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

# BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**Wednesday, October 14, 2026** **8:15 AM** **2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall**

**Members Present:**
Dwight Fischer, Chair
Councilor Edward Haas, Vice Chair
Dr. Rowland Russell
Charles Redfern
Jacob Robertson (remote)
Michael Davern, Alternate
Diana Duffy, Alternate
Andy Holte, Alternate
David Mast, Alternate

**Staff Present:**
Jason Nadeau, Parks & Recreation Program Manager
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner
Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer

**Members Not Present:**
Samantha Jackson
Brian Phillips

## 1. Call to Order

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

## 2. Adoption of Minutes – September 9, 2026

Chair Fischer asked if everyone had enough time to review the meeting minutes. Discussion ensued. Chair Fischer proposed tabling the meeting minutes approval to next month's meeting. He continued that he also would like the minutes to be shorter and more summarized.

Councilor Haas made a motion to table the meeting minutes approval until the next BPPAC meeting. Dr. Russell seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous roll-call vote.

Brief discussion ensued about meeting rules and legal issues, such as voting and quorum when some members are participating remotely. Dr. Russell suggested Mr. Nadeau have the City Attorney give the BPPAC a refresher about the rules of RSA 91-A.

## 3. Safety & Outreach

### a. THT Updates - Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer

Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer, stated that Phase I of the Transportation Heritage Trail (THT) project is wrapping up this week. The BPPAC is invited to the ribbon cutting ceremony on October 30, 2026. Anyone who walks the site and finds anything that needs to be addressed can let him know.

Mr. Ruoff continued that the City received the federal funding agreement from the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) for Phase II. At one point, Phase II was going to be just the overpass, but Phase II will be the remainder of the THT to the town line. It includes everything, including all three bridges. That will be on the Finance, Organization, and Personnel (FOP) Committee's agenda next Thursday to request permission from the City Council for the City Manager to execute that federal funding agreement. An RFQ for engineering services is out for the design of that project. They hope to go through that formal process, as required by the federal funding, and select a consultant engineer for the design in the next couple of months. Preliminary conceptual design would start in December or early January.

Dr. Russell asked if Phase I is safe to walk now. Mr. Ruoff replied that he thinks so, since the trail is no longer an active construction zone. The crew is finishing up in the parking area, with lights, final paving, and the fence installation.

Chair Fischer asked what the terminus is when the THT gets to Route 101. Mr. Ruoff replied that it is just a dead end. Chair Fischer asked if people would be able to exit the trail in some way to get across the road. Mr. Ruoff replied that should be possible. Mr. Nadeau stated that there is a pile of dirt at the end of the trail. It is possible to walk over it.

Dr. Russell asked if the crossover that goes up to Chapman Rd. was done, too. Mr. Ruoff replied yes. Dr. Russell stated that originally, the idea was to have a pocket park at the end. Mr. Ruoff replied that that would be part of Phase II.

Councilor Haas asked for information about what the NHDOT grant covers. He continued that it is wonderful that it covers the entire project, including the bridges, but there are pieces to it. There is preliminary design, actual design, and probably two other steps between that and construction. Mr. Ruoff replied that he misspoke. He continued that first is conceptual design, with public input gathering, including from the BPPAC. Next is preliminary design, and then they would ask formal permission to go to final design. In between the preliminary and final design stages is a right-of-way acquisition phase in coordination with NHDOT. Staff does not anticipate needing to acquire properties or easements for this, but it is still a phase funded by NHDOT. From start to finish, the design from conceptual to preliminary to right-of-way acquisition to final design, would be about a two-year process, potentially three if anything gets complicated. They need to dovetail the project with the Route 101 Reconstruction Project. It is unlikely that the THT Phase II design would be ready at the same time, but it might be possible, depending on how the funding works. Route 101 Reconstruction is a large, expensive project, so it is possible the funding might get delayed.

In response to Councilor Haas's question about the process, Mr. Ruoff explained that the City gets a federal funding agreement, administered through NHDOT. It is based on the anticipated cost of design through construction. It would be a commitment for those construction costs. Of course, costs might change. Once the City received an actual cost based on bid numbers, they would do an amended federal funding agreement based on those actual costs for construction.

Mr. Redfern asked if Kürt (Court) Bloomquist is aware of this so he knows when to bring Mr. Ruoff the local checks. Mr. Ruoff replied that he thinks so. He will reach out to him today.

