



Transportation, Recreation and Community Development: **A Tale of Two VT Trails**

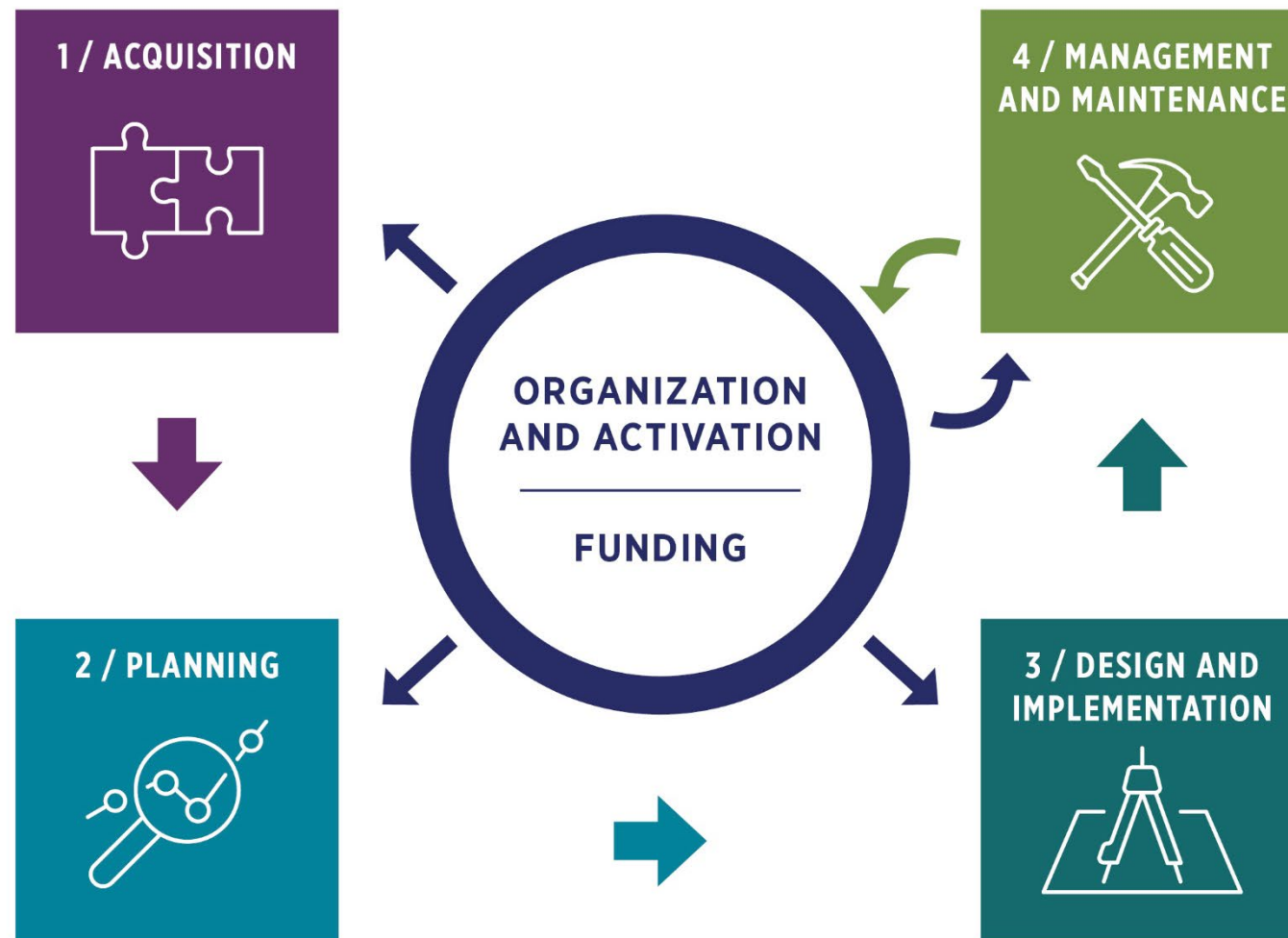
NNECAPA | New Castle, NH
November 7, 2023



Key Themes

- How can we align transportation, recreation, and community development?
 - Developing new community facilities and assets
 - Leveraging existing/completed assets for local and regional benefit
- Should communities and regions think of recreational trails as “core infrastructure?”
What does it mean to put this into practice?

