	ACTIVE VTrans	
Hardwick TO Morristown 12.4 MILES							Awarded: SD Ireland, November '21 Under Construction	ACTIVE VTrans	
Morristown TO Cambridge 17.4 MILES			Completed by VAST/VTrans Munson Earth Moving Blow & Cote						
Cambridge TO Sheldon 18.4 MILES							Awarded: Dirt Tech Company, October '21 Under Construction	ACTIVE VTrans	
Sheldon TO Sheldon Junction 1.5 MILES					Completed by VAST/VTrans Munson Earth Moving				
Sheldon Junction TO Highgate 6.2 MILES							Completed by VAST/VTrans Dirt Tech		
Highgate TO Swanton 3.9 MILES							Completed by VAST/VTrans GW Tatro		
Priority Bridges Project							Awarded: JP Sicard, August '21 Under Construction	ACTIVE VTrans	



Trail Construction Update



LVRT(10) – Bridge project; Contract awarded to J. P. Sicard, Inc. Construction contract amount: \$3,472,258.50. Completion date August 31, 2022.

LVRT(11) – Sheldon Jct. to Cambridge; Contract awarded to Dirt Tech Company, LLC. Construction contract amount: \$2,476,651.15. Completion date November 12, 2022.

LVRT(12) – Morrisville to Hardwick; Contract awarded to S. D. Ireland Construction. Construction contract amount: \$6,986,878.50. Completion date November 10, 2022.

LVRT(13) – Hardwick to West Danville (Joes Pond); Contract Awarded to G. W. Tatro Construction, Inc. Construction contract amount: \$2,254,046.00. Completion date November 12, 2022



What it IS



- Review of best practices from other trail systems throughout the country.
- Recommendations for a cohesive set of off-facility signs including how to find the trail from the State Highway and Local Roads and on-trail signs including mile markers, town lines, and geographic destinations.
- Solicitation of input from RPC's, VAST, VTrans and other important stakeholders.
- Development of plans, specifications and an estimate for this project be bid.



What it is **NOT**

- Temporary traffic control during construction
- Signs pointing users to individual businesses, services or attractions.
- Interpretive signage detailing features of historic or environmental significance along the trail.





Timeline

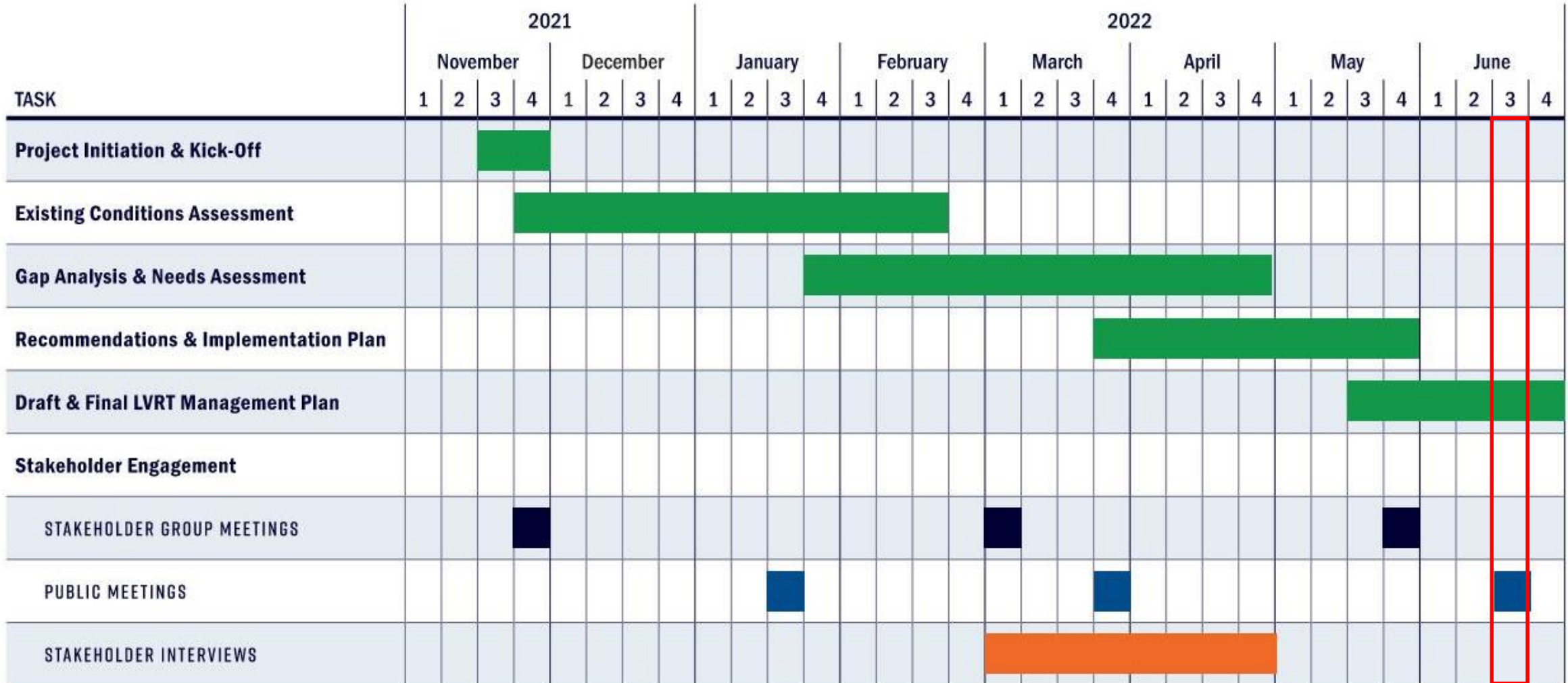
- Complete review, outreach and development of plans, specifications and estimate Fall of 2022.
- Bid for construction Winter 2022/Spring 2023.
- Construction begins Spring 2023.

Project Update





Project Update





What is a Management Plan?

- **Vision & Goals** for a cohesive trail system
- **Strategies to guide:**
 - **Management**
 - **Maintenance & Operations**
 - **Economic Development & Community Connections**

DRAFT
**Strategies &
Recommendations**





Developing Draft Strategies & Recommendations

1. Stakeholder Input & Background Investigations





Developing Draft Strategies & Recommendations

1. Stakeholder Input & Background Investigations
2. Screen Ideas through Vision & Goals





LVRT Vision Statement

The Vision for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is a **year-round, multiuse recreation and alternative transportation corridor** that is **well-maintained** and **supports economic vitality, fosters community connections, and promotes healthy lifestyles** across scenic, northern Vermont.





LVRT Management Plan Goals



Support the economic vitality of northern Vermont communities

Promote LVRT locally and regionally to draw visitors to the trail and trailside communities

Improve connections to villages and town centers to encourage exploration of trailside communities

Complement existing economic development plans in trailside communities



Cultivate community, culture, and history along the trail and in trailside communities

Foster trail stewardship opportunities to promote sense of community pride

Encourage inclusive and respectful trail use

Promote rural heritage, history, and educational programming



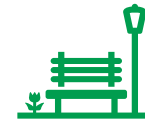
Promote healthy and connected communities

Encourage healthy and active lifestyles

Provide meaningful opportunities for connection with the scenic, natural, and agricultural landscape

Promote development and improve connections to recreational opportunities proximate to the LVRT

Improve connections to alternative transportation networks and trail systems



Preserve the corridor and maintain trail condition

Provide for routine asset condition assessment, maintenance, and preservation activities

Support well-maintained facilities for health and safety

Provide convenient trail access points along the LVRT with clear directional signage and well-maintained parking areas



Establish a well-managed trail system

Support and coordinate proactive trail management, maintenance, and operations activities

Identify stable sources of funding for management, maintenance, operations, enhancements, and programming



Developing Draft Strategies & Recommendations

1. Stakeholder Input & Background Investigations
2. Screen Ideas through Vision & Goals



Developing Draft Strategies & Recommendations

1. Stakeholder Input & Background Investigations



2. Screen Ideas through Vision & Goals



3. Align Strategies & Recommendations by "Bucket"





Developing Draft Strategies & Recommendations

1. Stakeholder Input & Background Investigations



2. Screen Ideas through Vision & Goals












3. Align Strategies & Recommendation by "Bucket"





Draft Strategies & Recommendations: Management

- **Human Resources/Staffing**     
 - Implement a **staffing structure** to efficiently support continuity and strategic management, maintenance, and operations
- **Volunteer Staff Management**    
 - Establish proposed **Regional LVRT Stakeholder Groups** to engage trail champions and coordinate local volunteers
 - Develop **training programs** to engage volunteers and partnering organizations (e.g. trail ambassadors, condition assessments, adopt a segment or trailhead programs)

Developing Draft Strategies & Recommendations

1. Stakeholder Input & Background Investigations



2. Screen Ideas through Vision & Goals










3. Align Strategies & Recommendation by "Bucket"

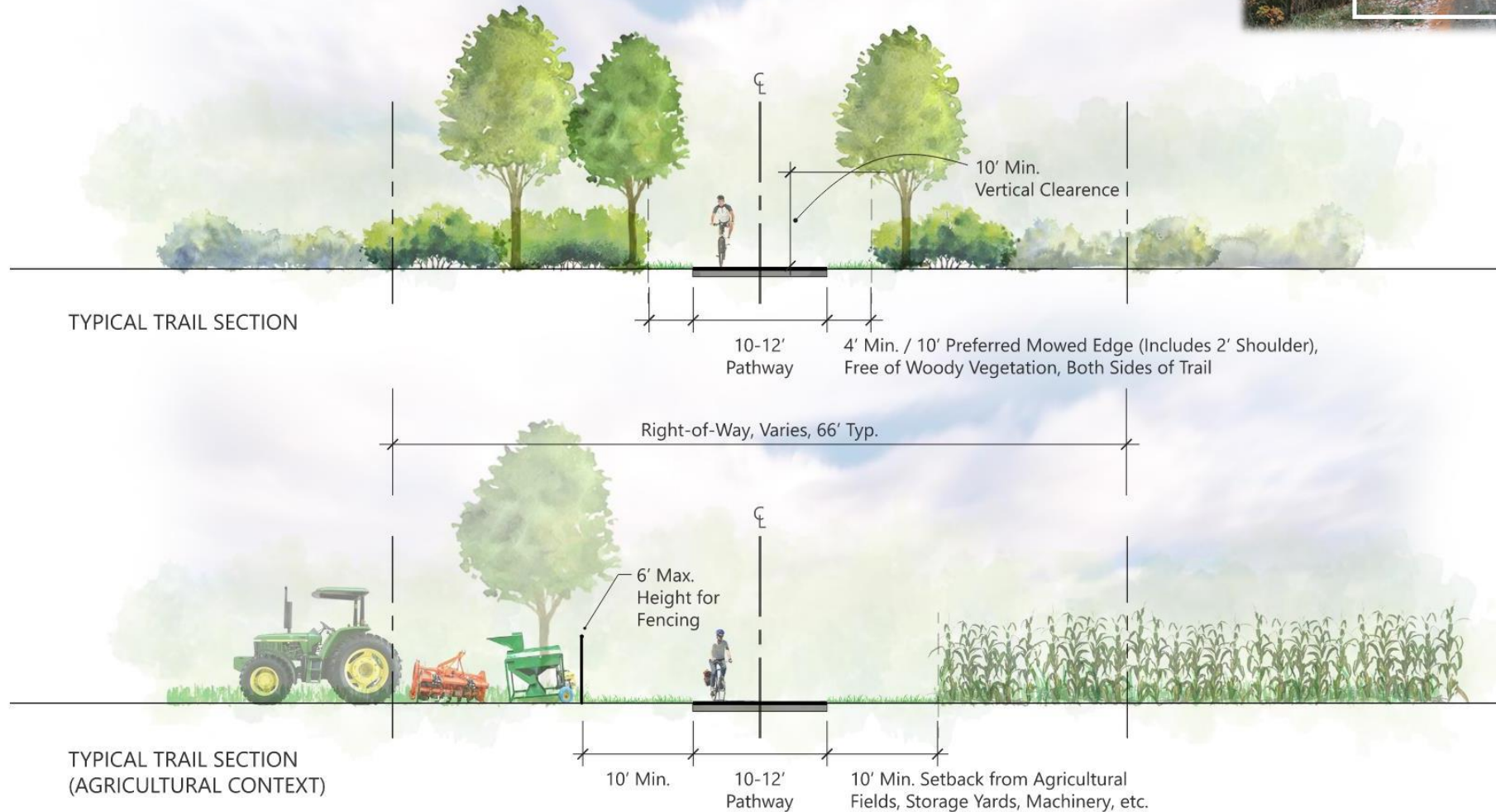




Draft Strategies & Recommendations: Maintenance & Operations

- **Asset Management & Inspection**   
 - Conduct **routine inspections** of all trail assets (trail surface, culverts, bridge structure, bridge surface, trailheads, signs)
 - Identify and prioritize **system preservation** projects
- **Seasonal Maintenance**  
 - Develop **annual maintenance plan**
 - Identify contractors and **procure services** for annual seasonal maintenance activities (mowing, trail surface rehab, etc.)
- **Best Management Practices**  
 - Adapt and adopt **best management practices** for trail specific maintenance activities including surface inspection, vegetation management, wildlife management, and flood mitigation