Councilor Haas asked what the total expected cost is and what the City's match is. Mr. Ruoff replied that he believes it is about $3.8 to $3.9 million, with a City match of 20%. Mr. Redfern stated that Pathways for Keene will try and come up with half of the City's match. Mr. Ruoff stated that Phase I of the THT project is about 18% under budget, and since it is a CIP project, those funds can be used for the City's match for Phase II. There is good news on all fronts.

Mr. Ruoff stated that the Marlboro St. project sort of connects to the THT project. All aspects of the trail for that have been completed, with some final restoration work needed on that as well.

Mr. Redfern stated that at the top of the new access path there is a sudden, 90-degree turn to get onto the trail. He sees people cut through onto the dirt to make an arc to get onto the trail. The dirt is eroding and that can be expected to continue and eventually undermine the path and pavement. Adding an apron so that people do not need to make a 90-degree turn would help. He spoke with Don Lussier, Public Works Director, and Mr. Lussier told him the company doing the work would put in that apron. Mr. Redfern asked Mr. Ruoff to verify that. Mr. Ruoff agreed.

Mr. Ruoff stated that a section of paved sidewalk will be in between the completed Marlboro St. work and the trailhead. As a future CIP update, staff will look to make that a continuous concrete sidewalk. They had not had the foresight to include it in the project now.

### b. VHB Updated Info in Maps and Evaluation Criteria

Chair Fischer asked what the BPPAC needs to discuss before VHB's presentation. Mr. Nadeau stated that the BPPAC received VHB's updated draft memorandum last Friday.

Councilor Haas stated that he suggests VHB put the date and page number on every page so they know what is connected to what, especially since there are multiple versions flying around. Also, acronyms need to be defined.

Dr. Russell stated that he found the draft project goals and evaluation criteria useful for interpreting the map. He asked for others' feedback. He has questions about the scoring and how certain elements are weighted. The BPPAC talks regularly about economic benefits, which are weighted fairly low. Mr. Holte replied that they can have VHB explain how they arrived at the weights. Mr. Nadeau added that the BPPAC can question anything they want.

Chair Fischer invited Phil Goff and Ashley Domogala, from VHB, to present.

Mr. Goff stated that the BPPAC received a list of prioritized projects and an identification map. He continued that there have been a few minor updates since then. He and Ms. Domogala would be glad to take more comments today. As a reminder, through this master planning process, in order to get where they are now with a draft of a ranked order of projects, the ranking was based on an evaluation and scoring methodologies that evolved from the initial project goals. The seven project goals are safety, connectivity, design, economy, feasibility, environment, and community support. Each goal has one or two evaluation criteria. Some were more quantitative, so GIS analysis Ms. Domogala created gave a score. Others were more qualitative, so there was more subjectivity.

Dr. Russell stated that he is fine with the seven project goals, but he wonders about the weighting. Recognizing the reality of City financing, "feasibility" feels under-weighted. As a longtime group member, he has been part of two studies of the economic benefit of the pathway systems, and "economy" also feels under-weighted. That includes the first criterion of "environment," which is the ecotourism aspects of access to parks and open spaces. He wonders why those are weighted less. He is fine with "safety" being weighted a little higher, but he thinks 4., 5., and 6. should be weighted similarly to 2. and 3.

Mr. Goff replied that VHB's process involved receiving comments about the weighting from City staff and others, and this is where VHB landed with it. He continued that some people expressed concerns opposite to Dr. Russell's, thinking that too much emphasis on cost and engineering complexity might lower the scores of projects that were more longer-term, expensive, and complex, which would discourage moving forward on those projects. There is always a balance. Some communities are less concerned about that than others.

Mr. Goff continued that the primary way they scored "economy" was "proximity to businesses," which is primarily downtown or West St. When they discussed whether that should be weighted higher, some people were concerned that they might be taking away from good projects that happen to not be so adjacent to downtown, knowing that many of those downtown or West St. projects would score well anyway. An elevated weighting on "economy" might artificially inflate some projects' scores.

Dr. Russell asked if VHB received and read the two economic benefit studies done through BPPAC with the UNH Cooperative Extension. Mr. Goff replied that he cannot recall if they read both, but they read at least one, and summarized it in their technical memorandum. Dr. Russell replied that what stood out for him is that it is not considered in the weighting.