Trail Asset Development Process





Setting the Stage

150 miles of VTrans Railbanked Trails in VT

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT)



93

Miles of trail



18

Towns



6

"Bridge Road" Covered Bridges



2023

Trail Construction Complete

Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail (MVRT)



26

Miles of trail



7

Towns

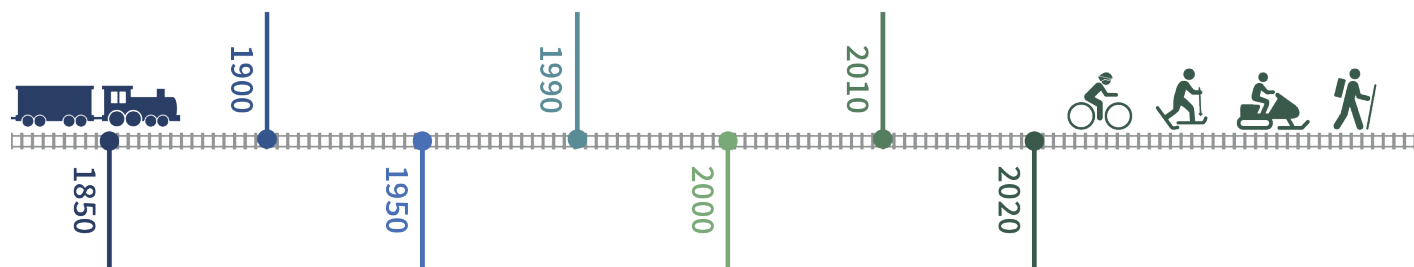


"Milk Train"—dairy train



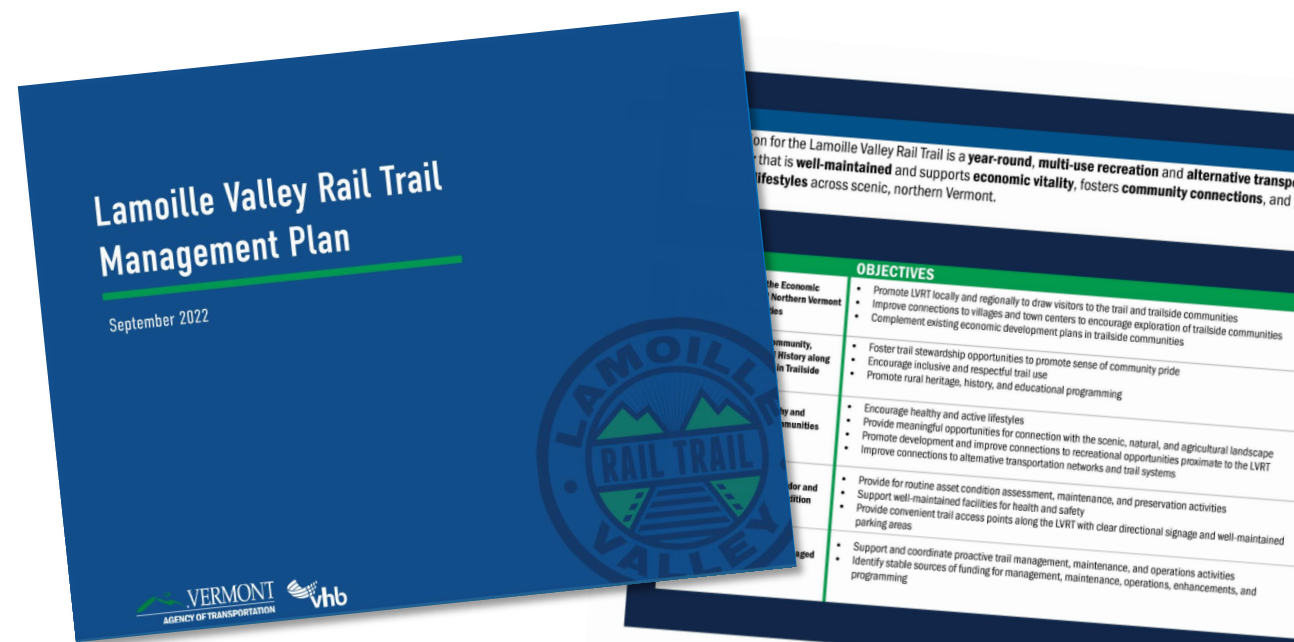
2002

Trail Construction Complete



What is a Management Plan?

