

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, August 13, 2025**

**8:15 AM**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Samantha Jackson, Chair  
Rowland Russell, Vice Chair  
Dwight Fischer  
Michael Davern  
Councilor Edward Haas  
Jan Manwaring  
Diana Duffy, Alternate  
Charles Redfern, Alternate  
Andy Holte, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

William Schoefmann, Mapping Coordinator

**Members Not Present:**

Autumn DelaCroix

**1) Call To Order, Roll Call, & Welcome**

Chair Jackson called the meeting to order at 8:15 AM.

**2) Reading of Mission Statement**

At last month's meeting, Councilor Ed Haas suggested the committee begin each meeting by reading its mission statement to refocus on its purpose and ensure alignment with its goals. Chair Jackson read the Committee charge. Dr. Russell suggested clarifying terminology, noting that the City document labels this as the charge, not a mission. He explained that mission statements are typically short, memorable, and impactful, while the charge serves a different purpose. If the group wants to create a mission statement, that could be addressed later when working on the master plan.

Councilor Haas suggested that simply reading the first paragraph of the charge at each meeting would provide enough focus. He also noted and supported the fact that the planning department and the master plan were emphasized repeatedly in the wording.

**3) Adoption of Minutes**

Dr. Rowland Russell noted that the letter “e” had been left off Mr. Andy Holte’s name in the body of the minutes. Chair Jackson motioned to approve the minutes pending correction to Mr. Holte’s name. Dr. Russell seconded the motion, and with all in favor and none opposed, the minutes for July 9, 2025 were approved.

**4) Safety and Outreach**

**A) Downtown Project - Final Updates to Recommended Rules**

Councilor Haas introduced the downtown safety and outreach project, emphasizing the need to finalize updates and recommendations for MSFI and the City Council. He explained that having a clear proposal in place would show that the project has been well thought out, would help to guide its operation, and shift the focus away from debating its existence. He acknowledged questions around enforcement and logistics, but stressed the importance of providing concrete ideas to move the discussion forward. Copies of the recommendations were circulated with the agenda. He hoped to adopt it and submit it for inclusion in the MSFI agenda packet next week.

Councilor Haas clarified that the document was a summary carried over from last year. Mr. Schoefmann asked if this was part of a larger presentation. Councilor Haas clarified that this was part of a larger package along with supporting materials and input from Ms. Autumn DelaCroix, which was submitted to the Committee on merits and did not move forward beyond that point.

Mr. Fischer clarified that the proposal is not final or authoritative, but rather serves to fill a gap with recommendations, since the group has no rulemaking power. He suggested applying the “80/20 rule,” considering the document good enough to advance, and moved to pass it forward as a recommendation.

Councilor Greenwald, attending as the MSFI Chair and as a cyclist, expressed concern about downtown bicycle safety. He noted the proposal lacked a clear rule requiring bikes to ride with traffic, which many riders ignore. He emphasized that without clear guidance and enforcement, increased bike and e-bike use in downtown traffic lanes could become dangerous. In discussion with Mr. Schoefmann, Councilor Greenwald reviewed the numbered safety points. He emphasized the need for clarity and simplicity, noting that while rules already state vehicles must obey traffic signals and yield at intersections, additional signage could help. He suggested signs reminding riders to walk bikes in crosswalks, ride in the correct direction of traffic, and keep fast e-bikes on the road rather than in bike lanes.

Councilor Haas noted the difficulty of distinguishing between electric-powered vehicles and bicycles, a challenge even at the state level. Mr. Schoefmann explained that regulation currently relies on the rule limiting speeds in bike lanes to 8 mph.

Councilor Haas asked Mr. Kowalczyk about trail regulations for electric bikes. Mr. Kowalczyk responded that the current state law allows Class 1 and 2 e-bikes on trails. A bill to regulate personal electric vehicles was introduced but did not pass, though further attempts are expected.