Maintenance & Operations





Draft Strategies & Recommendations: Maintenance & Operations

- **Operations Manual**
 - Establish clear policies and procedures for:
 1. Allowable uses and use permits
 2. Resolving user conflicts
 3. Mitigating encroachment & encampment issues
 4. Agreements supporting trail connections and amenities for the public good
 5. Trail access, crossing and right-of-way use agreements
 6. Trail etiquette (incorporate in signage and promotional/educational materials)
- **User Count & Survey Program**
 - Develop **count and survey program** to gather visitor use and user feedback data



Developing Draft Strategies & Recommendations

1. Stakeholder Input & Background Investigations



2. Screen Ideas through Vision & Goals








3. Align Strategies & Recommendation by "Bucket"

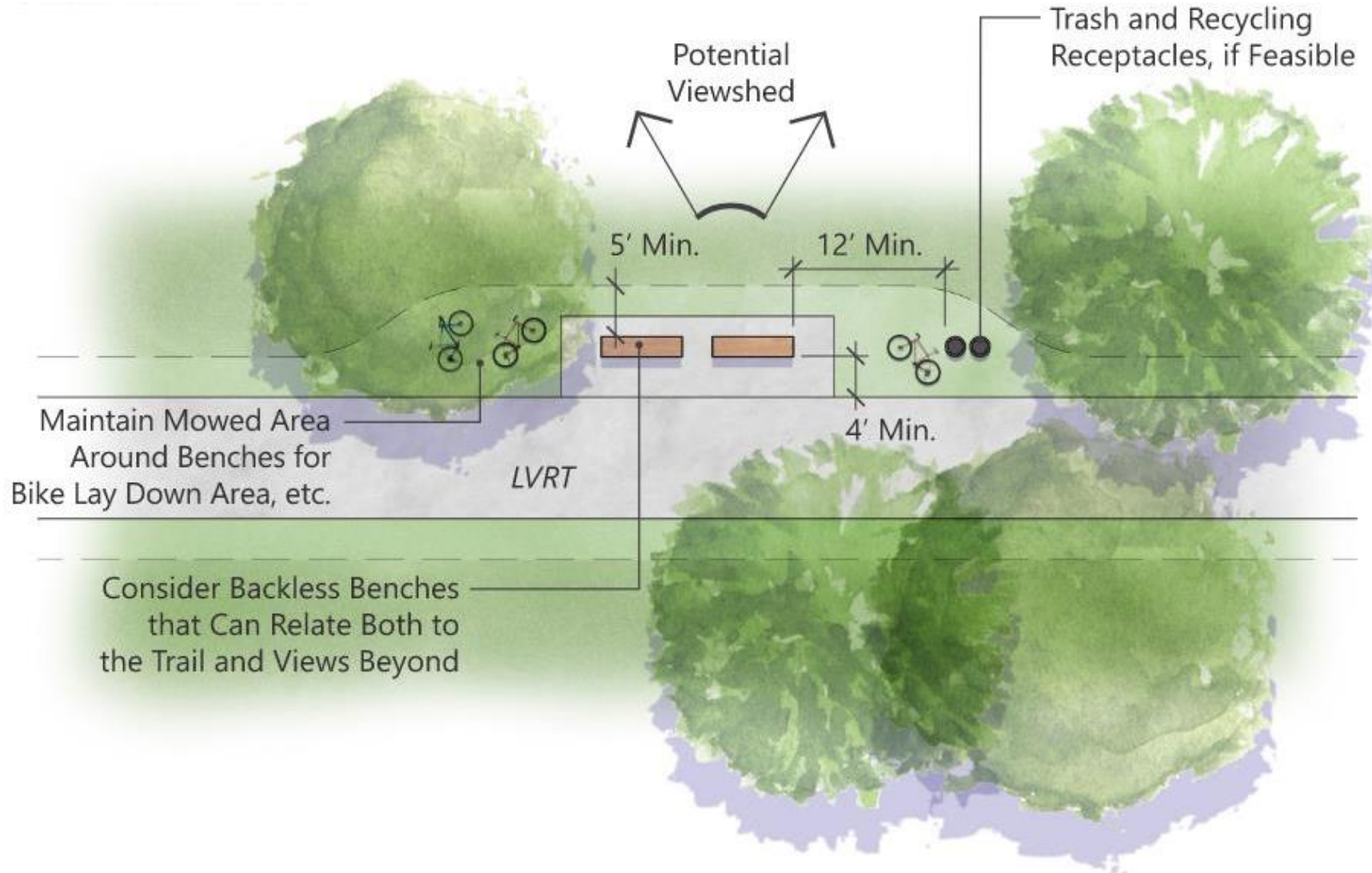




Draft Strategies & Recommendations: Economic Development & Community Connections

- **Capital Improvement Projects**     
- **Pause Places**
 - Identify and support development of **pause places**
- **Trail Connections**
 - Support the development of **connecting or spur trail** systems
 - Support promotion of **regional or destination loops** connecting to the LVRT
- **Trailheads**
 - Establish **network of trailheads** to provide trail access and trailside amenities at regular frequencies
 - Engage with local communities in the **development and maintenance of trailheads** and trailside amenities

Pause Places



Trailheads

- Trailheads serve as gateways to the LVRT and to trailside communities





Trailhead Amenity Levels



Amenities that should be included for a trailhead of this listed level



Amenities that may be included for a trailhead of this listed level



Amenities not typically found at a trailhead of this listed level

AMENITY	TRAILHEAD TYPE		
	Level 1 Small Trailhead	Level 2 Medium Trailhead	Level 3 Large Trailhead
Wayfinding Trail Map (Direction / Distance, etc.)	✓	✓	✓
Benches and Trash/Recycling Receptacles	✓	✓	✓
Bike Racks and Bike Repair Station	✓	✓	✓
Vehicular Parking	?	✓	✓
Historical / Interpretive Element	?	?	?
Information / Map Kiosk (Nearby Attractions, Events, Direction / Distance, etc.)	?	?	?
Entry / Arrival Signage	✗	✓	✓
Water Fountain / Bottle Filling Station	✗	?	✓
Picnic Area / Tables	✗	?	✓
Restroom Facility	✗	?	✓
Pavilion	✗	?	?
Landscaping	✗	?	?
Lighting	✗	?	?
Public Art	✗	?	?
Pull-Through Trailer Parking (Boat, Canoes, Sport Facility Support, etc.)	✗	✗	?

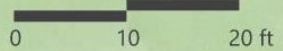


Trailhead Typical | Level 1



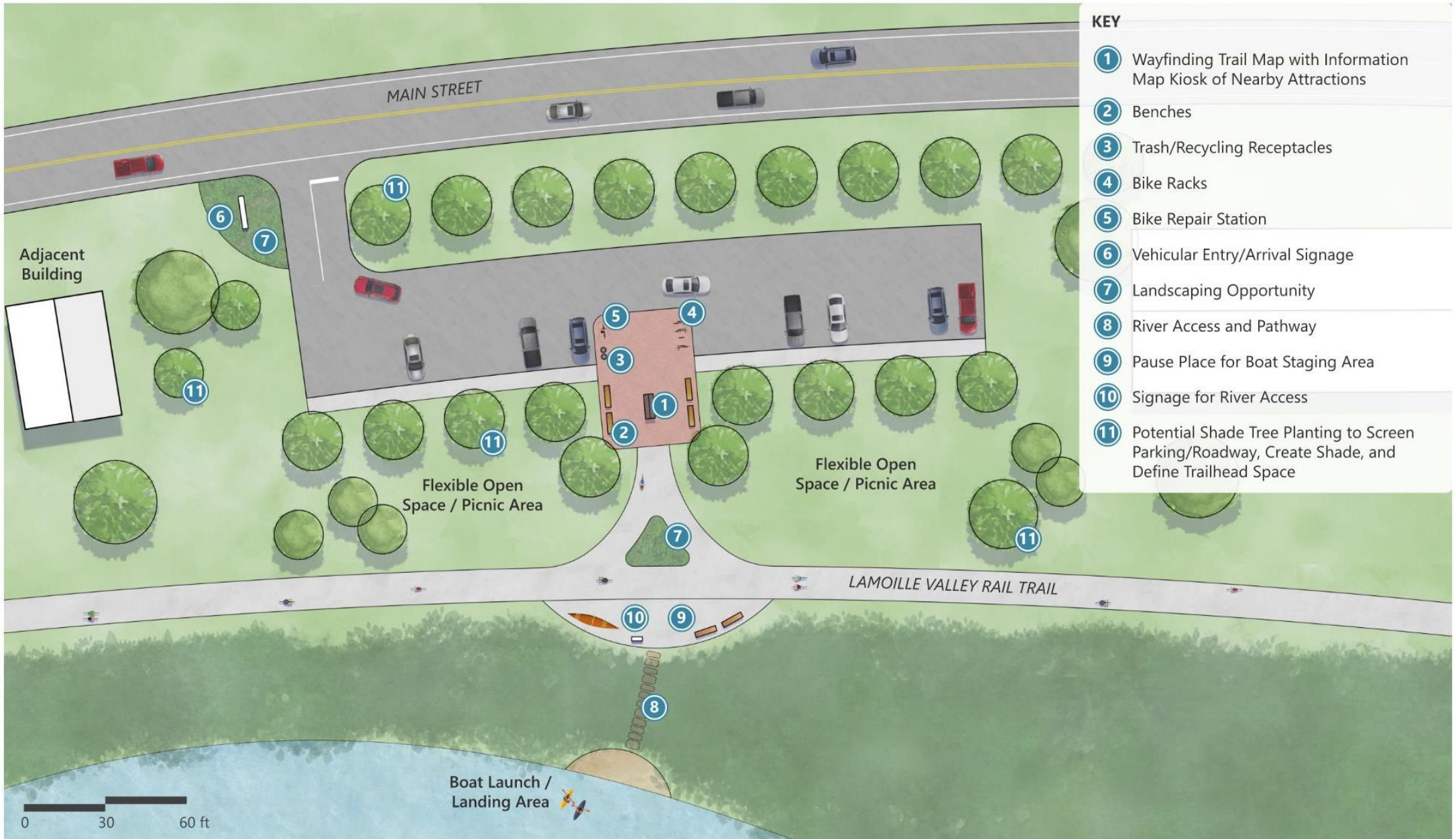
- KEY**
- ① Wayfinding Trail Map with Information Map Kiosk of Nearby Attractions
 - ② Benches
 - ③ Trash/Recycling Receptacles
 - ④ Bike Racks
 - ⑤ Bike Repair Station
 - ⑥ Potential Shade Tree Planting to Screen Nearby Roadway, Create Shade, and Define Trailhead Space

Adjacent Building



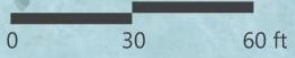


Trailhead Typical | Level 2



KEY

- 1 Wayfinding Trail Map with Information Map Kiosk of Nearby Attractions
- 2 Benches
- 3 Trash/Recycling Receptacles
- 4 Bike Racks
- 5 Bike Repair Station
- 6 Vehicular Entry/Arrival Signage
- 7 Landscaping Opportunity
- 8 River Access and Pathway
- 9 Pause Place for Boat Staging Area
- 10 Signage for River Access
- 11 Potential Shade Tree Planting to Screen Parking/Roadway, Create Shade, and Define Trailhead Space



