

October 15, 2009

NH 120 Bicycle-Pedestrian Corridor Study Field Review

Presented by:

Upper Valley Trails Alliance

Hanover Bike/Pedestrian Committee

Lebanon Pedestrian & Bicyclist Advisory Committee

NH Department of Transportation Bicycle/Pedestrian Program

Event Coordinator:

Dr. Doug Deaett, UVTA volunteer, and Hanover Bike/Ped Committee member



Review Overview:

On Wednesday morning two dozen tour participants gathered at the **Marriott Residence Inn** to prepare for a day of information sharing and visitation of bike & pedestrian facilities. As the group traveled from stop to stop for site visits and meetings with various stakeholders, an enhanced understanding of the transportation and recreation needs, interests and concerns was developed. Throughout the tour, representatives from various interest groups joined the ride or gave presentations about specific projects and concepts.

Larry Keniston, NH Bike-Ped Coordinator, shared his vision for the day. To build general consensus to move forward and make progress for sustainable and

active transportation in the Upper Valley, connecting bike, bus and walking opportunities and to connect the people of the community.

Russ Hirschler, Upper Valley Trails Alliance, shared the vision for improvements in trail connectivity and spoke of the Loop Trail effort to identify and mark an on-road and off-road transportation and recreational trail loop in the hub of the valley for bicycles and pedestrians – the Upper Valley Loop Trail.

Peter Knights representing development interests in the Route 120 corridor, spoke of opportunities between Greensboro Rd. to Centerra and Rte. 120 for connectivity. Well coordinated efforts between UVTA, Suncook, UVLT and other concerned parties can result in some useful improvements.



Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center:

John Leigh, Dave Stiger and Dan Dahmen presented on behalf of DHMC sharing the following:

A Dartmouth Hitchcock Parking and Commuting study was conducted this year. 68% of employees drive alone to work, 14% carpool, 8% bike or walk, 7% use transit and 3% are dropped off.

Bikeable shoulder planned from Mt. Support Rd. on part of Lahaye Dr., 4' shoulder on both sides of access rd. (12' travel lanes).

Some discussion with four participants (L. Keniston, C. Smith, D. Brooks, J. Taylor, J. Leigh) re examples of 11' narrowing of travel lane to calm traffic and provide a wider area for shoulder or bike lane.

More difficult to improve DHMC Loop Rd. bike paths/lanes due to slopes and utilities along that route.

Bicycling commuter survey results: 50/50 prefer on rd. versus separate pathways (survey was bike focused only, didn't include walking use/needs).

DHMC completed a carbon footprint study re carbon and ecological impacts – 33% associated with transportation (automobile use) to and from hospital (doesn't include deliveries of goods).

Bicyclists are interested in cleaned/better maintained shoulders and pathways.

Consider one southbound lane for cars versus two at Greensboro intersection vicinity to allow for a bike lane.

D. Dahmen mentioned possible system of incentives to attract more bike/ped. use.

Potential for improved access from W. Lebanon, and Rte. 10 residential areas. via walking and biking across D. College lands if landowner interested/willing to accommodate improvements (J.Taylor). N. Cormen suggests balancing trail needs/locating with natural sensitive areas.



Dartmouth Hitchcock Parking Lot 9

Joanna Whitcomb, **Dartmouth College**, shared information on **Lot 9** and the proposed 390 car parking lot – need to identify how to connect to Greensboro

Rd. intersection and to paths leading to the hospital. Improved **bus stop** shelters and visibility of stop and connectivity to destination points are needed at stops on both sides of **Rte. 120 at Buck Rd.**



Gile Hill Development

Miro Weinberger, Hartford Group, suggested a possible trail cut parallel between the **Gile Hill Community** and Rte. 120 (in area where vegetation already removed for drainage improvements) towards DHMC. Connections from Gile Hill to Buck Rd. and the Greensboro Rd. Intersection also discussed.



Hanover Conservation Council office

Molly Donovan, HCC, informed the group that UVLT, City of Lebanon and HCC have partnered on planning of Rte. 120 corridor from Land Conservation

perspective.