Councilor Greenwald shared that he and the Mayor tested e-bike speeds in a Public Works Department trial with cones on the sidewalk. Riding a Class 1 pedal-assist bike, he found exceeding 8 mph felt unsafe, especially when the Public Works Director unexpectedly stepped out to simulate a hazard. He stressed the need for this Committee's input to refine the rules before sending them to MSFI, emphasizing his support, but also strong concern about safety.

Mr. Schoefmann advised Councilor Greenwald that, procedurally, it would be best if MSFI asked BPPAC to revisit the recommendations rather than making changes directly. He noted that BPPAC had already collaborated with a Mayor- and City Manager-appointed task force to reach an agreement on what to send forward, so altering them now could create confusion. Councilor Greenwald said he would run it back to the City Manager.

Councilor Greenwald raised the issue of Airport Road being closed for non-vehicle use, noting that walkers and bikers use it. Dr. Russell added that Antioch classes have long used it, and its closure will affect educational and recreational uses. They agreed it should be placed on the next meeting's agenda for further discussion, including exploring alternatives like a separate pathway.

Councilor Haas remarked that the Mayor and City Manager's Committee had stopped meeting without results. Mr. Schoefmann clarified that the Committee did produce draft rules, which were reviewed and adjusted through a couple of sessions with BPPAC until both groups reached consensus. Once that was done, the Committee disbanded because its task was complete. Councilor Haas acknowledged and apologized for the earlier mischaracterization.

Councilor Haas seconded Mr. Fischer's earlier motion to accept the recommendations as is and to submit the recommendations to MSFI. He explained that doing so shows the committee is taking ownership and establishing rules, which helps reassure those concerned about downtown biking. While supportive of cycling, he stressed the need to balance it with safety and public comfort, joking about Councilor Greenwald's e-bike speed. He confirmed the goal is for MSFI to review it at their meeting next week, with the option to send it back if needed.

Chair Jackson opened it up for comment and acknowledged Ms. Diana Duffy. Ms. Duffy raised a process question, asking whether Council would understand how the recommendations were developed and whether the Committee's work would be acknowledged appropriately. Mr. Schoefmann responded that staff would include background in the memo to Council, summarizing the four-month process and collaboration between the Mayor/Manager's group and BPPAC. He emphasized that this consensus should be highlighted, and the recommendations sent forward as-is, with MSFI able to refer the recommendations back later if further input is needed.

Mr. Holte emphasized that since the goal is to make people comfortable with the new rules, it's essential to highlight the effort and careful thought put into them. Presenting it this way at the MSFI meeting will help show that the recommendations are intentional and focused on everyone's safety.

Mr. Schoefmann added that the task force consensus included the need for outreach materials, like infographics, to accompany the rollout. He noted that after MSFI review, the next step would be incorporating the rules into City Code, so it's essential to ensure they are complete and precise before that stage.

Chair Jackson opened the motion to a vote. With all in favor and none opposed, the motion was approved.

Councilor Haas asked Councilor Greenwald for suggested next steps for presenting the recommendations to MSFI. He agreed it would be helpful for committee members to attend and speak at the meeting. After clarifying dates, they determined the proposal would be on the agenda for the following Wednesday's MSFI meeting, and Mr. Schoefmann confirmed it would be forwarded once the agenda was set. Councilor Greenwald thanked the committee for having him and then left the meeting.

#### **B) Bike-Walk Alliance of NH - Safer Streets Initiative**

Councilor Haas noted that the Bike Walk Alliance has recommended pushing speed issues to the state level, but that noted that this differs from the Committee's focus. He pointed out that while their materials emphasize lowering speeds, state law doesn't allow reductions below 25–30 mph on roadways. However, this restriction doesn't necessarily apply to paths or other non-road areas.

Chair Jackson suggested that lowering Main Street's speed limit to 20 mph would help align bike and car speeds, reducing conflicts. Councilor Haas explained that while state law generally restricts lowering speed limits, it can be done if a special traffic study demonstrates the need. Mr. Schoefmann felt the yield counts would help with that.

Councilor Haas noted past advocacy for elevated crosswalks, such as at Railroad Square, as a way to slow traffic without changing speed limit laws. Mr. Schoefmann asked if there was a specific request, and Councilor Haas replied that there wasn't, but suggested supporting Bike-Walk Alliance efforts. He added that while new legislation is unlikely to pass this session, staying engaged and showing support is still worthwhile.