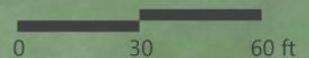


Trailhead Typical | Level 3



KEY

- 1 Wayfinding Trail Map with Information Map Kiosk of Nearby Attractions
- 2 Benches
- 3 Trash/Recycling Receptacles
- 4 Bike Racks and Repair Station
- 5 Pavilion with Restrooms, Water Fountain, and Picnic Area
- 6 Vehicular Entry/Arrival Signage
- 7 Landscaping Opportunity
- 8 Hiking Trail Connection
- 9 Pause Place and Hiking Trail Signage
- 10 Pathway Connection and Signage for Nearby Amenities
- 11 Potential Shade Tree Planting to Screen Parking, Create Shade, and Define Trailhead Space
- 12 Potential Play Area or Other Amenity, Location to Create a Synergy between Pavilion and Nearby Amenities





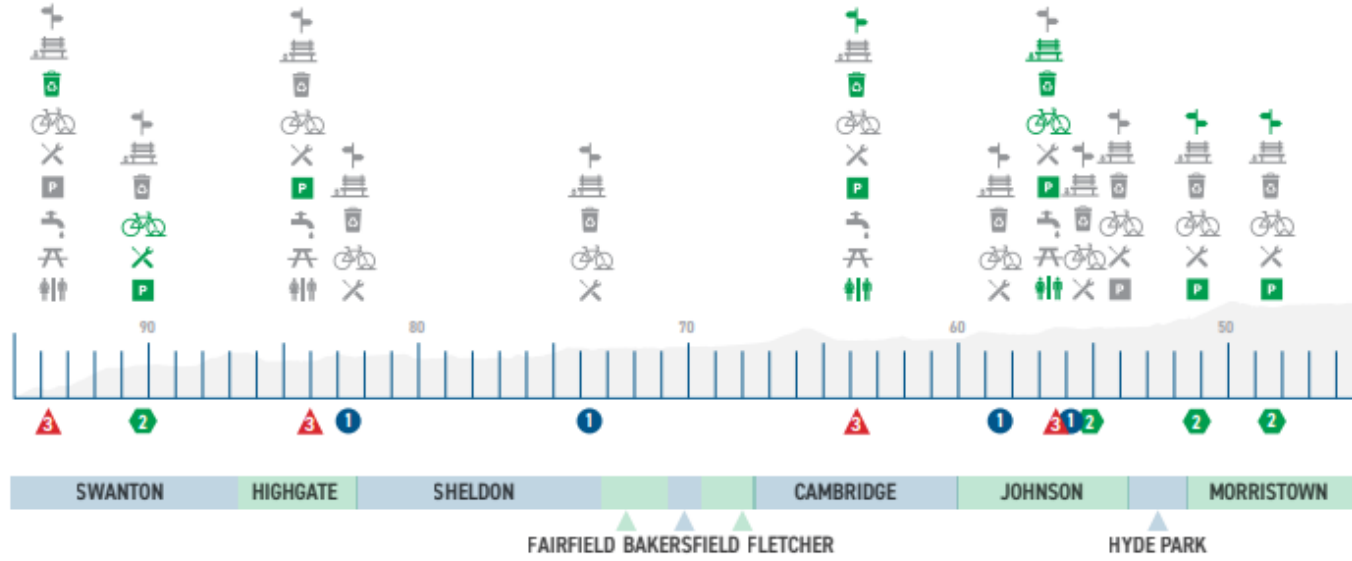


Trailhead & Amenity Spacing

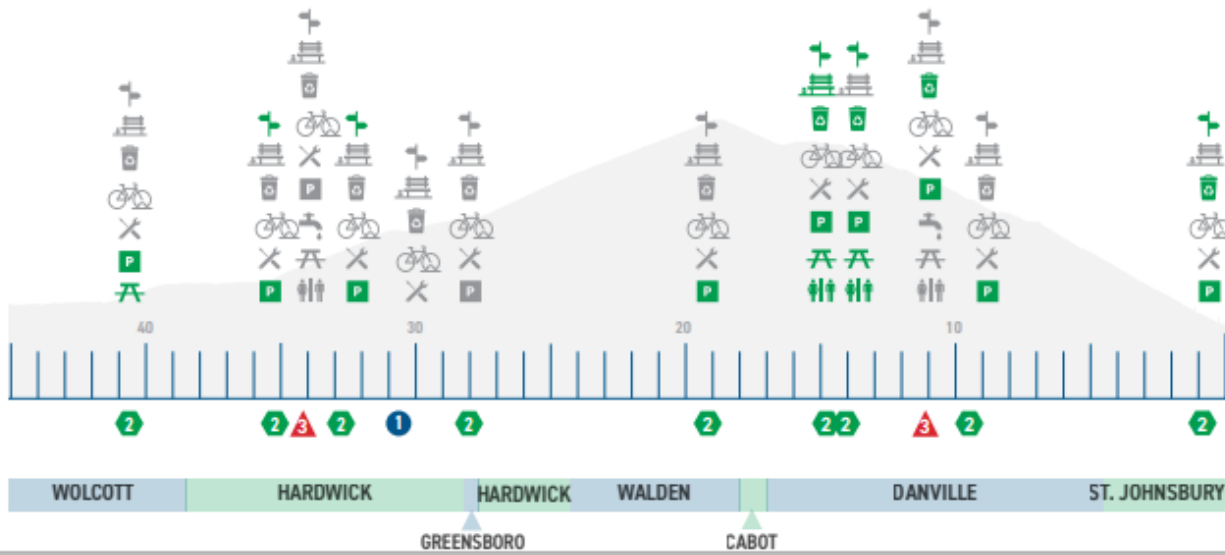
- Proposed LVRT Trailhead Spacing based on best practices and existing conditions
 - Designated trailhead at least every 8-10 miles
 - Average spacing of 3-5 miles
- Proposed LVRT Trailhead Facilities
 - Trailside restrooms average spacing of 16 miles
 - Trail parking average spacing of 5 miles
- Rural segments with greater spacing of facilities and amenities
 - e.g. Cambridge to Highgate
- Strategic placement for minimum trailside services
- Engage with local communities and stakeholders to develop and maintain trailheads and trailside amenities



Western Segment: Morristown to Swanton (MM 45-93)



Eastern Segment: St. Johnsbury to Wolcott (MM 0-45)



Legend

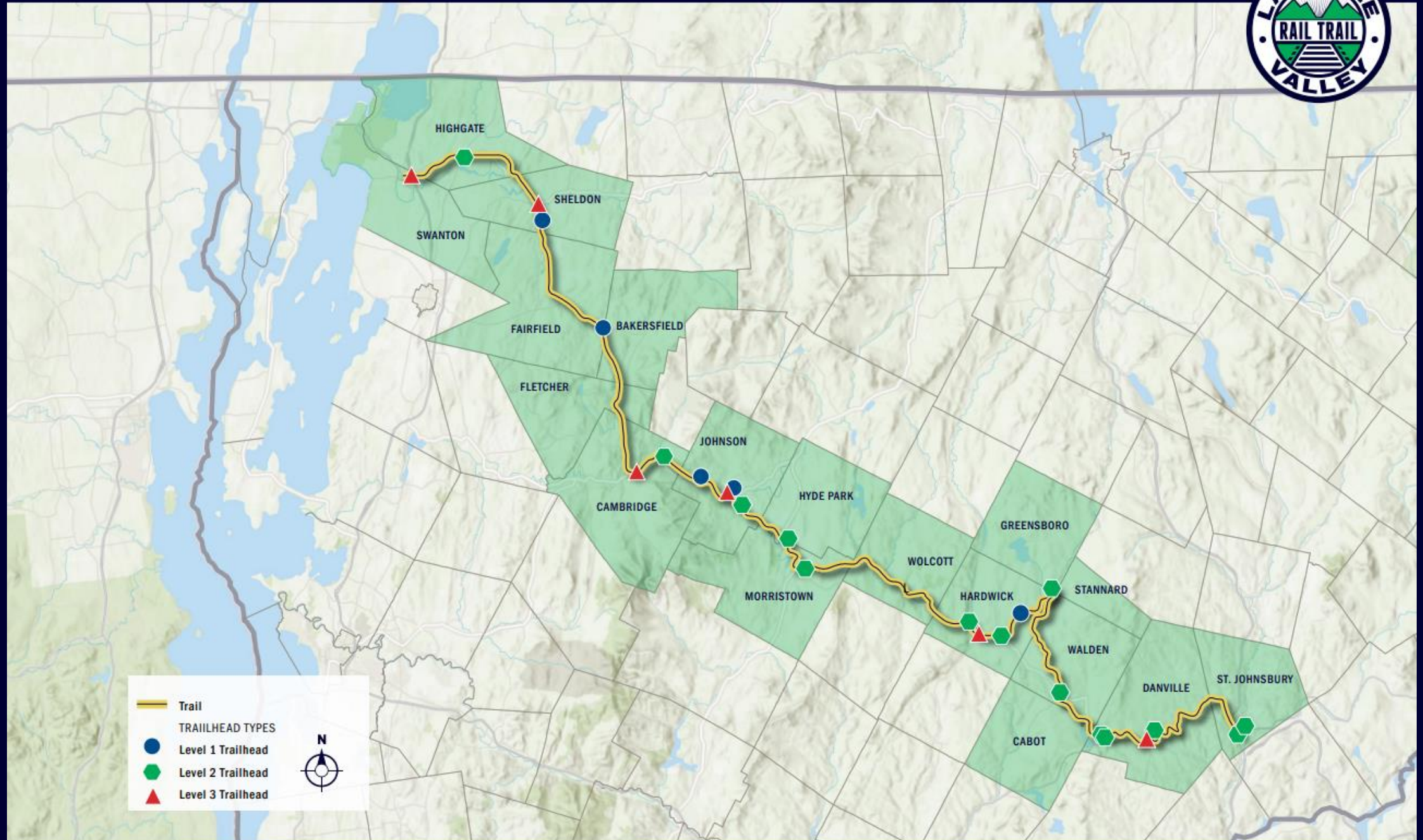
TRAILHEAD TYPES

- Level 1 Trailhead: ①
- Level 2 Trailhead: ②
- Level 3 Trailhead: ▲

TRAILHEAD AMENITIES

	Existing	Proposed
Trail Map		
Benches		
Trash Receptables		
Bike Racks		
Bike Repair		
Parking		
Water Fountain		
Picnic Area		
Restrooms		

Trailhead & Amenity Spacing



Trail

TRAILHEAD TYPES

- Level 1 Trailhead
- Level 2 Trailhead
- Level 3 Trailhead





Draft Strategies & Recommendations: Economic Development & Community Connections

■ Tourism & Marketing

- Build out **LVRT visitor website** and investigate integrating **trip planning tools** into the website
- Coordinate with partner agencies and organizations to develop **regional marketing campaign**
- Leverage recreational tourism opportunities through **promotion of multisport synergies** and coordinate with partner organizations (VAST, paddlers, northern forests, GMC, velomont, local trail stewards/councils)
- **Encourage camping and lodging** opportunities in trailside communities to support multiday tourism opportunities
- Support development of **trail friendly business program**
- Support development of **passport or quest program** to encourage exploration
- Identify funding and support research to quantify **economic impact of the LVRT** on trail communities and broader regional and state level economies



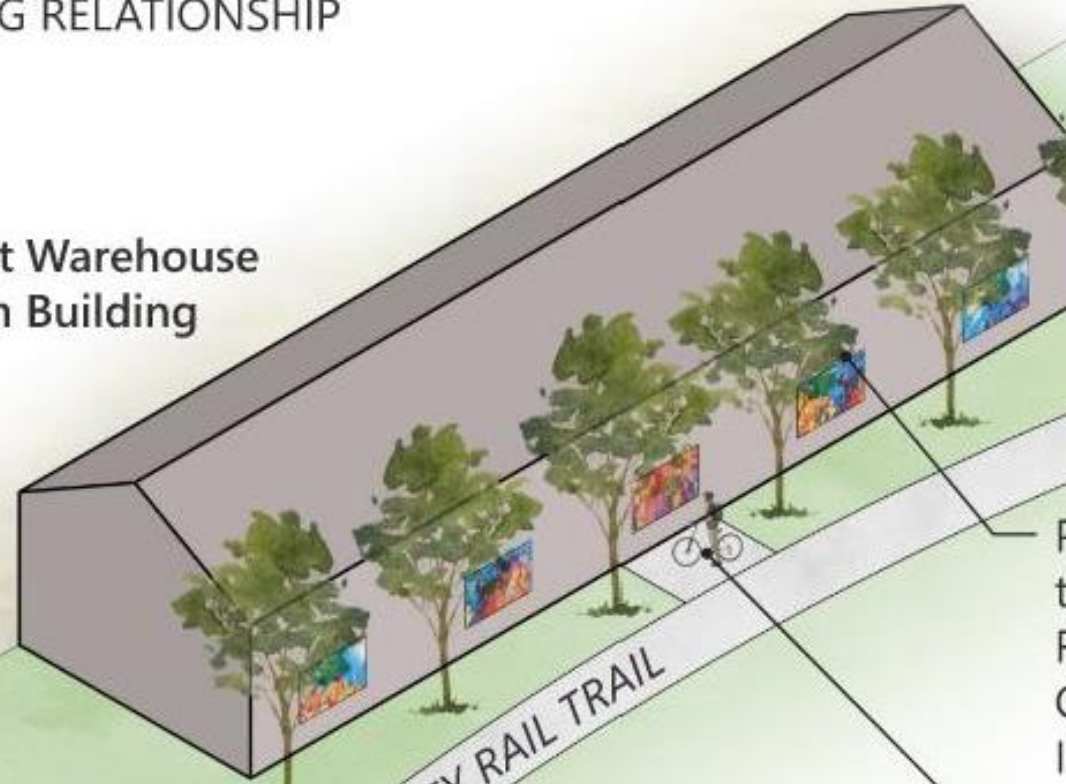
Draft Strategies & Recommendations: Economic Development & Community Connections