- Seeks **Stakeholder Input** on priorities and potential issues
- Articulates a **Vision and Goals** for a cohesive trail system
- Develops **Strategies and Recommendations** to guide:
 - Management
 - Maintenance and Operations
 - Economic Development and Community Connections



Developing Strategies and Recommendations

1. Stakeholder Input and Background Investigations

Web Map

Public Comments

Public Meetings

Stakeholder Interviews




LVRT PROJECT

ABOUT THE PROJECT

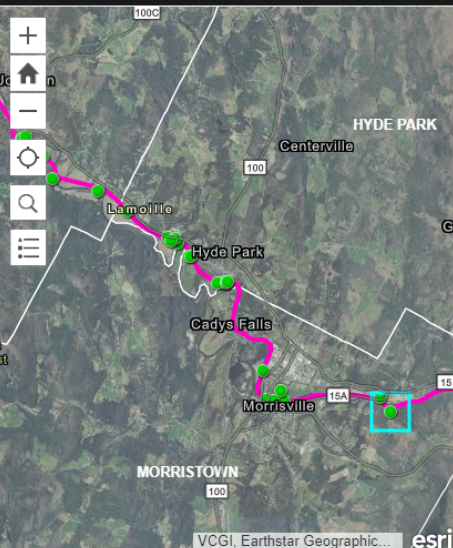
LVRT Management Plan

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



Setting a Strategic and Cohesive Vision

“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.”



Developing Strategies and Recommendations

1. Stakeholder Input
and Background
Investigations



2. Screen Ideas
through Vision
and Goals

VISION and GOALS

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 Strategies and Recommendations