Mr. Holte pointed out that road design can reduce traffic speeds even without changing speed limits. He noted that Stantec's initial downtown proposal had one lane in each direction, but it was changed to two due to parking concerns. He suggested advocating for fewer lanes in future

projects, such as on West Street, as a way to naturally slow traffic where lowering the legal speed limit is difficult.

### **C) Annual Report to City Council**

Councilor Haas noted that the Committee is tasked with providing a report on its activities. He suggested, as discussed at the last meeting, that the report also include the group's identified challenges and opportunities, which were already shared in the meeting packet.

Councilor Haas and Mr. Schoefmann reviewed the draft bullet points for the Committee's report. These included future opportunities, such as improvements on West Street, expanding green bike infrastructure and hiking initiatives, strengthening the local bike/walk community through public engagement, and enhancing collaboration with groups like MRRTC and Monadnock Outdoors. They also mentioned ideas like small bike repair pop-ups and developing accessible bike paths to support tourism. Councilor Haas noted that this list was built on earlier drafts of accomplishments and had been updated with challenges and opportunities, though it was less urgent than the Downtown Project rules discussion.

Councilor Haas emphasized the importance of showing the Committee's work and contributions to the City, so it's not seen as idle or unnecessary. He noted other committees, like the Agricultural Commission, were disbanded after long periods of inactivity, and stressed that this should not happen to their group.

Mr. Schoefmann asked about the schedule for Committee updates. Councilor Haas explained that Council requested them by July, but the City Manager hasn't yet presented any, and still needs the Committee's accomplishments and challenges summary. Mr. Schoefmann suggested using Councilor Haas's template, with the Chair reviewing before submission. Chair Jackson added that a notable challenge is wayfinding gaps, such as on the Cheshire Rail Trail near School Street to Island Street, where navigation is unclear.

Ms. Duffy asked whether the Council receives detailed committee reports with a presentation or just the written document. Councilor Haas and others explained that currently reports are usually accepted in written form only, though in the past, there were presentations. The group agreed it could be valuable to bring presentations back in the future, as they help highlight the Committee's work and keep the Council more engaged.

Mr. Redfern asked Chair Jackson if the challenges and opportunities document was readily available, as he couldn't find it in his email. Chair Jackson agreed to send him a copy. Councilor Haas then moved to have Chair Jackson finalize the report and submit it to the City Manager, with the motion seconded by Mrs. Manwaring and passed unanimously. Chair Jackson said she would try to send it out that week.

### **D) Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan Update**

Mr. Schoefmann reported he has been coordinating with Mr. Andy Bohannon on staff responsibilities and noted there is CIP funding to support moving the work forward. Councilor Haas then asked when the last Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan updated was completed. Mr. Schoefmann explained that the original was drafted in 1992, with an update around 2000–2001, meaning another update is overdue.

Mr. Schoefmann suggested a good place to start would be to email Mr. Bohannon. Councilor Haas said he would circulate what he could find of the old Master Plan. Mr. Schoefmann explained that the plan would need to be rebuilt from scratch, though a partial template and scope of work that he and Mr. Bohannon had started drafting could serve as a foundation. Councilor Haas agreed, and they suggested bringing that material to the next meeting as a starting point to move the update process forward.

### **E) Bicycle & Pedestrian Yield Count Updates**

Mr. Schoefmann updated the group on bike and pedestrian yield counts, noting that he is still collecting data and can compile everything into a spreadsheet. He asked members to send scans or legible photos of their counts. He confirmed having received some from Mr. Davern, Mr. Holte, and Dr. Russell, and noted he would double-check past emails for any others.

Dr. Russell reported that he, Mr. Holte, and Dr. Russell conducted yield counts, noting nearly 50 violations in two hours at the Island Street crosswalk, including drivers running lights while pedestrians were present. He stressed that this needs to be addressed, especially for West Street. Mr. Schoefmann added that intersection safety is a known issue. Following a question from Dr. Russell as to whether red light cameras were allowed, Councilor Haas clarified that state regulations currently do not allow cameras to enforce such violations.