- **Educational & Recreational Programming**   
 - Encourage local and regional **trail-based educational and recreational programming** and events in coordination with schools, libraries, and other organizations or resources
 - Support bike, ski, snowshoe **lending libraries** and/or rental opportunities
 - Support **working lands educational and promotional opportunities** to highlight Vermont farms and forests as part of the LVRT identity
- **Cultural Resources**   
 - Coordinate with state and local historical organizations to identify **historical site opportunities** and develop **interpretive signage plan**



ADJACENT BUILDING RELATIONSHIP

Adjacent Warehouse
/Farm Building



Tree Planting to
"Soften" Building
Facade

Programming Opportunity
to Highlight Cultural
Resources (Art, Historical/
Cultural/Environmental
Interpretation, etc.)

Provide Opportunity to Step
Off the Trail and Engage with
Interpretive Elements

LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL TRAIL









Programming & Cultural Resources





Draft Strategies & Recommendations: Economic Development & Community Connections

- **Community Assistance**   
 - **Support communities** seeking funding for development or enhancement projects (e.g. trailheads, amenities, wayfinding, services, gateways, pathways to trailside communities)
- **Trail Identity**   
 - Establish a **cohesive trail identity** and incorporate into signage, wayfinding, guidance, amenities, and promotional materials



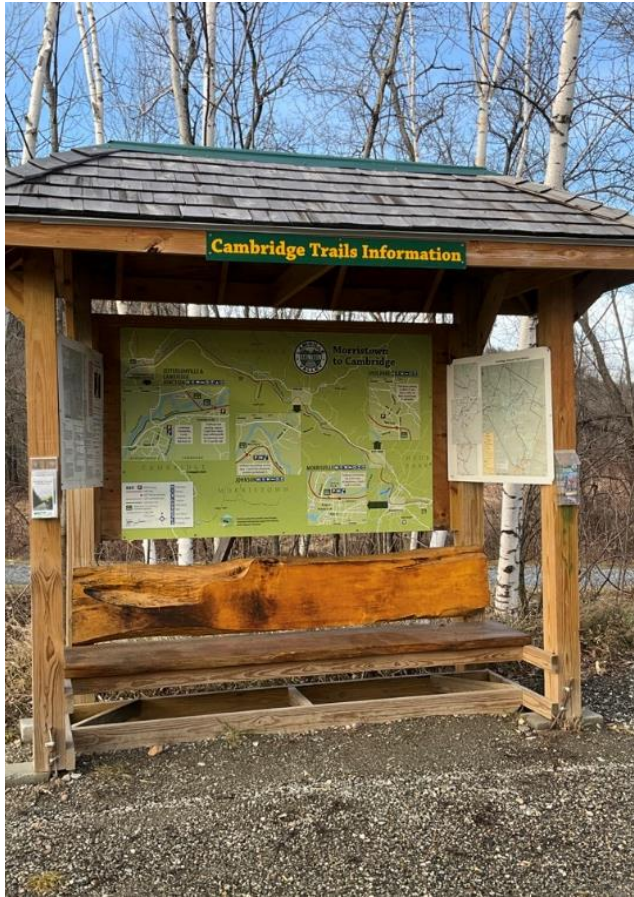
Community Assistance

- Grant Program Announcement
 - **\$2 million in grant funding** available for improvements along the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT)
 - The Program will support improving **trail amenities** and **visitor experience** along the LVRT
 - Reimbursement program with a **20% local cash match** requirement
 - Municipalities may apply as a **consortium**
 - Municipalities are encouraged to work with their **Regional Planning Commission** in refining project ideas
 - Application process opens in August, with the **applications due in October**



LVRT Graphic Identity

- Build on existing foundation



PRIMARY LOGOTYPE

Seal—Full Color



Seal—Black



Seal—Reverse



Seal—White

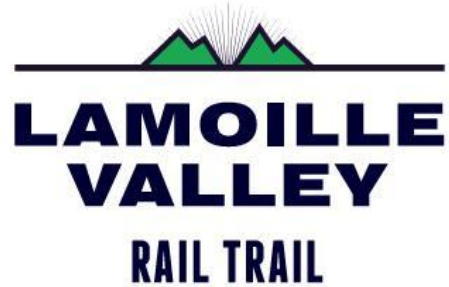


ALTERNATIVE LOCKUPS

Side By Side (Suggested Use: Letterheads, Web banners)



Horizon—Vertical (Suggested Use: Signage)



Horizon—Horizontal (Suggested Use: Signage)



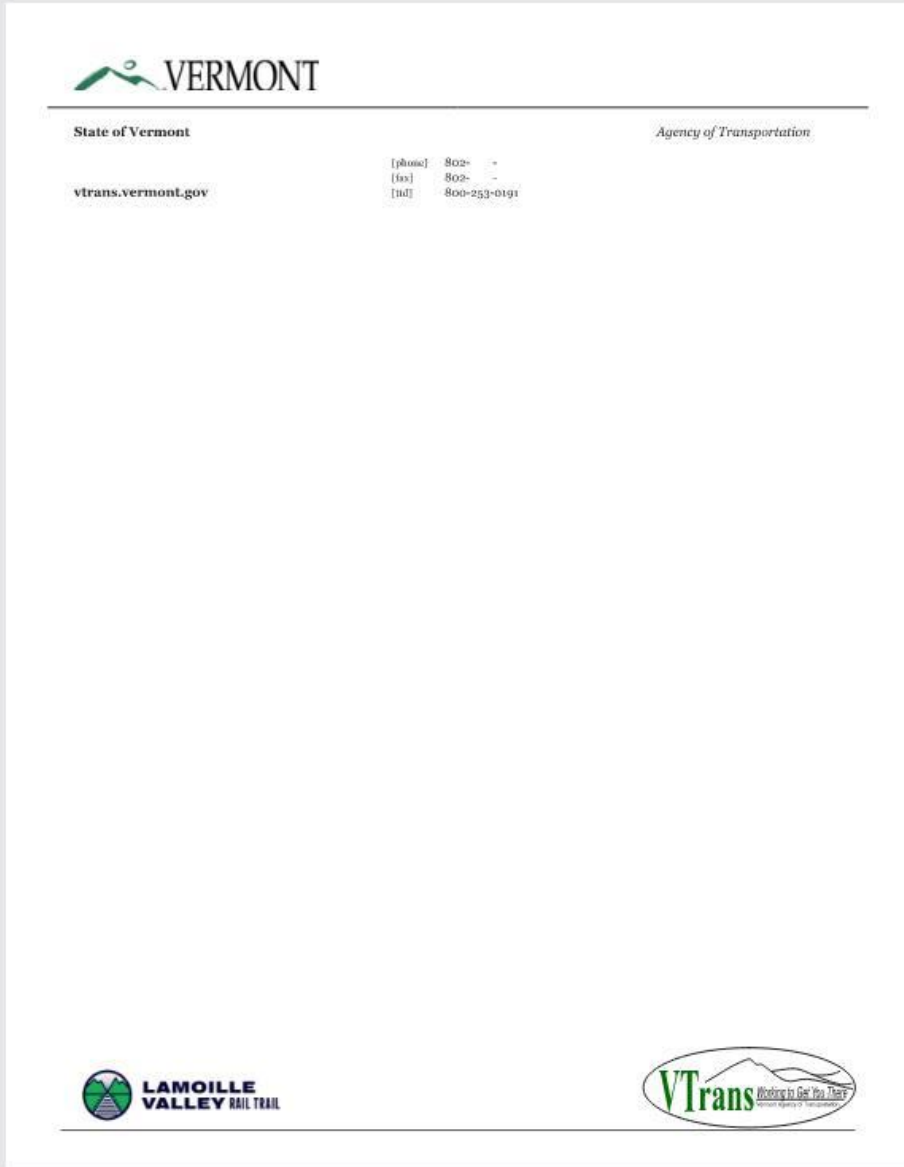
Horizon—LVRT (Suggested Use: Stickers/Window Decals)



LVRT Simple Seal (Suggested Use: Stickers/Window Decals)



LOGO USAGE EXAMPLE





VERMONT

State of Vermont Agency of Transportation

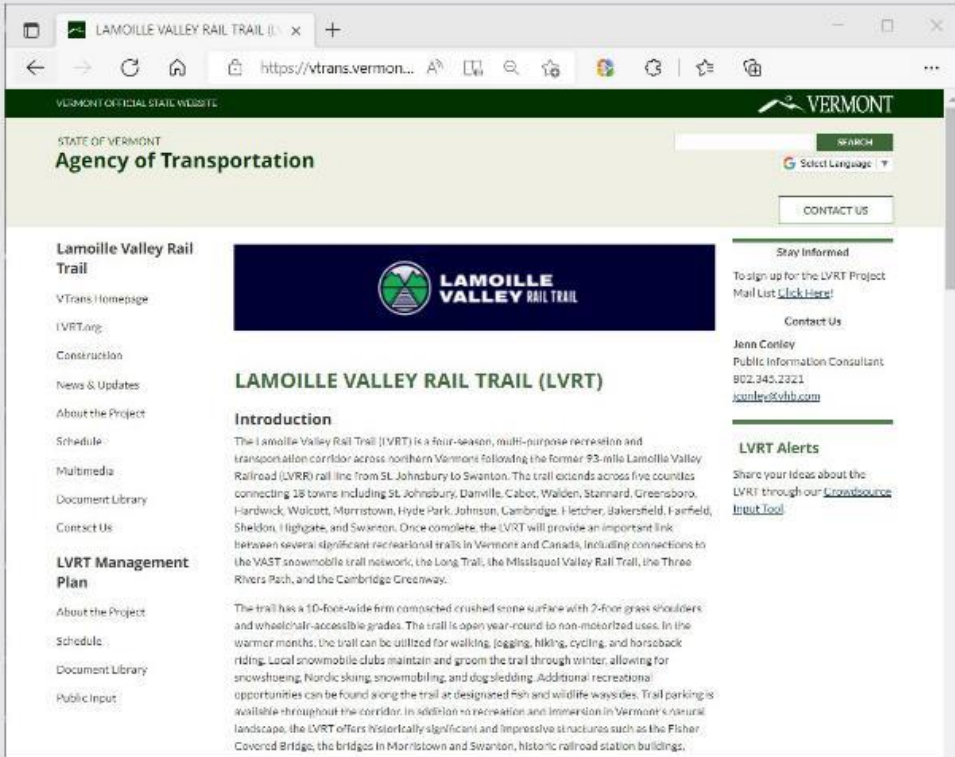
vtrans.vermont.gov

[phone] 802- -
[fax] 802- -
[toll] 800-253-0191



VTrans Letterhead

Website Banner



LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL TRAIL (LVRT)

STATE OF VERMONT
Agency of Transportation

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail

- VTrans Homepage
- LVRT.org
- Construction
- News & Updates
- About the Project
- Schedule
- Multimedia
- Document Library
- Contact Us

LVRT Management Plan

- About the Project
- Schedule
- Document Library
- Public Input

LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL TRAIL (LVRT)

Introduction

The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) is a four-season, multi-purpose recreation and transportation corridor across northern Vermont following the former 93-mile Lamoille Valley Railroad (LVR) rail line from St. Johnsbury to Swanton. The trail extends across five counties connecting 18 towns including St. Johnsbury, Danville, Cabot, Walden, Stannard, Greensboro, Hardwick, Wolcott, Morristown, Hyde Park, Johnson, Cambridge, Fletcher, Bakersfield, Fairfield, Sheldon, Highgate, and Swanton. Once complete, the LVRT will provide an important link between several significant recreational trails in Vermont and Canada, including connections to the VAST snowmobile trail network, the Long Trail, the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, the Three Rivers Path, and the Cambridge Greenway.