Jeanie McIntyre, UVLT and M. Donovan – some easements with specific requirements, each easement is different depending on conservation purposes, conservation values and potential impacts. Some easements provide opportunity for bicycle trails. Nature Preserves are most restrictive. Judy McNab, Lebanon Con Com, mentioned some areas shouldn't have roads – too sensitive/important natural values.

J. Taylor mentioned that several easements he is familiar with don't provide for hardened (paved) surfaces. Jeanie M. mentioned that new easements could allow hardened surfaces if landowner interests, conservation purposes, values and potential impacts were addressed.



Greensboro Rd. Intersection

The **Greensboro Rd. Intersection** was difficult to cross – redesign of intersection should be considered to provide better connectivity for walkers and riders.



Hypertherm (at Great Hollow Rd.)

Barbara Couch and Perry Seale represented Hypertherm and shared information about the companies visions and interests for improved off road connectivity.

Interest was expressed in sidewalks and other connections to other facilities along Etna/Great Hollow Rd. and Mt. Support Rd.

The vision is a pedestrian/transportation system to take cars off the road.

Tour participants interacted in a discussion concerning intermodal efforts in the Upper Valley to create a transportation hub.

Hypertherm is interested in a campus type mind set to connect their facility and other businesses/landowners in the area

Doug Deaett suggested that it would be nice if whole Valley had a campus mind set.

Nicole Cormen, suggested one possible improvement would be to loop one of Advance Transit buses to serve this area of Etna Rd.

N.Cormen, create an intelligent system of connections (balance needs and impacts).



Sharrows on Lebanon St. in Hanover

D. Deaett mentioned concept to soon be adopted in federal rd. sign standard for shared use of road for bikes and car when lane too narrow for bike lane. Marking (two chevrons with bike image below) provides alignment for bike to stay out of car door hazard line.



Dartmouth College Green, J. Whitcomb

Dartmouth College Green, J. Whitcomb, mentioned Dartmouth College's efforts to create a more campus friendly environment for bike and ped use. More bike

racks, paths, reduced or calmed traffic, and incentives to reduce need for more parking.



New Bike Lanes on Rt. 10A/Norwich Main St.

Lucy Gibson, Norwich Transportation Committee & Smart Mobility, shared information on road alignment and use capacity study which led to VTrans and Town of Norwich trialing and then approving lane reduction to one lane with bike lane addition. More bicycle users since the road has much safer areas for riders.

King Arthur Trail at Mill Rd. J.Taylor, showed the group how the off road packed earth trail provides a safe alternative for walking or bicycling along Rte. 5 to the Dresden Athletic fields and possibility beyond as part of Upper Valley Loop Trail improvements in the future.

Hartford Paved Multi-use path, Matt Osborn, Hartford Planner, led the group over the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile off road alignment from Dothan Brook School to the village of Wilder where he discussed recent Rte. 5 improvements including new sidewalks and widening of road shoulders to improve accommodation for bicycling use. Sidewalk improvements also planned for Depot St. (towards Kilowatt Park/Wilder Dam) as part of the recently approved Bike/Ped Master Plan for Hartford.



Wilder Dam Crossing

Tour participants crossed Wilder Dam thanks to Ken Alton. The tour group was very interested in seeing a possible river crossing in this vicinity. Connectivity to DHMC via the Boston Lot Lake property was discussed. Additional connectivity from the NH side of the river was discussed. TransCanada is willing to connect to the “**River Park**” owners and adjacent landowners river front areas to create a trail to the Rte. 4 bridge and across to WRJ. The review continued past the River Park site to Rte. 4 where a temporary bridge is being installed as part of a Rte. bridge replacement project.

Caroline Radisch, ORW Landscape Architects, described their work on the **Mascoma River Greenway** and **Westboro Railyard** projects which would potentially connect all the way to High St. and the Mall in Lebanon. Improvements on the **Pinetree Cemetery Road** resulted in one bike lane being created.



Sewer Easement



Rail Bed

The rail bed south of Mascoma River adjacent to the Miracle Mile is heavily overgrown with saplings and trees. ORW and the **Mascoma River Greenway** Committee will be working with the NH DOT Rail Bureau to see if portions of this corridor could be used as part of the Mascoma River Greenway trail. A **sewer corridor** that crosses a large section of Timken lands could also be considered as a possible trail corridor. Traveled through **Slayton Hill Rd. narrow underpass** to APD enroute to Lebanon.



