

City of Keene
New Hampshire

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

8:15 AM

**2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Drew Bryenton, Chair
Dillon Benik
Jan Manwaring
Michael Davern
Rowland Russell

Staff Present:

William Schoefmann, GIS Technician
Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks &
Recreation
Kürt Blomquist, Director of Public
Works

Members Not Present:

Todd Horner, Vice Chair
Dr. Chris Brehme, Alternate
Charles Redfern, Alternate

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Bryenton called the meeting to order at 8:17 AM.

2) April Minutes

Mr. Russell made a motion to accept the minutes of April 13, 2022 as presented. Mr. Davern seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3) Top 5 Project Priorities 2022-23

Mr. Schoefmann stated he sent out a spreadsheet that the committee used in 2020 to start ranking projects. He explained that they used two components to scoring/priority setting. One is organizational support, which would be staff input in terms of what they have for guiding documents, if the project is in the CIP, Master Plan, etc. He showed the group the project priority assessment tool and stated that after they rank everything they use the tool to see where projects fall on the chart. Then the committee takes it upon themselves to say which projects are high priority and need to be brought to the forefront and have support from staff.

Mr. Schoefmann stated the top 5 priorities from the last ranking process are wayfinding, all of the components of the Transportation Heritage Trail, West Street, and amenities in general.

Ms. Manwaring asked if there was anything on the list that has to do with downtown, especially Central Square, with regards to safety and riding bikes. Chair Bryenton stated Downtown Revitalization would include the aforementioned. Mr. Schoefmann added that it is not a top 5 priority as of now, though. Chair Bryenton added that amenities is top 5 and is broken out into Downtown. Ms. Manwaring stated it is important to note so that Mr. Benik can bring the committee's concerns to the Downtown Infrastructure Project Steering Committee meetings. Mr. Benik stated the first meeting consisted of introductions, purpose, what has to be accomplished as far as utilities, and announcement that they will be discussing with a consulting company for the next meeting. Chair Bryenton stated P14 Main Street is on the list as well, which he believes is the essence of the Downtown Revitalization.

Dr. Russell observed that safety concerns keep coming up so it might be good to break things down that way, no amenity or particular project but safety that's high on their radar, with at least three different locations. Mr. Benik stated separating safety and amenities is important and he added that they don't have to match the City with priority.

The committee then proceeded to go through and discuss each project individually and give each a ranking/priority. Mr. Schoefmann mentioned that there are items listed in grey that are pulled out as overall objectives. He gave the examples of 'Overall Rail Trail Completion and Regional Connectivity,' 'Maintenance Plan,' 'Access Point and Connectivity Analysis,' and 'Baseline Data Collection.'

P1 CRT Eastern Ave – NH 101: Mr. Schoefmann described the project as design and construction including drainage, brush clearing, grading, stone dust surfacing, and a possible pocket park at the old trestle abutment at NH 101. Mr. Bohannon stated the project is happening and funding from the government is coming. Chair Bryenton stated the project has a lot of momentum so it may be safe for them to take their focus off of it and focus on phases down the road, to keep it moving. He suggested it be a medium priority. Mr. Schoefmann stated there is a lot of opportunity in terms of promotion for this project. Mr. Bohannon suggested it be high priority noting the scope of work is being worked on. Mr. Blomquist stated this project is slated as an FY23 construction project and suggested keeping it as a high priority until the project has actually begun. Mr. Schoefmann agreed, stating they should keep their foot on the gas until the project is completed. Dr. Russell mentioned they could keep it at the bottom of the high priority projects. General consensus was to keep this project as high priority.

P2 Roundhouse T I Widening: Mr. Schoefmann stated this project is to replace the six foot sidewalks along sections of Emerald and School Street with eight foot sidewalks. Mr. Benik suggested this project be low priority and there was general agreement.

P3 JD Trail Maintenance: Mr. Bohannon stated the project is in the CIP and starts this year. He added that they are doing some matching grants for Goose Pond and will go after Recreational Trail grants as well, which have applications due at the end of June. Mr. Schoefmann stated the project is either FY23 or 24 so it's a project that's happening and high priority for staff because

it's budgeted. Dr. Russell stated the project seems like another project for the bottom of the high priorities. Mr. Bohannon added that it's the most used trail in the City and needs some attention. Ms. Manwaring suggested it be a medium priority project. Mr. Blomquist stated the project is in the CIP but not as funded as Eastern Avenue. He agreed with the reasoning behind keeping it as a high priority and explained that with projects that have funding they want to make sure City Council stays focused and brings the projects to completion. Additionally, with projects that may not have funding yet they want to make sure they stay in the plan. Chair Bryenton agreed on having the project be high priority and there were no objections.