The trail has a 10-foot-wide firm composed crushed stone surface with 2-foot grass shoulders and wheelchair-accessible grades. The trail is open year-round to non-motorized uses. In the warmer months, the trail can be utilized for walking, jogging, hiking, cycling, and horseback riding. Local snowmobile clubs maintain and groom the trail through winter, allowing for snowshoeing, Nordic skiing, snowmobiling, and dogsledding. Additional recreational opportunities can be found along the trail at designated fish and wildlife waysides. Trail parking is available throughout the corridor. In addition to recreation and immersion in Vermont's natural landscape, the LVRT offers historically significant and impressive structures such as the Fisher Covered Bridge, the bridges in Morristown and Swanton, historic railroad station buildings,

Stay Informed

To sign up for the LVRT Project Mail List [Click Here!](#)

Contact Us

Jenn Conley
Public Information Consultant
802.345.2321
jconley@vtfb.com

LVRT Alerts

Share your ideas about the LVRT through our [crowdsourcing input tool](#)

Next Steps





Next Steps

- **Draft Management Plan** | June
- **Public Comment Period** | July
- **Final Management Plan** | August

Public Input





Questions?

Comments?





Keep in touch!

Amy Bell, VTrans Project Manager
802-279-0783 | amy.bell@vermont.gov

Karen Sentoff, VHB
802-497-6130 | ksentoff@vhb.com

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt>



Thank you!

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt>



Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Management Plan

VTrans Leadership Meeting
July 27th, 2022





Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Management Plan Overview
- Draft Strategies & Recommendations
- Next Steps

Welcome & Introductions





Management Plan Team

■ Project Team

- **Amy Bell** | VTrans Project Manager
- **Jackie Cassino** | Rail Trails Program Manager
- **Chris Hunt** | Construction Project Supervisor
- **Jacqui DeMent** | Planning Coordinator
- **David Saladino** | VHB
- **Karen Sentoff** | VHB
- **Elisabeth Sundberg** | VHB
- **Jeff Dube** | VHB

■ Stakeholder Group

- **Michele Boomhower** | VTrans Director of Policy & Planning
- **Jon Kaplan** | VTrans Bicycle & Pedestrian Program Manager
- **Joel Perrigo** | VTrans LVRT Construction Project Manager
- **Mark Fitzgerald** | VTrans Rail Property Management Section Chief
- **Ken Brown** | Vermont Association of Snow Travelers
- **Dan Delabruere** | VTrans Rail & Aviation Bureau Director
- **Nate Formalarie** | ACCD, Department of Tourism and Marketing
- **Rob Moore** | Lamoille County Planning Commission
- **David Snedeker** | Northeastern Vermont Development Association
- **Bethany Remmers** | Northwest Regional Planning Commission
- **Nancy Banks / Carol Hodges** | Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail

Management Plan Overview



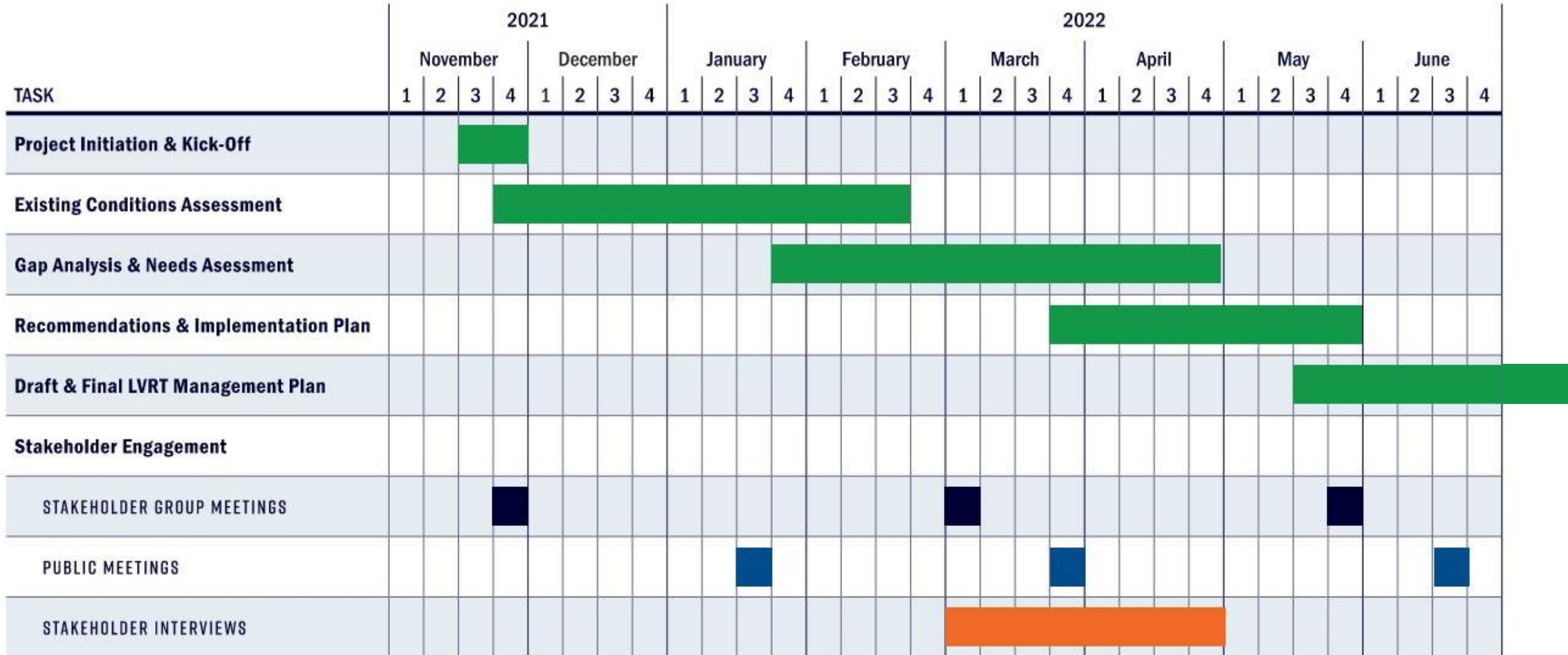


What is a Management Plan?

- Seeks **Stakeholder Input** on priorities & potential issues
- Articulates a **Vision & Goals** for a cohesive trail system
- Develops **Strategies & Recommendations** to guide:
 - Management
 - Maintenance & Operations
 - Economic Development & Community Connections



Project Schedule



DRAFT Strategies & Recommendations





Developing Draft Strategies & Recommendations

1. Stakeholder Input & Background Investigations

Web Map

Public Comments

Public Meetings

Stakeholder Interviews



ABOUT THE PROJECT

LVRT Management Plan

With the anticipated completion of the 93 miles of trail in the fall of 2022, the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) will be a year-round recreational facility that will draw residents and visitors alike to the northern tier of Vermont. As use of the LVRT increases and as responsibility for trail management shifts from VAST to VTrans, it will be important for VTrans to have a clear plan for effectively managing and maintaining the LVRT into the future. As such, VTrans is engaging stakeholders in a robust planning process to develop a comprehensive Management Plan, identifying a cohesive vision for the trail and detailing the management and maintenance strategies to be employed into the future. The Management Plan will identify ways the LVRT can spur or complement economic development efforts, improve user experience, provide connections to other existing and planned facilities, connect to communities along its length, and offer a range of transportation options, while establishing necessary asset maintenance and operational procedures to ensure the trails continued enjoyment for years to come.

LVRT Issues & Opportunities Feedback

Sign In ?

LVRT Comments

+ Add Comment

With a rail trail of this length it will be a...	10
It might be a good idea to stress the op...	6
The Sheldon junction connecting the M...	6
With all the varied users, it makes sens...	5
As a lifelong VT resident and third year...	5
Ongoing efforts to control invasive Jap...	3
It would be wonderful to connect this t...	2
This is a dangerous crossing section. ...	2





Developing Draft Strategies & Recommendations

1. Stakeholder Input & Background Investigations

2. Screen Ideas through Vision & Goals





LVRT Vision Statement

The Vision for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is a **year-round, multiuse recreation and alternative transportation corridor** that is **well-maintained** and supports **economic vitality**, fosters **community connections**, and promotes **healthy lifestyles** across scenic, northern Vermont.



GOALS

OBJECTIVES



Support the **Economic Vitality** of Northern Vermont Communities

- Promote LVRT locally and regionally to draw visitors to the trail and trailside communities
- Improve connections to villages and town centers to encourage exploration of trailside communities
- Complement existing economic development plans in trailside communities



Cultivate **Community, Culture, and History** along the Trail and in Trailside Communities

- Foster trail stewardship opportunities to promote sense of community pride
- Encourage inclusive and respectful trail use
- Promote rural heritage, history, and educational programming



Promote **Healthy and Connected** Communities

- Encourage healthy and active lifestyles
- Provide meaningful opportunities for connection with the scenic, natural, and agricultural landscape
- Promote development and improve connections to recreational opportunities proximate to the LVRT
- Improve connections to alternative transportation networks and trail systems



Preserve the **Corridor** and Maintain Trail Condition

- Provide for routine asset condition assessment, maintenance, and preservation activities
- Support well-maintained facilities for health and safety
- Provide convenient trail access points along the LVRT with clear directional signage and well-maintained parking areas



Establish a **Well-Managed** Trail System

- Support and coordinate proactive trail management, maintenance, and operations activities
- Identify stable sources of funding for management, maintenance, operations, enhancements, and programming

Developing Draft Strategies & Recommendations

1. Stakeholder Input & Background Investigations






2. Screen Ideas through Vision & Goals



3. Align Strategies & Recommendations by "Bucket"



Recommended Strategies










MANAGEMENT		GOALS ADVANCED
Human Resources/ Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a staffing structure to efficiently support continuity and strategic management, maintenance, and operations 	
Volunteer Staff Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish proposed regional trail councils to engage trail champions and coordinate local volunteers Develop training programs to engage volunteers and partnering organizations (e.g. trail ambassadors, condition assessments, adopt a segment or trailhead programs) 	
MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS		GOALS ADVANCED
Asset Management & Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct routine inspection of all trail assets (trail surface, culverts, bridge structure, bridge surface, trailheads, signs) Identify and prioritize system preservation projects 	
Seasonal Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop annual maintenance plan Identify contractors and procure services for annual seasonal maintenance activities (mowing, trail surface rehab, etc.) 	
Best Management Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt and adopt best management practices for trail specific maintenance activities including surface inspection, vegetation management, wildlife management, and flood mitigation 	
Operations Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish clear policies and procedures for: 1) Allowable uses and use permits, 2) Resolving user conflicts, 3) Mitigating encroachment & encampment issues, 4) Agreements supporting trail connections and amenities for the public good, 5) Trail access, crossing and right-of-way use agreements, and 6) Trail etiquette (incorporate in signage and promotional/educational materials) 	
User Count & Survey Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop count and survey program to gather visitor use and user feedback data 	

Recommended Strategies

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS		GOALS ADVANCED
Capital Improvements Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pause Places <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and support development of pause places • Trail Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of connecting or spur trail systems • Support promotion of regional or destination loops connecting to the LVRT • Trailheads & Amenities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish network of trailheads to provide trail access and trailside amenities at regular frequencies • Engage with local communities in the development and maintenance of trailheads and trailside amenities 	
Community Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support communities seeking funding for development or enhancement projects (e.g. trailheads, amenities, wayfinding, services, gateways, pathways to trailside communities) 	
Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with state and local historical organizations to identify historical site opportunities and develop interpretive signage plan 	
Tourism & Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build out LVRT visitor website and investigate integrating trip planning tools into the website • Coordinate with partner agencies and organizations to develop regional marketing campaign • Leverage recreational tourism opportunities through promotion of multisport synergies and coordinate with partner organizations (VAST, paddlers, Northern Forests, GMC, Velomont, local trail stewards/councils) • Encourage camping and lodging opportunities in trailside communities to support multiday tourism opportunities • Support development of trail friendly business program • Support development of visitor passport or quest program to encourage exploration • Identify funding and support research to quantify economic impact of the LVRT on trail communities and broader regional and state level economies 	
Educational & Recreational Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage local and regional trail based educational and recreational programming and events in coordination with schools, libraries, and other organizations or resources • Support bike, ski, snowshoe lending libraries and/or rental opportunities • Support working lands educational and promotional opportunities to highlight Vermont farms and forests as part of the LVRT identity 	
Trail Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a cohesive trail identity and incorporate into signage, wayfinding, guidance, amenities, and promotional materials 	