Councilor Haas explained that past legislation to allow traffic enforcement cameras in New Hampshire, brought forward by Phil Jones, was dismissed by the committee despite research showing success in other states. He noted that it will take at least a year before it can be raised again. Chair Jackson suggested that coordinating with Councilors in other cities might make future efforts more effective. Both agreed it's worth continuing to push, especially since red-light cameras are widely accepted elsewhere, such as in school zones and construction zones.

Councilor Haas asked if yield counts were still ongoing and whether more could be done. Mr. Schoefmann confirmed they could, explaining that the original time slots (7:00–9:00 AM, 3:00–5:00 PM, and 11:00 AM–1:00 PM on weekends) were based on standardized research guidelines. He offered to resend the sign-up form or find another way for members to coordinate, noting the current system seemed to work well.

Mr. Redfern, being mindful of the time, asked to be reminded why Mr. Ruoff had been invited to the meeting. Mr. Schoefmann explained that Mr. Ruoff was there to provide project updates,

particularly on the Downtown Project, and to give feedback on treatment options and costs related to bike lanes and markings based Stantec's recommendations. He noted that this would come up under the "*Project Updates*" agenda item and also reminded the group to allow time for Mr. Pete Hills, who was present.

Mr. Davern introduced a colleague from Ohio with experience in bike rentals along rail trails, suggesting their perspective could be helpful in the group. Mr. Schoefmann recommended moving quickly into regular project updates to allow time for that input.

**5) Regular Project Updates**

**A) Transportation Heritage Trail Construction**

Mr. Ruoff reported that all easements for the Transportation Heritage Trail (THT) project (Eastern Avenue to Route 101) have been secured, with the final design submitted for the Department of Transportation and Federal Highway for approval. He expects approval soon, aiming to go out to bid in September and start construction this year.

He also provided an update on the Marlboro Street project, noting that it took three bid attempts and an extra \$1 million in funding, but a qualified contractor was secured. The project includes extending the Cheshire Rail Trail and features traffic calming measures and bump-outs. Since it's federally funded, changes would require formal approval to ensure construction follows the approved plans closely. He added that the plan drawings are available electronically and will be shared through a website. Councilor Haas confirmed that the Eastern Avenue connection is part of the project and expressed support for the updates.

Dr. Russell asked if the fall project included the steep connector from the Barbara Avenue extension to Chapman Road. Mr. Ruoff confirmed it does, noting DOT's comments were incorporated into the design, and it is in good shape.

Mr. Ruoff reported that funding decisions for the Prowse Bridge and Stone Arch Bridge projects under the current TAP grant round have not yet been announced, but remain under consideration. He expects a decision after the federal fiscal year ends in September, given competing priorities with federally funded projects like the THT. He also noted that planned sidewalk construction was pushed to next year due to contractor issues. The contractor failed to meet conditions and gave inadequate notice, leading the City to cancel the contract. The sidewalks will now be bundled into next year's project schedule.

Mr. Ruoff explained that Downtown Project cost estimates have been received, but cannot yet be shared, as the scope is still being refined with Stantec. Some items, like benches, were initially budgeted as new but will be reset, which will reduce costs.

Regarding bike lanes, colored concrete was considered but rejected due to excessive cost (about \$450 per yard compared to \$100 for standard sidewalk). Instead, the plan is for dark gray bike

lanes with clear striping that meets MUTCD standards, plus green striping at road crossings for extra visibility. He added that he would be meeting with the City Manager to review project budgets and identify potential cuts, since the City did not receive the grant it had applied for, which has constrained funding.

Dr. Russell asked if Main Street's redesign included raised crosswalks beyond the table at Railroad Square. Mr. Ruoff confirmed that all central crosswalks downtown will be raised, with the same approach planned for West Street. He added that West Street will also feature lane narrowing to slow traffic, with preliminary design beginning next year (FY27) and public input to be gathered similarly to the downtown process.