P4 CRT NH 101 Overpass/Stone Arch Bridge: Mr. Schoefmann stated this project is another component to the Transportation Heritage Trail and includes the Stone Arch Bridge improvements. He noted that last time they did scoring, this was combined with the Prowess Bridge/overpass and stated they track the projects separately but launch them consecutively. Mr. Blomquist stated the projects won't necessarily be two different construction projects that they bid out separately, and suggested they keep the Prowess Bridge and Stone Arch Bridge together. Dr. Russell stated the project seems like an obvious high ranking and there was agreement.

Ms. Manwaring asked about their previous discussions on connecting with the Heritage Commission with regards to this project. Mr. Schoefmann stated he will bring the topic to them after priorities are set and they can get Mr. Lussier at a meeting to see what he needs from both groups.

P5 CRT Swanzey Factory Road: Dr. Russell suggested this project be medium priority and there was general agreement. Mr. Blomquist stated they will know more in the fall if the Bailey Bridge is reusable.

P6 CRT Victoria Street Extension: Mr. Blomquist stated this project is with DOT for review and funding and is part of the Marlboro Street/Complete Streets project, which is slated for FY24 in the State Transportation 10 year plan. He mentioned that if the DOT has additional funding they could move the project up a year. Mr. Blomquist explained that the current estimate is an at grade, which is sloping the crossing down. He stated it is not in the CIP anymore because it's dependent on the owner of Kingsbury who could choose to go with an internal private road and not a public road. He went on to explain that Victoria Street neighborhoods have low interest in doing anything with the properties due to the delivery situation, making this crossing no more or less than any of their other at grade crossings. Dr. Russell suggested they keep the project medium priority because several individuals on the committee have safety concerns. There was general agreement.

P7 Appel Way Assessment and Maintenance: Mr. Bohannon reported that this project is scheduled for FY24. Mr. Blomquist suggested the group think about putting a priority on maintenance versus new projects/improvements. Mr. Davern asked about what this project entails. Mr. Bohannon explained that there are certain parts where the abutments meet and are

heaving so it will be a quick resurfacing. General consensus was to keep this ranked at a medium priority.

P8 Marlboro Line Trail: Mr. Schoefmann stated there's a segment out along Route 101 across the river that is broken up into private ownership. Dr. Russell stated Monadnock Conservancy manages a section. Chair Bryenton suggested the project be low priority and there was general agreement.

P9 CRT V Ammi Brown – City Limits: Mr. Schoefmann stated this was a medium priority and explained that the project is basically going through and fixing surface drainage and doing any brush clearing that's needed. Mr. Blomquist stated if there are no real plans on the Westmoreland side it will impact the users. Mr. Bohannon stated there is a group from Westmoreland and Walpole that has been doing some ditch work along the Rail Trail. He went on to state that the City is currently interested in focusing on the Ammi Brown project and Transportation Heritage Trail and when they get through those they will begin to look at other sections; however, they can't go North right now because there are too many projects going on. Chair Bryenton stated regional connectivity is one of their goals so they should keep this project as medium priority to keep visibility on it. There was agreement.

P10 JD Trail II: Mr. Schoefmann explained that this would be an effort to head North off of Appel Way, along Ashuelot River across from the hospital, and up to Court Street. This would create a loop from Ashuelot River Park to Court Street and then users could take sidewalks to Wheelock Park. Dr. Russell asked if this would include the area behind Hannaford. Mr. Schoefmann stated it would not. Mr. Bohannon stated he doesn't think this project should be considered because City staff does not have the capacity to maintain this and there will be difficulty with obtaining access and getting trucks to the trail. Additionally, Tanglewood wants nothing to do with an entrance coming into the park.

Dr. Rowland suggested a more doable approach would be at the end of the bridge coming out by Hannaford because the encampments have been cleaned and there's a fence that goes behind Hannaford to Melanson Company. He explained that this could be a nice loop from Ashuelot River Park to Appel Way. Mr. Bohannon added that it's generally wet back in that area and most surveys they do with the public express that it's not safe, especially with a known homeless encampment and potentially giving them a gateway.

Chair Bryenton stated it's good to know there's potential space there but agreed that it should be a low priority and no more time should be spent on it in the near future. Dr. Russell suggested they change the project to the location he described and keep it low priority. There was agreement.