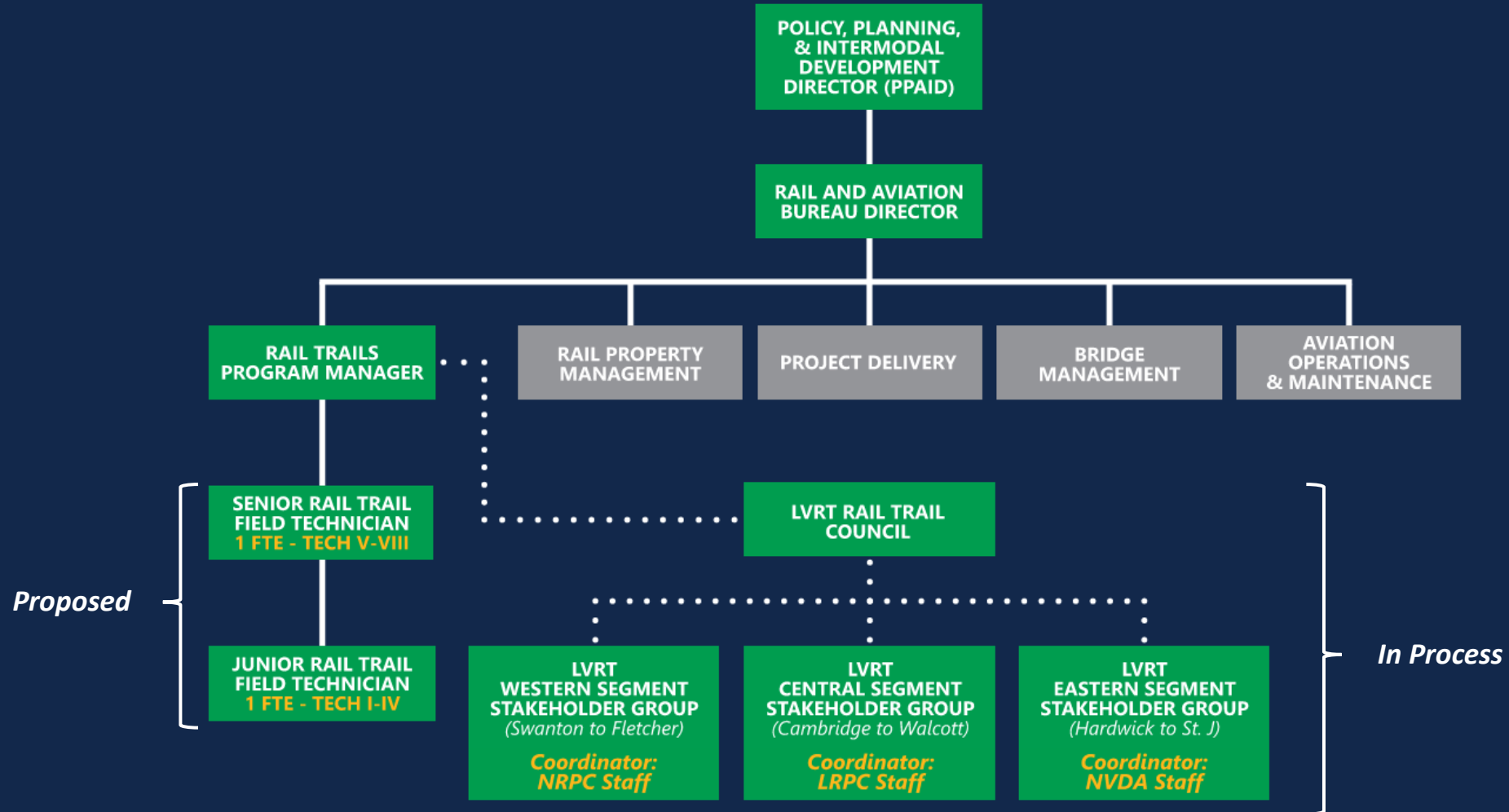


Draft Strategies & Recommendations: Management

- **Human Resources/Staffing**     
 - Implement recommended **staffing structure** to support continuity and strategic management of the LVRT
- **Volunteer Staff Management**    
 - Establish **Regional LVRT Stakeholder Groups** to coordinate local volunteers
 - Develop **training programs** to engage volunteers



Draft Strategies & Recommendations: Management





Draft Strategies & Recommendations: Maintenance & Operations

■ Asset Management Maintenance & Inspection

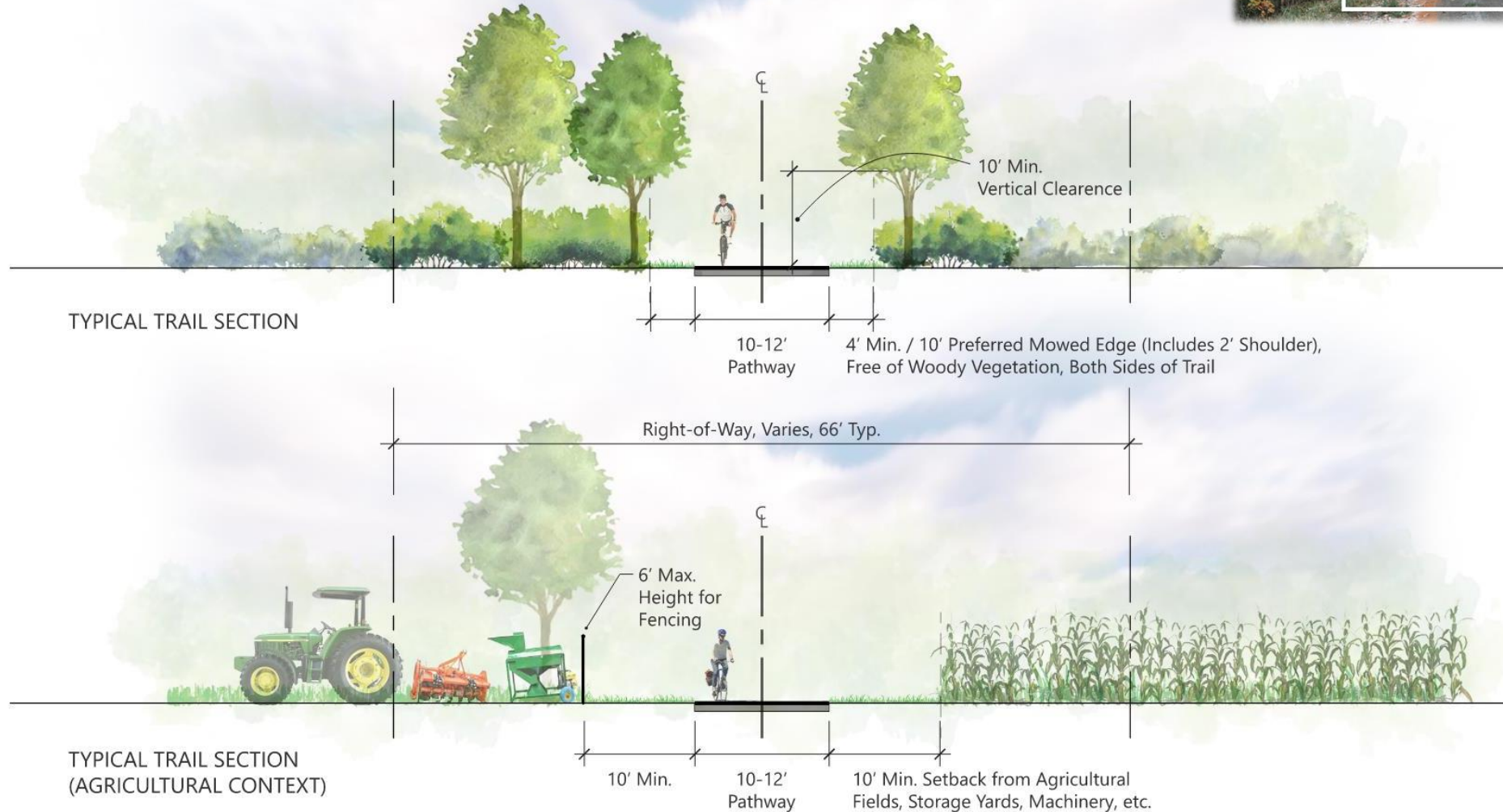


- Adapt **best management practices** for trail specific maintenance activities
- Establish **annual maintenance plan**
- Conduct **routine inspections**
- Prioritize **system preservation** projects

■ User Count & Survey Program






- Develop **count and survey program**

Maintenance & Operations

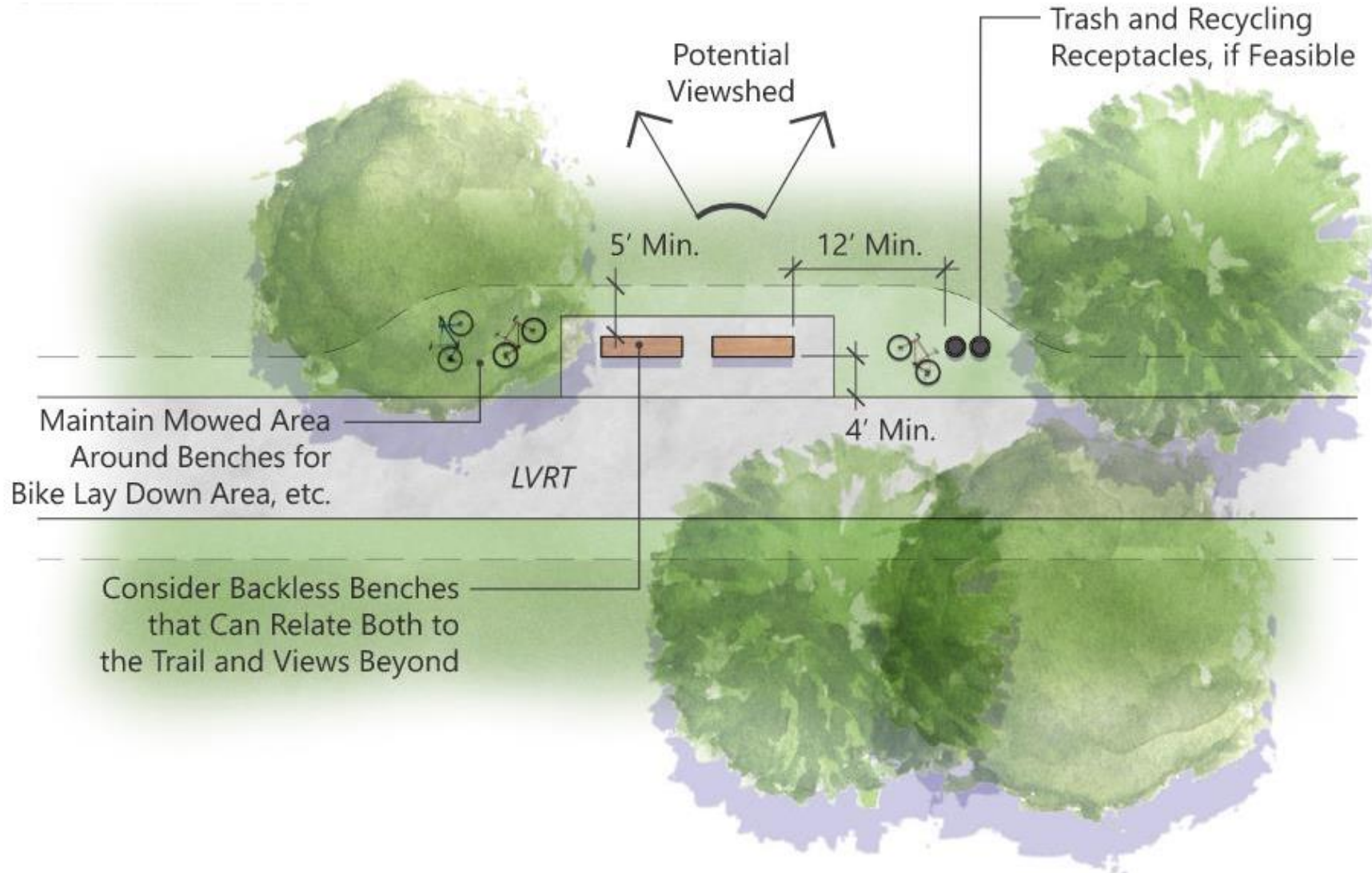




Draft Strategies & Recommendations: Economic Development & Community Connections

- **Capital Improvement Projects**     
- **Pause Places**
 - Support development of **pause places**
- **Trail Connections**
 - Support development of **connecting or spur trail** systems and **regional or destination loops**
- **Trailheads**
 - Establish **network of trailheads** and engage local communities in **development and maintenance of trailheads**