Ms. Brunner asked, for clarification, if Dr. Russell is referring to the economic benefits of the projects versus economic costs. Dr. Russell replied yes.

Mr. Goff stated that the economic benefits of a project can be difficult to assess. For example, it is hard to ascertain the economic benefit of a new crosswalk versus a long stretch of a separated bike lane. There is an art to this. It is both qualitative and quantitative. This is the system VHB has settled on for this process right now.

Mr. Goff stated that there are two maps, one of the whole City, and a downtown inset. He continued that the maps show the projects and their attributes, such as whether they are pedestrian related or trail related. They highlighted the 20 projects that scored the highest. Most are in the downtown inset map, but the bike lanes on Maple St. scored high, as did a couple projects on Washington St. Court St. projects scored just outside of the top 20. Some crosswalk projects scored well additionally. Regardless of how a project scores, this map is intended to inform the City and Public Works on moving forward with short-, medium-, and long-term projects over the next one, two, five, ten, or more years. They should not expect the projects to be implemented in the order in which they are scored. It is just to inform prioritization. If a project scores in the middle, it does not mean it is not important.

Mr. Goff continued that regarding the downtown inset map, the top 20 includes a handful of projects on lower Main St. One highly ranked project is on a side street that leads to the Monadnock Food Co-op, but is not necessarily part of the Main St. project, as it is not literally on Main St. Another project is on Winchester St. at the Ashuelot Rail Trail crossing. Improved connection to the Cheshire Rail Trail at Emerald St., a project discussed by the BPPAC and at other stakeholder meetings, also made the top 20. Those are some highlights. The top 20 are a mix of various bike lane projects, crosswalks, lighting, sidewalks, and rail trail crossings. This is just a high-level overview, and he would be happy to take questions about projects.

Mr. Holte asked about the Winchester St. project going to Swanzey. He thought the plan was to make it a Complete Street with bike lanes as well as sidewalks, but VHB has it tagged as a sidewalk project. Mr. Goff asked if that is part of NHDOT's TIP project that includes bike lanes. Mr. Holte replied yes. Maybe the changes to the state projects plays a role there. Ms. Brunner stated that she does not think the change to the timeline affected the project design or scope. It should still include the bike lanes and sidewalks. Mr. Goff replied that VHB just has the bridge listed for that project. It sounds like they missed that part of NHDOT's recommendation. He hears Ms. Brunner saying the NHDOT project is a reconstruction of the whole roadway. Ms. Brunner replied that she believes it is from the roundabout at Route 101 and into Swanzey a little bit. NHDOT is doing the whole road corridor and the bridge. Dr. Russell added that Mr. Ruoff said NHDOT would address the bridge earlier than anything else, given how critical it is. Maybe that is where the confusion came in. Ms. Brunner agreed and added that the Red Listed bridge is in dire need of replacing. Mr. Goff stated that he and Ms. Domogala will update the map to reflect the larger project beyond the bridge.

Mr. Holte stated that he was jumping back and forth between the map and spreadsheet to identify which project was which. He wonders whether it would be possible to make an interactive version of the map, so that clicking on a number gives you the project's description and details. Mr. Goff replied that they will look into that.

Mr. Holte stated that he likes the top 20 list; it prioritizes the important projects. He wonders if there is room in VHB's plan for city-wide recommendations for things the City should do. For example, '*whenever X conditions are in place, we recommend the City implement Y solution*.' Many projects involve lanes ten feet wide. He would love to see that everywhere. Maybe there could be guidelines for, say, raised crosswalks or rapid beacons under certain conditions. Mr. Goff replied that they can do that. In all the bicycle pedestrian master plans, they typically have a

handful of blanket recommendations for a whole city. Examples are lane widths, installation of signs, and typical signs on approaches to crosswalks.

Ms. Brunner asked if everyone has seen the Complete Streets Guidelines, because they are similar to that. Maybe a recommendation could be to update the Complete Streets Guidelines, which are dated. The guidelines assign a street typology to each street, and each street typology has a set of recommendations. For example, a lane width of ten feet would be recommended for certain street typologies, if not every street in the city.

Councilor Haas asked if VHB will include commentary on the status of E-bikes and state laws within the master plan. Mr. Goff replied that they will include something high-level related to E-bikes, E-scooters, and E-micromobility devices. The scope does not include having that fully fleshed out. They will not give specific policy recommendations. Councilor Haas replied that if Mr. Goff could provide that high-level section to the BPPAC as soon as possible, it would help the BPPAC with their other work. Mr. Goff agreed.