1. Stakeholder Input and Background Investigations

Web Map

Public Comments

Public Meetings

Stakeholder Interviews

2. Screen Ideas through Vision and Goals

VISION & GOALS

3. Align Strategies and Recommendations by "Bucket"



Management












Maintenance and Operations



Economic Development and Community Connections

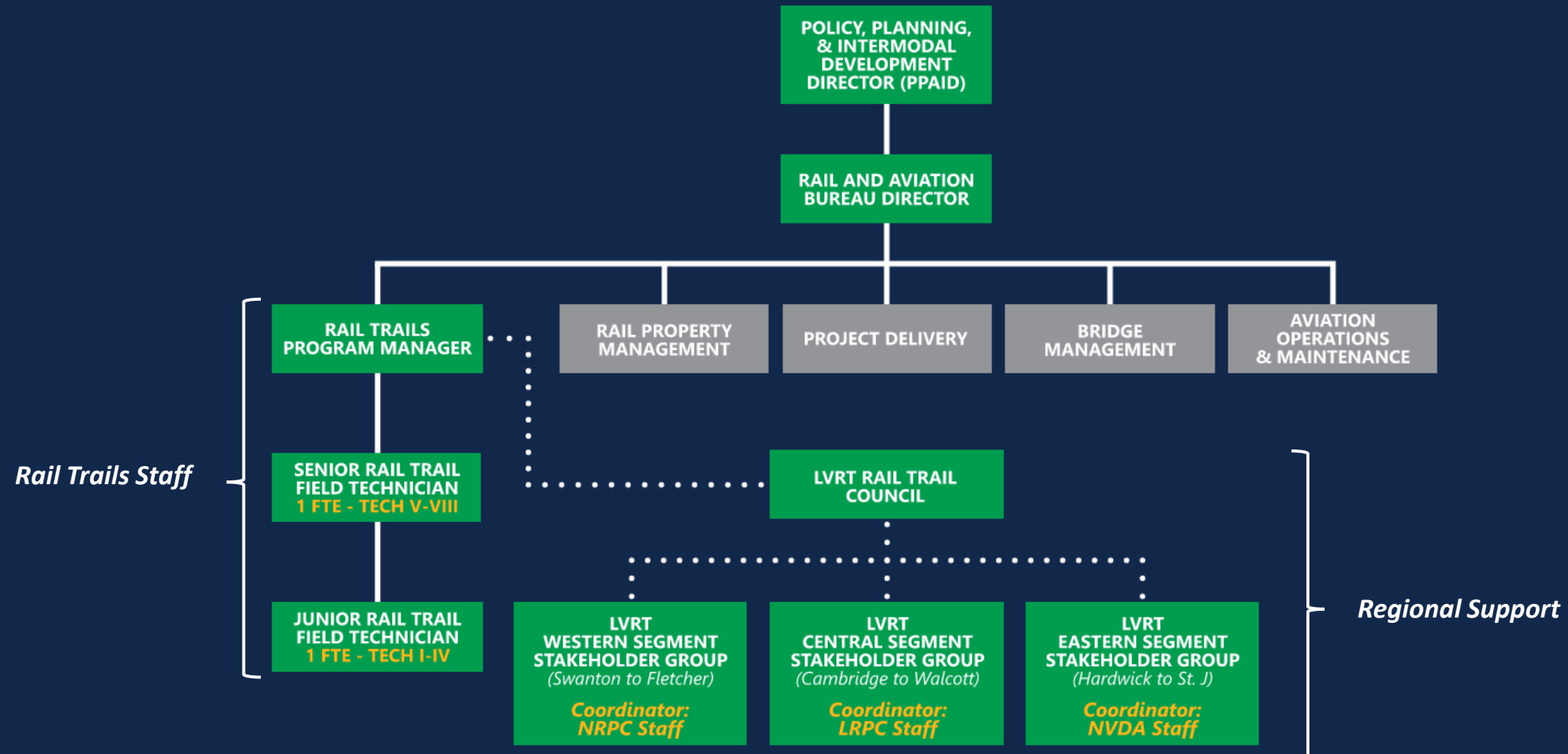
Strategies and Recommendations: Management

- **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 and Recommendations: Management



Strategies and Recommendations:

Maintenance and Operations

- **Asset Management**     
 - Adapt **best management practices**
 - Establish **annual maintenance plan**
 - Conduct **routine inspections**
 - Prioritize **system preservation**

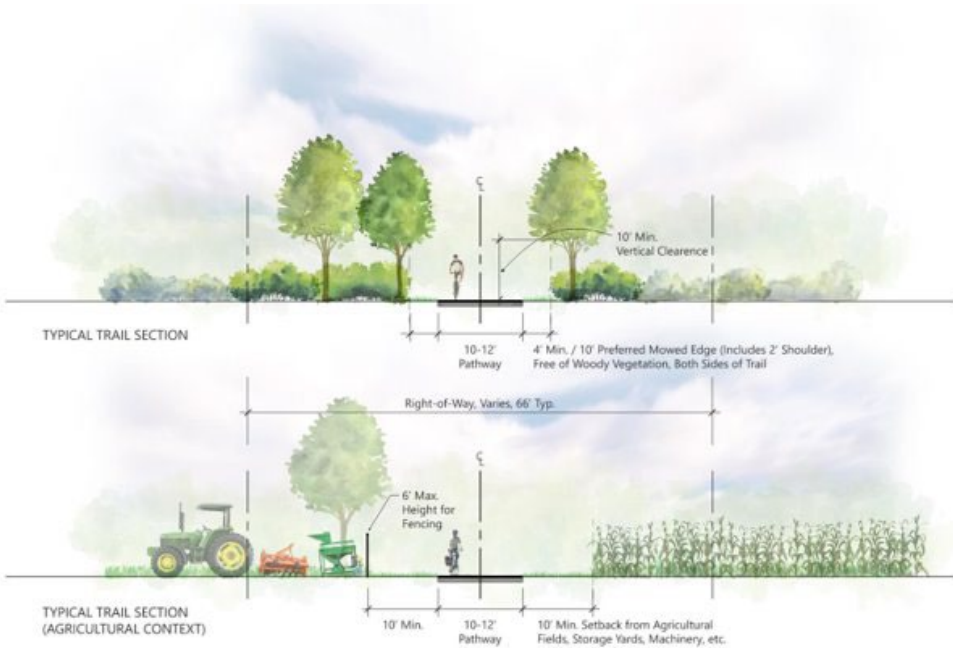
 93 Miles of trail	 6 Fishery Accesses
 96 Crossings	 26 Existing/ Potential Trailheads
 53 Bridges	 29 Historic Sites
 7 Tunnels & Underpasses	 1700' Highest Elevation
 525 Culverts	 157' Lowest Elevation
 34 Cattlepasses	 36 Miles Adjacent to Lamoille River