- 6) **Volunteer Opportunities**
- 7) **Old Business**
- 8) **New Business**
- 9) **More Time**
  - A) **Website**
  - B) **Community Bike Share**

Mr. Schoefmann introduced Mr. Pete Hills, noting the Committee's ongoing interest in bike share and rental options, and invited him to share his experience. Mr. Hills introduced himself as a long-time New Hampshire resident and competitive cyclist with 25 years of experience in road, mountain, and cyclocross cycling. He explained that he co-owns Loveland Bike Rental in Ohio, a business operating for over 25 years on the 75-mile Little Miami Rail Trail near Cincinnati. The rental shop serves both recreational and competitive cyclists and has become a hub for cycling activity in the area.

Although he has lived in New Hampshire for the past decade, Mr. Hills continues to actively manage the business remotely, handling hiring, staffing, scheduling, and payroll. He emphasized that the rentals are used almost exclusively on the trail rather than on roads and offered to answer the Committee's questions about his experience. He then opened it up for questions.

Mr. Redfern asked Mr. Hills about Keene's potential for bike rentals, given the regional trail system. Mr. Hills responded that Keene does have opportunities, especially as local trails have improved over the past decade. However, unlike Loveland, Ohio, Keene lacks both the extensive flat trail mileage and proximity to a large population center. As a result, while rentals could work, the overall volume here would likely be lower than what his Ohio business experiences.

Dr. Russell asked Mr. Hills to describe the setup of Loveland Bike Rental. Mr. Hills stressed that its success comes down to location. He explained that their small building sits directly on the trail, eliminating the need for customers to cross roads or traffic. The facility itself is modest but functional, storing around 100 bikes total, with a check-in counter, small maintenance shop, employee space, and outdoor storage area.



He explained that for starting a bike rental business, the essentials are:

- Visibility and direct trail access so customers can ride safely without navigating busy streets.
- Adequate storage for bikes and equipment.
- A simple setup, which could even be a storage trailer and canopy rather than a permanent building.

The rental season typically runs from Memorial Day to mid-October, with weekend-only openings in early spring and late fall. The business is staffed mainly by high school students (about 15 each summer), which he manages remotely. He noted that this model works well, as younger employees tend to follow directions closely.

Their fleet mainly consists of hybrid bikes (straight bar, geared, hand brakes) and cruisers (single-speed, coaster brake), with just a few road bikes. Mr. Hills highlighted that trail access and safety for families, especially with kids and trailers, would be a key challenge for launching something similar in Keene.

Mr. Hills explained that many customers confuse “hybrid bikes” with e-bikes, so his business is updating terminology to avoid misunderstandings. He emphasized that they do not rent e-bikes because of insurance concerns, the weight and maintenance of the bikes, and the challenges of storing and charging batteries. Instead, their rentals focus on traditional bikes with straightforward pricing: hybrid bikes cost \$19 for two hours or \$30 for a full day, cruisers are \$14 for two hours with slightly lower longer-term rates, and road bikes are about \$60 per day, but are rarely rented.

Most customers only ride for about two hours, since many casual riders are not comfortable going longer. People usually rent bikes because transporting their own is inconvenient, their bikes are in poor condition, or they do not own a bike at all. Rentals are almost exclusively used on trails rather than roads. Mr. Hills also pointed out that rentals create economic benefits for the community, since customers often go out to eat, grab ice cream, or stop at breweries and shops after returning their bikes. He noted that this “ride-and-dine” model works well in Loveland and could be even more successful in Keene, where downtown amenities connect directly to the trail system.

Mr. Redfern asked whether most of the bike rental business is for the same-day period. Mr. Hills confirmed that about 90% of rentals are on the same day, with very few longer-term. He added that while he hasn’t yet based himself in Keene to ride its trails extensively, he’s seen significant improvements in the past decade, including recent work by the Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative and upcoming projects like the Stone Arch Bridge connection. He believes there is potential for a rental business in Keene, though likely on a smaller scale, using around 30 to 40 bikes. Economically, he noted, bike rentals don’t generate significant profit compared to his consulting career. Still, for him and his business partner, the value lies in being part of the cycling community, supporting local riders, and giving nearly 90 high school students their first

jobs. He said they take pride in mentoring those kids and building a strong foundation for cycling in Loveland.