Pause Places



Trailheads

- Trailheads serve as gateways to the LVRT and to trailside communities





Trailhead Amenity Levels



Amenities that should be included for a trailhead of this listed level



Amenities that may be included for a trailhead of this listed level

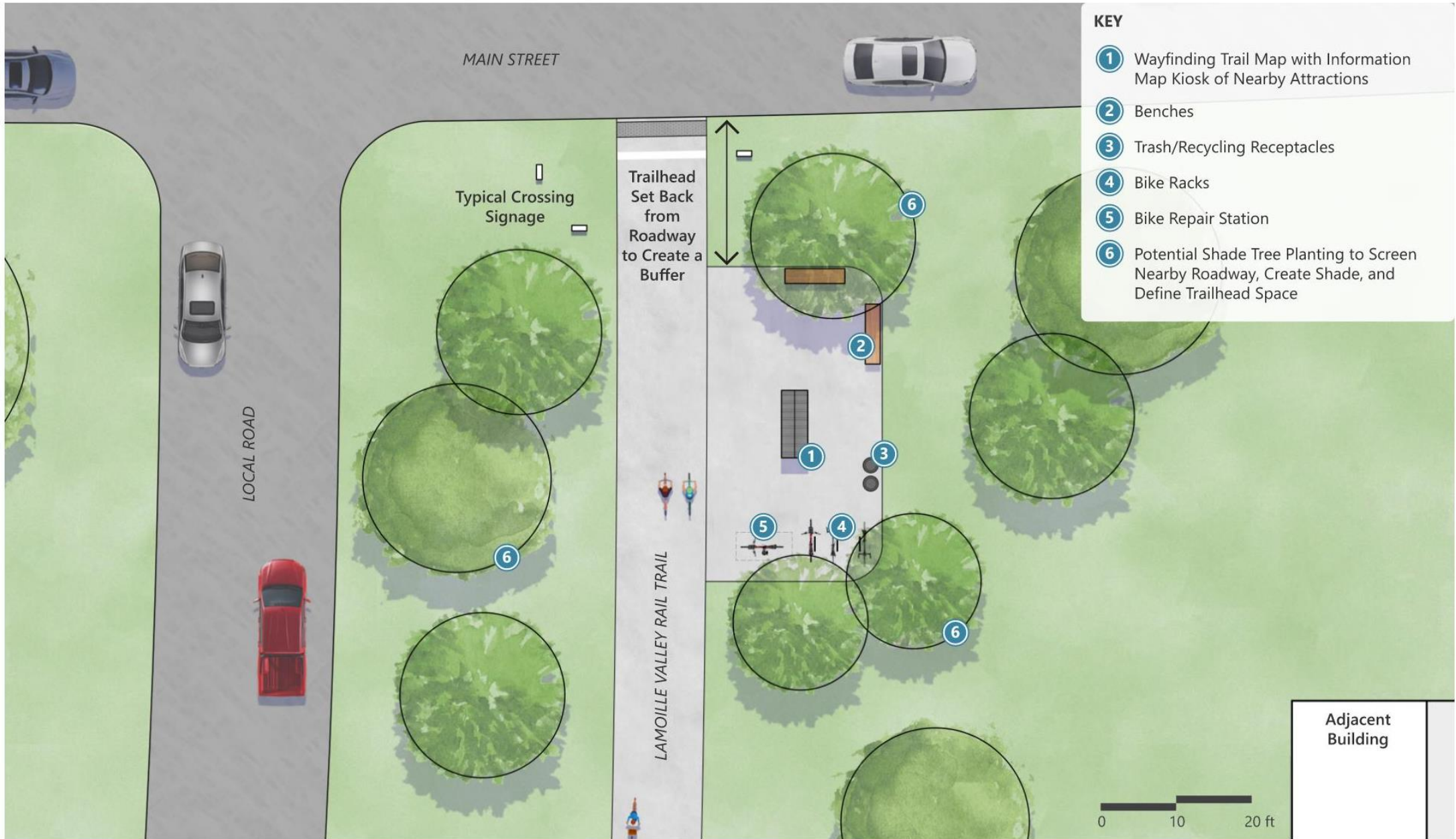


Amenities not typically found at a trailhead of this listed level

AMENITY	TRAILHEAD TYPE		
	Level 1 Small Trailhead	Level 2 Medium Trailhead	Level 3 Large Trailhead
Wayfinding Trail Map (Direction / Distance, etc.)	✓	✓	✓
Benches and Trash/Recycling Receptacles	✓	✓	✓
Bike Racks and Bike Repair Station	✓	✓	✓
Vehicular Parking	?	✓	✓
Historical / Interpretive Element	?	?	?
Information / Map Kiosk (Nearby Attractions, Events, Direction / Distance, etc.)	?	?	?
Entry / Arrival Signage	✗	✓	✓
Water Fountain / Bottle Filling Station	✗	?	✓
Picnic Area / Tables	✗	?	✓
Restroom Facility	✗	?	✓
Pavilion	✗	?	?
Landscaping	✗	?	?
Lighting	✗	?	?
Public Art	✗	?	?
Pull-Through Trailer Parking (Boat, Canoes, Sport Facility Support, etc.)	✗	✗	?

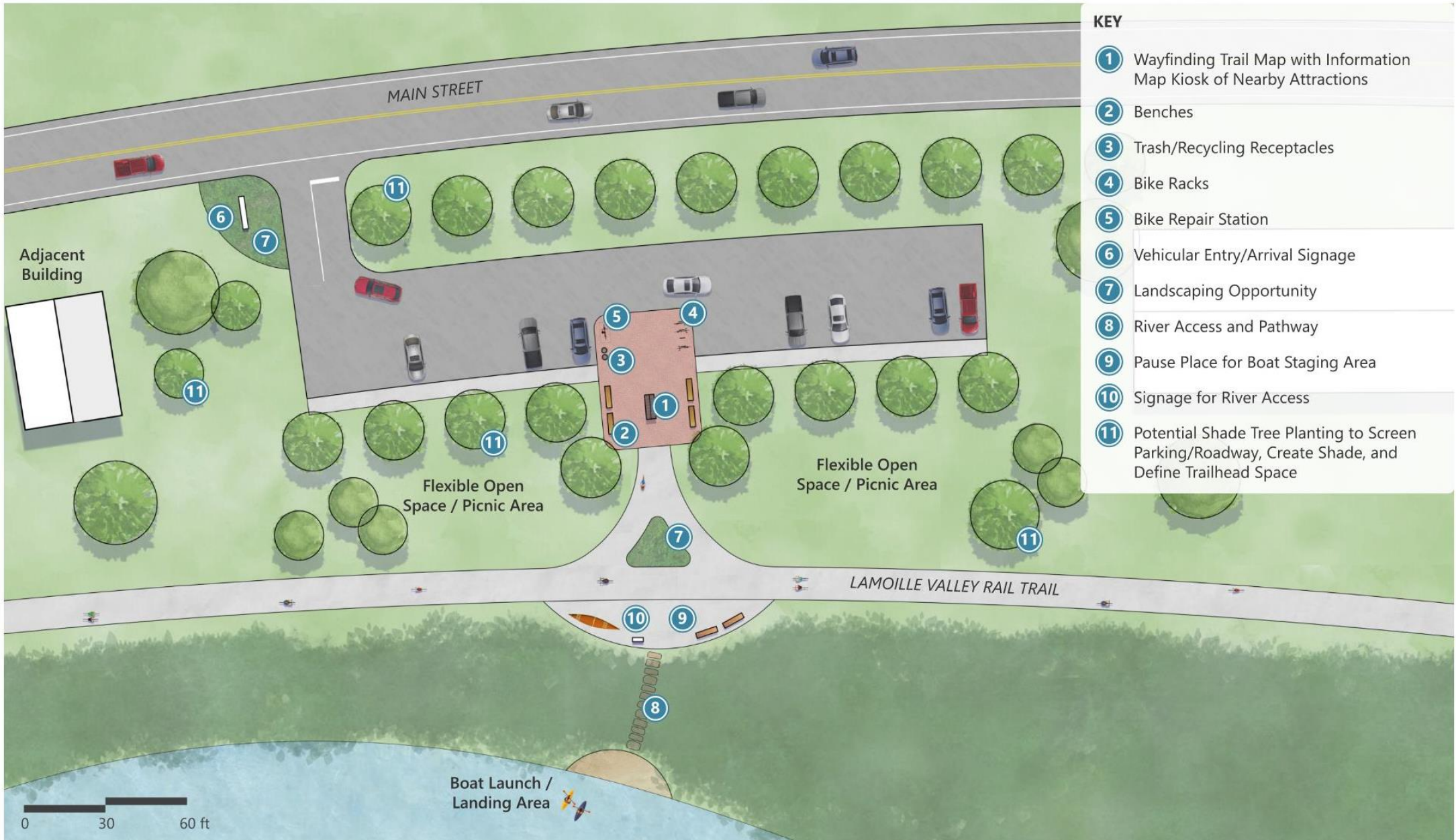


Trailhead Typical | Level 1



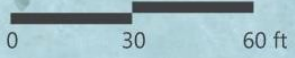


Trailhead Typical | Level 2



KEY

- 1 Wayfinding Trail Map with Information Map Kiosk of Nearby Attractions
- 2 Benches
- 3 Trash/Recycling Receptacles
- 4 Bike Racks
- 5 Bike Repair Station
- 6 Vehicular Entry/Arrival Signage
- 7 Landscaping Opportunity
- 8 River Access and Pathway
- 9 Pause Place for Boat Staging Area
- 10 Signage for River Access
- 11 Potential Shade Tree Planting to Screen Parking/Roadway, Create Shade, and Define Trailhead Space



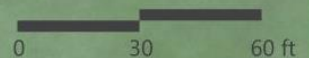


Trailhead Typical | Level 3



KEY

- ① Wayfinding Trail Map with Information Map Kiosk of Nearby Attractions
- ② Benches
- ③ Trash/Recycling Receptacles
- ④ Bike Racks and Repair Station
- ⑤ Pavilion with Restrooms, Water Fountain, and Picnic Area
- ⑥ Vehicular Entry/Arrival Signage
- ⑦ Landscaping Opportunity
- ⑧ Hiking Trail Connection
- ⑨ Pause Place and Hiking Trail Signage
- ⑩ Pathway Connection and Signage for Nearby Amenities
- ⑪ Potential Shade Tree Planting to Screen Parking, Create Shade, and Define Trailhead Space
- ⑫ Potential Play Area or Other Amenity, Location to Create a Synergy between Pavilion and Nearby Amenities







Trailhead & Amenity Spacing

- Proposed LVRT Trailhead Spacing based on best practices and existing conditions:
 - Designated trailhead at least every **8-10** miles
 - Average spacing of **3-5** miles
- Proposed LVRT Trailhead Facilities
 - Trailside restrooms average spacing of **16** miles
 - Trail parking average spacing of **5** miles
- Engage with local communities and stakeholders to develop and maintain trailheads and trailside amenities