P11 Wayfinding Facilities and Signage: Mr. Bohannon recommended this be high priority and stated they recently completed the UNH plan and things are going in the right direction. Chair Bryenton stated, given the efforts Mr. Bohannon has put in with UNH, he agrees they should

keep this as a high priority and there was agreement. Dr. Russell asked if ‘Wayfinding Plan’ should be combined with this project. Mr. Schoefmann stated the wayfinding plan is like the maintenance plan. Mr. Benik agreed with Dr. Russell and stated it works to combine them, and there was general agreement.

P12 South Bridge/Ashuelot RT Gap: Mr. Schoefmann explained that down across the old railroad bridge, on the back side of KSC, there is a gap between the bridge and the paved section. There is crushed stone dust there and they are looking to pave all the way to the bridge. Mr. Bohannon stated from the south bridge to Krif Road is stone dust and when they put the bridge in the rail base from the bridge to KSC is what is rough. Chair Bryenton suggested this be a low priority and there was agreement.

P13 Ashuelot Green Space Trailhead: Mr. Schoefmann stated the space that abuts Ashuelot River Park is a privately owned parking lot. Mr. Bohannon stated they should keep the project on the list. There was agreement to keep it low priority.

P14 Main Street: Mr. Bohannon stated it’s good to keep this project a high priority because of the wayfinding and construction piece. He added that there are a lot of eyes on what happens to Main Street right now. Chair Bryenton suggested they make this a top 5 priority. There was general agreement.

Emerald Street Bike Route/In Street: Mr. Schoefmann stated the Complete Streets plan will take care of this project. He stated ‘Complete Streets Implementation’ and ‘Sidewalk Connectivity/Access’ are both part of ongoing themes that will be looked at in the future with the sidewalk analysis.

P15 Marlboro Street: Mr. Schoefmann stated this is coming in FY24. General consensus was to leave it at a medium priority.

P16 Beaver Brook Greenway: Mr. Schoefmann stated this project will depend on what happens with the Kingsbury property. He explained that it would be creating a corridor that would link the improved Pat Russell field infrastructure. Mr. Blomquist stated this will depend on how the Marlborough Street/Complete Streets goes because it has a connection that runs through City property and reiterated that it’ll be dependent on the redevelopment of Kingsbury as well. Mr. Benik asked what they know about the Kingsbury property. Mr. Blomquist stated the current owner has floated a couple of ideas, primarily onto the East of the main building. There was general consensus to keep this a low priority.

P17 Pat Russell Park Improvements: Mr. Bohannon stated the funding has to be approved tomorrow at FOP and they could potentially kick start the project in early June. He stated the property between the basketball courts and the park has been purchased so the connection of Russell Park to the bike path will be the sidewalk down Water Street and over. General consensus was to take this project off the list.

Due to time, Chair Bryenton stated they will finish the remaining items at the next meeting and discuss the top 5.

Elizabeth Cardine, Evan Fletcher and Von were present from Making Community Connections Charter School. Ms. Cardine stated she is the internship coordinator and connects students with community happenings. She explained that they recently moved their school to 310 Marlborough Street and are invested in bike path access and utilizing public resources. Mr. Fletcher and Von, students of the school, stated it was interesting to understand the inner workings of how the City gets developed. Mr. Benik explained that they are an advisory committee to City Council and the projects discussed today they have been helping drive or keeping themselves apprised of. He went on to state that every year they go through and try to reprioritize the projects to make sure they understand what they want Council to try and push forward. Dr. Russell mentioned their bike counts and intercepts are good hands on intern projects. Chair Bryenton encouraged them to reach out with any follow up questions.

4) **Old Business**

A) **Wayfinding/Amenities**

No new updates

B) **Bike/Pedestrian Counts**

2022 Plans - Chair Bryenton asked when their first bike count is scheduled. Mr. Schoefmann stated they are waiting for confirmation on distribution of laser counters and made note to check in on that. He added that summer is a good time to look at supplementing with manual counts on some focus areas. General agreement was to discuss this topic at the June meeting.

C) **Public Art and the Trails Update**

No new updates

D) **Earth Day/Green Up Keene (April 16)**

No new updates

E) **Kiosk Map Updates**

No new updates

5) **Regular Project Updates**

Mr. Schoefmann stated striping of Park Avenue will be occurring in the early morning hours on May 12th.

6) **New Business**

Mr. Benik suggested next month they discuss the encampments along the Rail Trail behind Aldi and Kohl's.

7) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Bryenton adjourned the meeting at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Will Schoefmann, Community Development Staff