Mr. Goff stated that he will talk with Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Ruoff to work out a time for VHB to present to the City Council and the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure (MSFI) Committee at some point in November.

### c. E-bike Meeting Recap with City Manager and the Mayor

Mr. Nadeau stated that a while back, he and Mr. Redfern met with the City Manager and the Mayor. They were trying to nail down a date for the Bike-Walk Alliance of New Hampshire (BWANH) training that Dave Topham (President of the New Hampshire Rail Trails Coalition) wants to do. It was up to the City Manager to organize it. As of last week, the City Manager had not heard back from Mr. Topham. She was still hoping for October 27, 2026, for the municipality training.

Mr. Redfern stated that the documents were finally completed by the Department of Safety. They were supposedly brought to the Commissioner for a signature yesterday. He talks with Mr. Topham regularly. The City Manager is on top of this, through Megan in City Manager's office, who calls Mr. Topham regularly. They are doing the best they can.

Chair Fischer asked how likely it is that October 27 will work. Mr. Redfern replied that it would not take long to get the word out. He thinks they could request it be extended another two weeks. Mr. Nadeau stated that this first round of training will be for municipal staff, not open to the public. Then they use the material from the training to configure out how to make it school-friendly.

Councilor Haas stated that he thought there were two parts of training. He asked if it is correct that the first training would be for police, emergency response staff, Public Works staff, and other City employees as appropriate, and the second part would be for schools. Mr. Nadeau replied that is correct. They would gather and pare down the information from the first training, since students cannot be sitting for two hours of training. Councilor Haas asked if the BPPAC would be invited to the City staff training. Mr. Redfern replied yes.

Mr. Redfern stated that he is leery of the October 27 training. He thinks the BPPAC should make a recommendation to the City Manager to push it out a month. Discussion ensued. Chair Fischer stated that he does not think the BPPAC are the ones to drive this. The BWANH needs to figure out how to do it and work it with the City. There is not much the BPPAC can do. Others agreed. Councilor Haas stated that they were relying on the BWANH to put this training out. If they do not, it is back on the BPPAC. Mr. Redfern stated that he will keep the BPPAC posted.

**d. Review Memo to City Council Regarding Emerging Practices for Bikes, E-Bikes, and E-motorized Bikes**

Chair Fischer stated that at the last meeting, the BPPAC was reminded that they needed to put together something in response to the Mayor, regarding E-bikes and E-motorized bikes. He continued that Mr. Holte took the first step by doing a brain dump on this. Ms. Duffy jumped in for a bit, then he did, resulting in the draft. The opportunity is to get in front of the City Council with this, along with the BPPAC's annual report. E-bikes and E-motorized bikes are a big issue all over the country. Municipalities everywhere are trying to draft policies. He believes there is an urgency for the BPPAC to get this draft to the City Council, because as the lanes are developed and rolled out, signage will be critical.

Mr. Holte stated that the version of the draft Chair Fischer has is quite different from the version he and Ms. Duffy had been collaborating on. He has several items he thinks should be included or said differently. Given that it is urgent to get this to the City Council, his question to the group is how they could reconcile their different opinions regarding what they are putting forward as a group.

Discussion ensued. Councilor Haas shared thoughts on the process and stated that he does not think the BPPAC can agree on a draft quickly enough to get this done in the time requested. Chair Fischer stated that he focused the draft on what he thinks the audience, the Mayor and the Council, need to hear in a concise way, rather than what the BPPAC wants to put forth. Dr. Russell stated that he would be glad to talk about the memo more, or Chair Fischer, Ms. Duffy, and Mr. Holte could continue to work together on a refined draft for the BPPAC to review in advance of the next meeting.

Councilor Haas stated that the draft seems to just say what everyone already knows, that E-bikes are an issue around the country and something must be done. He sees nothing in it that is a local statement about what Keene, specifically, should do. That is what the focus should be. For example, ban E-bikes in the new, protected bike lanes around the Main St. project. Mr. Holte replied that he wanted to emphasize that local actions that might seem appealing, such as bans, are not necessarily the right solutions. He believes the City's role is to push the state to enact laws that limit the supply of E-bikes, rather than focusing on enforcement, signage, and bans. However, everyone has different opinions. That makes putting forward a recommendation as a group challenging.