Regional Planning Commission Office at 30 Bank St., Lebanon brainstorming session: how to create a Rt.120 corridor bike/ped/conservation masterplan

Doug Deaett shared his thoughts on the various developments occurring or proposed within the Rte. 120 corridor and the need for various stakeholders to

work together to oversee the development of a Phase II Master Plan for Bike and Pedestrian systems, taking into account stakeholder interests.

Nate Miller, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, expressed a need for the municipalities to take ownership of this process to be successful. Alan Hanscom, NH DOT is currently thinking about connections around Rte. 120 and Greensboro Rd. Need to engage the communities.

Russell Hirschler, UVTA, Asked What do people want? How are we going to do it? Why are we here? What results do you want?

Lelia Mellen, NPS and Thetford resident suggested importance of being as inclusive as possible in this process – there is regional interest in this area.

John Billings, representing Lyme Properties, expressed their interest in working with the community and sharing continued dialogue as they work on properties such as the **River Park** (located along the Connecticut River in West Lebanon). They plan to include public access and trails along the waterfront as part of this mixed-use development.

Larry Keniston/Dave Wood, stated the DOT looks to communities for ideas/projects (get in the 10 yr. funding plan). The next generation wants sustainable transportation.

Nicole Cormen, Lebanon City council suggested that the Review brought together a good convergence of interests.

Perry Seale: Include various stakeholders in this process to create an intermodal facility.

Doug McIlroy: Hanover Con Com and Trails Committee, suggested there needs to be more collaboration between RPC and towns – transportation should be 1st topic.

UVTA (Russ/John) offered their website as possible place to house discussion on this tour and Route 120 planning effort. It closely aligns with the Loop Trail project that they are heading up with the four UV hub communities. To be successful in the Rte. 120 planning, identify personal interests and those groups with ownership re Loop Trail for example.

Doug Deaett discussed the climate change goal for 2012 and including transportation with cap and trade and possibility for EPA regulation.

People should be informed of other meetings ie: TMA (UV Transportation Management Association), Loop Trail, MRGreenway project, etc.

PK Knights recommended continuity of facilities (no dead-ends). Use sewer line easements - they're the perfect place for pedestrian or bike paths in these areas.

Jeanie McIntyre, UV Land Trust spoke about the market and how some properties may be developed. Clearer options exist on "public" lands including road corridors.

Doug McIlroy, identified that one easy improvement that would go a long way in improving access along the Rte. 120 corridor would be to re-connect the end of Mt. Support Rd. to Rte. 120. It would be a quick and low-cost fix.

Shared information on meetings and projects is needed.

UVTA will prepare overview of tour and meetings to send out to participants and stakeholders. General interest to collaborate and continue discussions on who and how we will move forward with Rte. 120 corridor bike-ped-trail planning discussion. Nate Miller commented on the fact that some key folks were not at the meeting this afternoon and it would be helpful to have additional representation from Lebanon, Hanover along with Alan Hanscom (NH DOT) to further these discussions.

Advanced Transit, Van Chestnut, shared information on **bus route improvements**.

A project advisory committee is reviewing current and potential route improvements. Focal point for improvement is Colburn Park which is busiest bus stop. Plan to better waiting area and connectivity. Will develop other focused projects. The busiest Hanover stop is the Dartmouth bookstore. Facility adjustments were recently made and have improved safety and access at that location. One great bus stop that was mentioned by tour participant is next to the Dataman in WRJ, VT.



Upper Valley Transportation Management Association meeting

General introductions and discussion with TMA members and tour participants. More details on intermodal facility concept were discussed and interest in seeing bus route improvements and bike-ped-trail projects aligning to achieve most benefit. More detail available in TMA minutes.



Former Rail Tunnel under Downtown Lebanon Mall area

A small group continued on the tour through the former **rail tunnel** under the Lebanon Mall to High St., to the **pedestrian bridge** crossing North of Exit 18 over I-89, and then along School St. and up **Mt. Support Rd.** (where bike lane or off-road path improvements are being planned) to return to Centerra.

Notes compiled by John Taylor, UVTA, photos and edits by Larry Keniston NHDOT