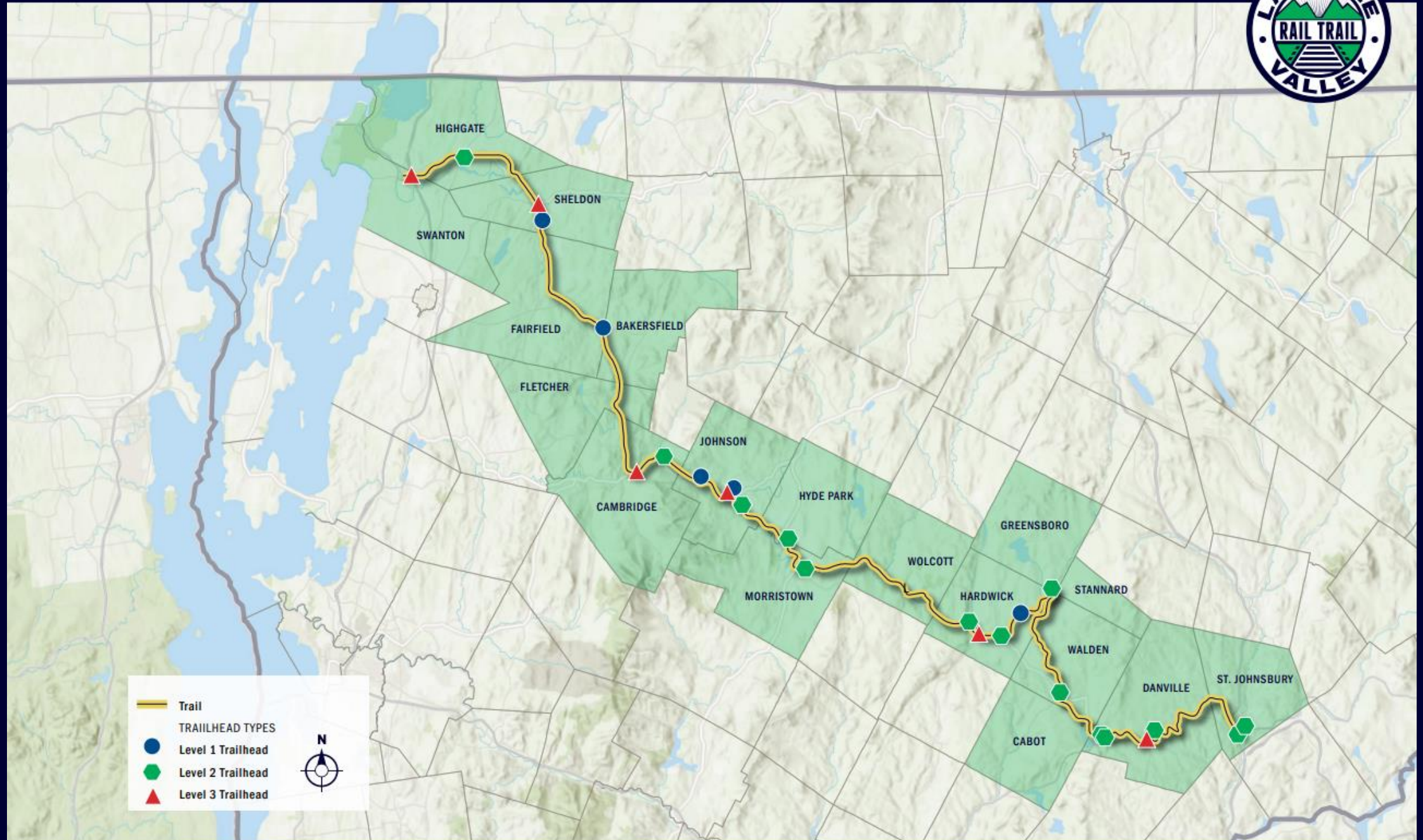
Trailhead & Amenity Spacing

- Designated trailhead at least every 8-10 miles
 - Average spacing of 3-5 miles
- Trailside restrooms average spacing of 16 miles
 - Trail parking average spacing of 5 miles

Legend		
TRAILHEAD TYPES		
Level 1 Trailhead	1	
Level 2 Trailhead	2	
Level 3 Trailhead	▲	
TRAILHEAD AMENITIES		
	Existing	Proposed
Trail Map		
Benches		
Trash Receptacles		
Bike Racks		
Bike Repair		
Parking		
Water Fountain		
Picnic Area		
Restrooms		



Trailhead & Amenity Spacing



Trail

TRAILHEAD TYPES

- Level 1 Trailhead
- Level 2 Trailhead
- Level 3 Trailhead











Draft Strategies & Recommendations: Economic Development & Community Connections

- **Tourism & Marketing** 🚂 🍴 🌲
 - Develop **LVRT visitor website** with **trip planning tools**
 - Develop **regional marketing campaign**
 - Promote recreational tourism and **multisport synergies**
 - Encourage **camping and lodging** opportunities in trailside communities
 - Support **trail friendly business program**
 - Support **passport or quest program**
 - Quantify **economic impact** of the LVRT on local and regional economy



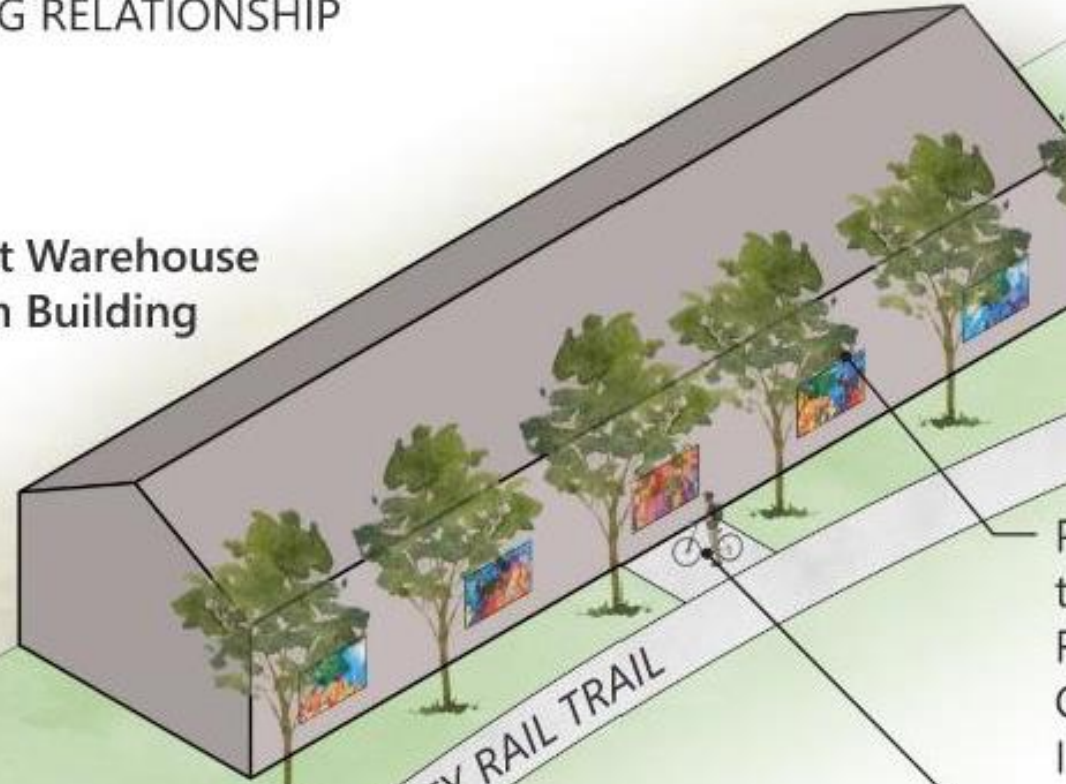
Draft Strategies & Recommendations: Economic Development & Community Connections

- Educational & Recreational Programming   
 - Encourage **trail-based educational and recreational** programming
 - Support bike, ski, snowshoe **lending libraries** and/or rental opportunities
 - Support **working lands** educational and promotional opportunities
- Cultural Resources   
 - Identify **historical site opportunities** and develop **interpretive signage plan**



ADJACENT BUILDING RELATIONSHIP

Adjacent Warehouse
/Farm Building



Tree Planting to
"Soften" Building
Facade

Programming Opportunity
to Highlight Cultural
Resources (Art, Historical/
Cultural/Environmental
Interpretation, etc.)

Provide Opportunity to Step
Off the Trail and Engage with
Interpretive Elements

LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL TRAIL



Community Assistance

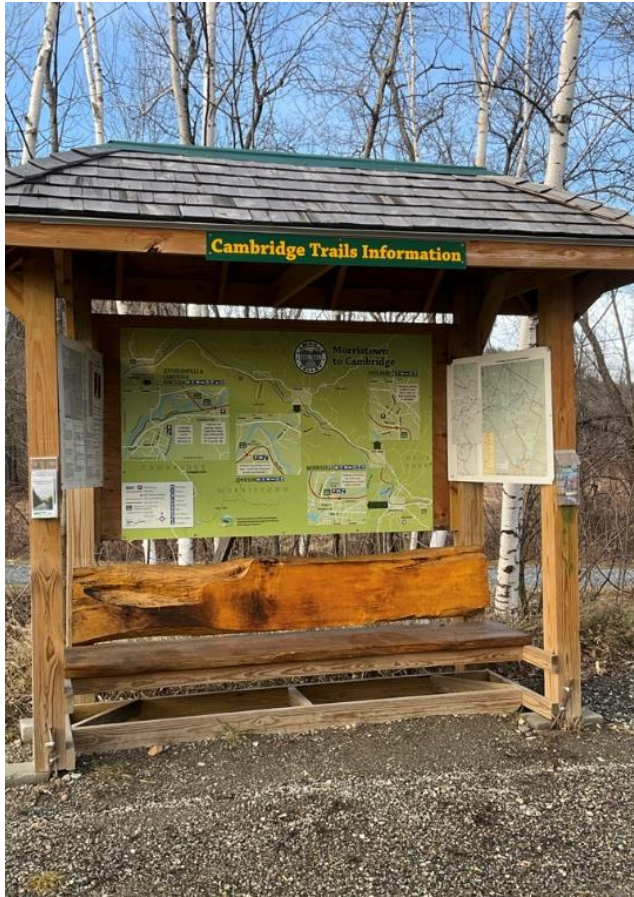
■ Grant Program Announcement

- **\$2 million in grant funding** available for improvements along the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT)
 - Funding for Feasibility, Scoping, Design & Construction
 - Not sure yet what level of support communities need
- The Program will support improving **trail amenities** and **visitor experience** along the LVRT
- Reimbursement program with a **20% local cash match** requirement
- Municipalities may apply as a **consortium**
- Application process opens in August, with the **applications due on November 1**



LVRT Graphic Identity

- Build on existing foundation



PRIMARY LOGOTYPE

Seal—Full Color



Seal—Black



Seal—Reverse



Seal—White



ALTERNATIVE LOCKUPS

Side By Side (Suggested Use: Letterheads, Web banners)



**LAMOILLE
VALLEY** RAIL TRAIL

Horizon—Vertical (Suggested Use: Signage)



Horizon—Horizontal (Suggested Use: Signage)



Horizon—LVRT (Suggested Use: Stickers/Window Decals)



LVRT Simple Seal (Suggested Use: Stickers/Window Decals)



Next Steps





Next Steps

- **Public Comment Period** | Early August
- **Final LVRT Management Plan** | End of August



Questions?

Comments?





Thank you!

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/lvrt>



Appendix B. Vendor List

Potential Vendor List

Dero (www.dero.com) – Bike Racks, Bike Repair Stations

Design Signs Vermont (www.designsignsvt.com) – Signage

Elkay (www.elkay.com) – Bottle Filling Stations

Madrax (www.madrax.com) – Bike Racks, Bike Repair Stations

New England Outdoor (www.neoutdoor.com) – Pavilions/Structures

Premier Signs and Graphics (www.premiersignsandgraphics.com) – Signage

Saris Infrastructure (www.sarisinfrastructure.com) – Bike Racks, Bike Repair Stations

Streetlife (www.streetlife.com/us) – Benches, Picnic Tables

Thomas Steele (www.thomas-steele.com) – Benches, Picnic Tables, Trash Receptacles

Timberhomes Vermont (www.timberhomesllc.com) – Trailhead Kiosk, Pavilions/Structures

Victor Stanley (www.victorstanley.com) – Benches, Picnic Tables, Trash Receptacles

NOTES:

1. Pavilions and structures such as portable restroom enclosures or trailhead map kiosks may be fabricated by a local contractor. Consult local/regional companies for quotes.
2. Consult local/regional stone supplier or quarry for quotes on stone slab benches.
3. Projects receiving Federal funding may require compliance with the Buy America and/or Buy American procurement provisions. The above list of vendors is known to carry products fulfilling these requirements. The individual purchaser must verify grant requirements and product compliance.