Mr. Redfern stated that he agrees with Mr. Holte's idea and would like to involve Phil Jones, who is an active State Representative. City Councilor, and Pathways for Keene member. They

could invite Councilor Jones to a meeting to discuss it. He is well regarded by Republicans and Democrats, and he cares about these issues.

Chair Fischer stated that state advocacy and local control are two separate issues. He wants to focus on actions within Keene's control, because he thinks the Councilors want to know that. For example, signage. Dr. Russell replied that he thinks they could do both. The BPPAC could say their strongest recommendation is to advocate at the state level, and also give recommendations for what to do locally while that plays out, that would make an immediate difference as the downtown infrastructure is built out. Chair Fischer stated that the signs for the new lanes need to be simple and clear so people biking past the signs can understand them. He would like the BPPAC to recommend the content of that signage.

Mr. Robertson stated that previously, he mentioned "Spirit of the Trail." He suggests using that as an initiative, including signage, education, and awareness, as something the BPPAC could push. Mr. Mast agreed. He continued that there is a "hearts and mind aspect" of this, as far as educating people. Rules are only half of it. The other half is how to develop a new philosophy, Spirit of the Trail, that preaches a maturity about these electric devices. Mr. Robertson added that Spirit of the Trail could encompass more than just E-bikes, such as how pedestrians, vehicles, and cyclists interact with each other in general.

Chair Fischer asked how they turn that into a specific recommendation. He asked if Mr. Robertson wants to spend some time working on that with the group. Mr. Robertson agreed. Mr. Holte stated that in the first draft, he tried to say that the BPPAC wants to emphasize both aspects, the legal and the spirit, and that the draft would focus on the legal aspect and the BPPAC would later put together suggestions for the spirit aspect. He suggests this memo focus on regulations and enforcement. A separate initiative would be recommendations for creating that sort of environment and culture.

Councilor Haas stated that he sees four tasks. One is state advocacy. Two is local regulations. He suggests the BPPAC brainstorm a laundry list of potential local regulations, then let the City Attorney's Office go through it and say which would be possible. Three is Spirit of the Trail as a publicity campaign of what the BPPAC thinks trail behavior should be. If the BPPAC clarifies what Spirit of the Trail should be, they can work with the City's publicity staff to create materials. Four is to take that into the schools. He would be glad to start the laundry list.

Chair Fischer stated that he sees a Venn diagram. They should probably do Spirit of the Trail first, because it might inform the local regulations. But they still need to put together an actual memo. It should be about what they can do locally.

Dr. Russell stated that he sees Spirit of the Trail as the qualities they want to enhance, such as safety and enjoyment. Spirit of the Trail frames the recommendations for local regulations. For example, the reason they want to not have E-bikes 'here' and allow them 'there' is because they want safety and enjoyment for all users.

Discussion continued about how the BPPAC does not have enough time at this meeting to draft a memo with specific points they all agree on. Mr. Davern suggested making the recommendations

in the memo generic, with categories instead of specifics, such as "education" and "signage." Councilor Haas suggested a Venn diagram with the phrases "Spirit of the Trail," "local control," and "state advocacy." Chair Fischer stated that he could work on a refined draft, more of this Venn diagram concept, and share it with the group via email. By the next meeting, they will have a new version. Mr. Nadeau noted that the next meeting is November 4, because November 11, when the meeting normally would be, is a holiday.

Chair Fischer asked Mr. Robertson to flesh out some thoughts on the Spirit of the Trail in the next few days and send that to him. He asked Councilor Haas to share his "laundry list," and asked Mr. Holte to send him the issues and comments he wants included. Anyone else with input can send it, too. Mr. Nadeau stated that he will start an email chain for everyone. Discussion ensued about what the BPPAC, as a City body, is allowed to do via email, and the BPPAC's need for clarification from the City Attorney's Office.

**e. Review Road and Safety Action Plan Report**

Chair Fischer stated that this will be on next month's agenda.

4. **Regular Project Updates**
    a. **Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan Update**
    b. **Mobility Management**
    c. **Updates to Project Tracking Table**

5. **New Business**
6. **Next Meeting Date – November 4, 2026**
7. **More Time Items**
8. **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Fischer adjourned the meeting at 9:31 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Jason Nadeau, Keene Parks & Recreation Programmer