Strategies and Recommendations: Maintenance and Operations

Operations Manual 🧑🏫 🏞️ 🛠️ 📋

Establish clear policies and procedures for:

- 1. Allowable uses and permits
- 2. Resolving user conflicts
- 3. Mitigating encroachments/encampments
- 4. Agreements for trail connections and amenities
- 5. Agreements for trail access, crossing, and ROW use
- 6. Trail etiquette



Count and Survey Program 🏠 🧑🏫 🏞️ 🛠️ 📋

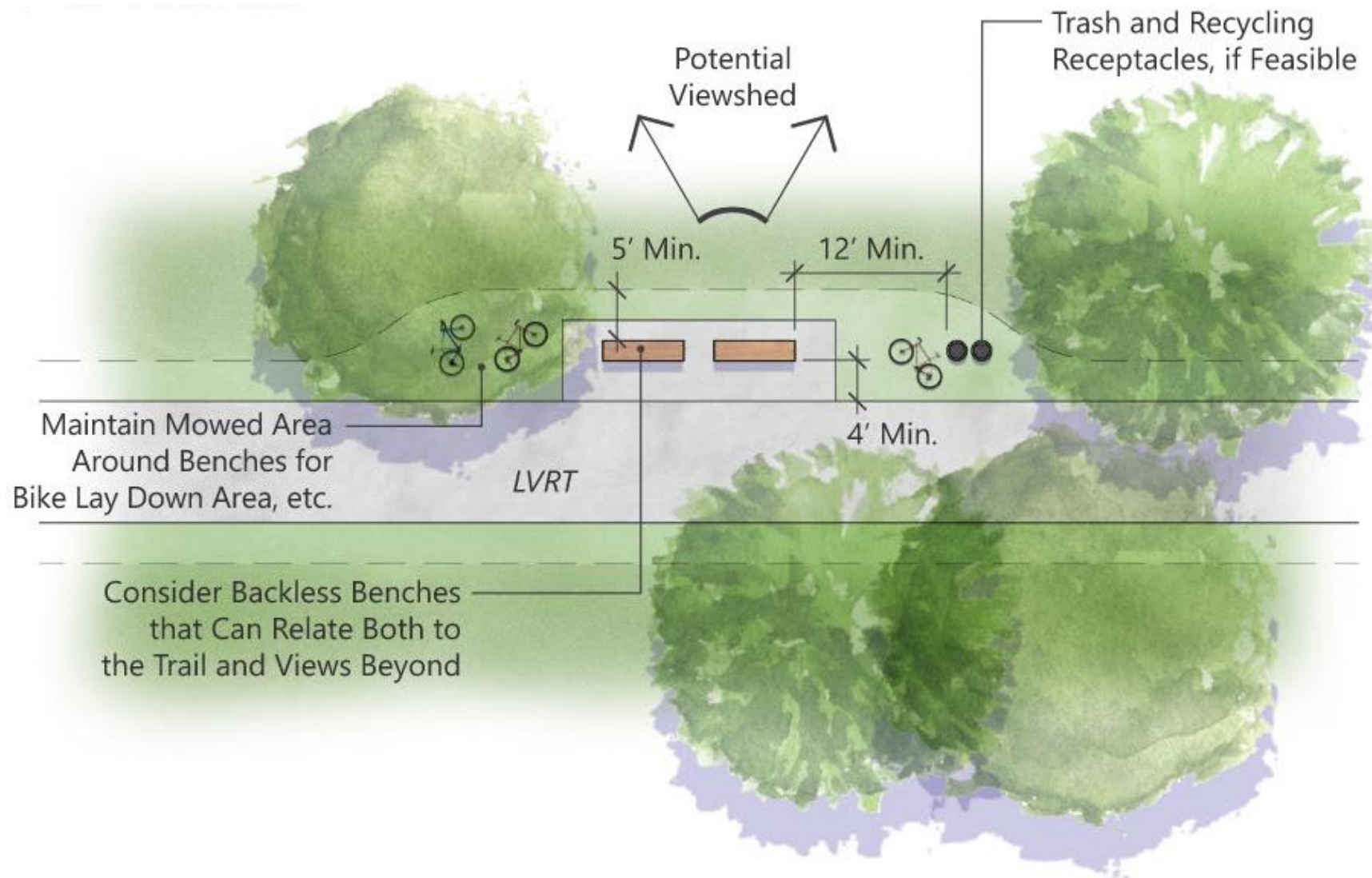
Develop user **count and survey program**