### **C) Public Art & Trails Update**

Mr. Mike Kowalczyk, founder and president of the Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative, gave a comprehensive update on trail rehabilitation efforts. He explained the group's mission is to make all regional rail trails safe and usable year-round, with the guiding principle that "a 6-year-old should be able to ride a bike on it."

On the Cheshire Rail Trail, recent work included clearing trees, ditches, and culverts, and resurfacing sections in Westmoreland, Surry, and north Keene. A mile-long cut in Surry is now passable, and new culverts have improved drainage. In Keene, about 1.5 miles near the Amy Brown trailhead were also improved, with more surfacing to come if City crews can assist. Looking south, the Swanzey Factory Road Bridge remains the main missing link. Mr. Kowalczyk is working with the county and local partners on a fundraising campaign to reuse the Bailey bridge from Island Street for this crossing.

Meanwhile, Swanzey will soon receive 3.5 miles of new hard-pack surfacing, and Marlborough and Troy are nearly complete, with final sections expected to be finished this fall. Once done, the Cheshire Rail Trail will be continuous from Walpole to Fitzwilliam, minus a few bridge gaps. An RTP grant has also been submitted to complete the last four miles in Fitzwilliam to the state line.

On the Ashuelot Rail Trail, washouts from 2023 remain an issue. The largest, at the Eversource substation in Swanzey, is scheduled for repair in 2026, with four more to follow in 2027. Smaller projects are underway, including replacing deteriorating culverts south of the Riley Conservation Trail to stabilize the railbed and adding safer road crossings along Matthews Road. Plans include extending trail improvements from South Holbrook Road to Route 10 and exploring connections into Winchester and Hinsdale. Mr. Kowalczyk emphasized that with bridges and final surfacing, the region is close to completing a nearly continuous, family-friendly trail network across Cheshire County.

Mr. Kowalczyk reported on efforts to extend the Monadnock Rail Trail from the Massachusetts state line north through Rindge and Jaffrey. He is in discussions with the local snowmobile club to potentially manage an RTP grant, with support from Cheshire County for writing the application. Work would begin at the state line and progress north, though a gap exists between Jaffrey and Peterborough where the state never purchased the rail bed. The Monadnock Conservancy is exploring whether conservation land could help bridge that gap.

He also highlighted the Rail Trail Challenge, which encourages people to walk or ride regional trails and check in at participating businesses via QR codes to earn reward points redeemable for

stickers or T-shirts. So far, 165 participants have registered, and businesses from Keene to Walpole, Hinsdale, and Hillsborough are involved.

Additionally, new regional trail maps have been created with support from Pathways for Keene and the Southwest Region Planning Commission, showing both City and regional rail trails as well as mountain bike connections.

Finally, he shared that the group is working on signage improvements. With design guidelines from the state and funding from the New Hampshire Horse Council, they are beginning in Fitzwilliam and creating mile markers, wayfinding, yield signs, and “what three words” location markers. These signs will start appearing on trails over time to improve navigation and safety.

Mr. Schoefmann admitted that, due to capacity constraints, he has not been active as the City’s representative on the Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative (MRRTC) and asked if anyone from the committee was interested in taking on that role. He noted the MRRTC’s projects are valuable and could use stronger representation from Keene. Having someone with more bandwidth would be a great help, since Mr. Redfern currently serves as the alternate, but already has many responsibilities. He encouraged committee members to contact him or Mr. Kowalczyk if interested.

Councilor Haas noted the need to properly sign the bridge named after a founding member of Pathways, with some debate about the proposed signage. Chair Jackson then moved to send the recommended sign to MSFI for their next meeting. Dr. Russell seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Chair Jackson confirmed she would send the letter to move the process forward.

#### **10) Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Jackson adjourned the meeting at 9:40 AM.

#### **11) Next Meeting Date - September 10, 2025**

Respectfully submitted by,  
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Megan Fortson, Planner