Strategies and Recommendations:

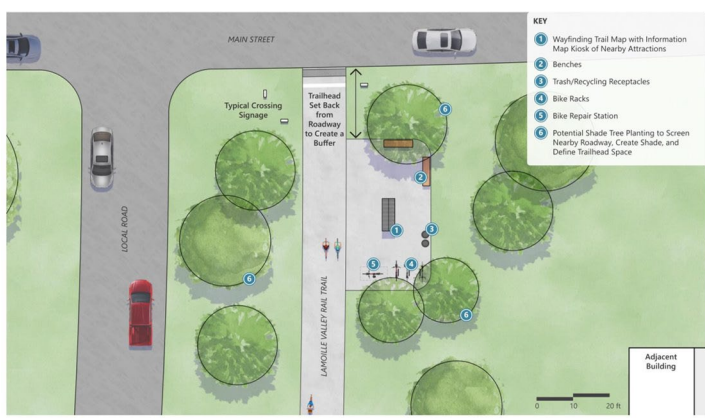
Economic Development and Community Connections

- **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



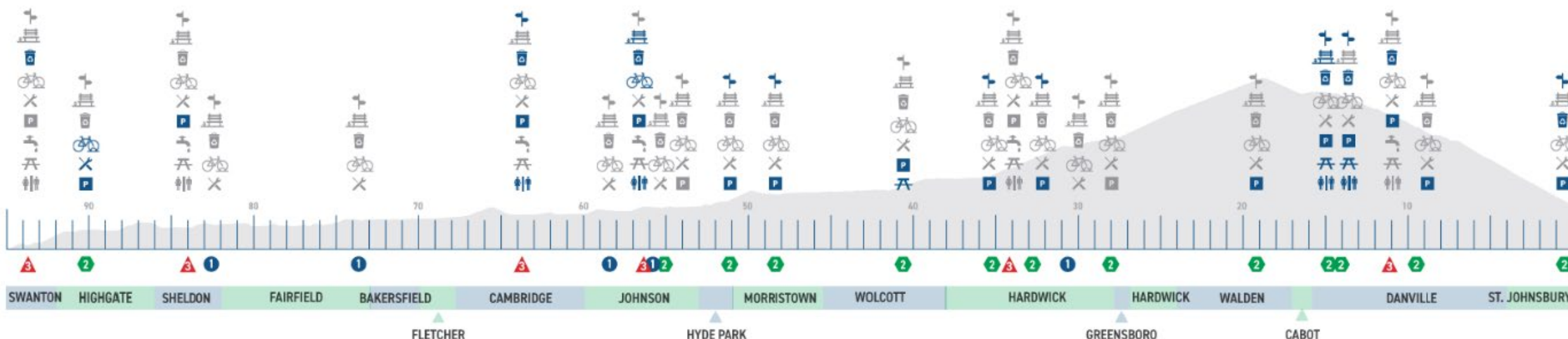
Trailheads



Trailhead and Amenity Spacing

- Designated trailhead at least every **8–10** miles
 - Average spacing of **3–5** miles
- Trailsite 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 trailsite amenities

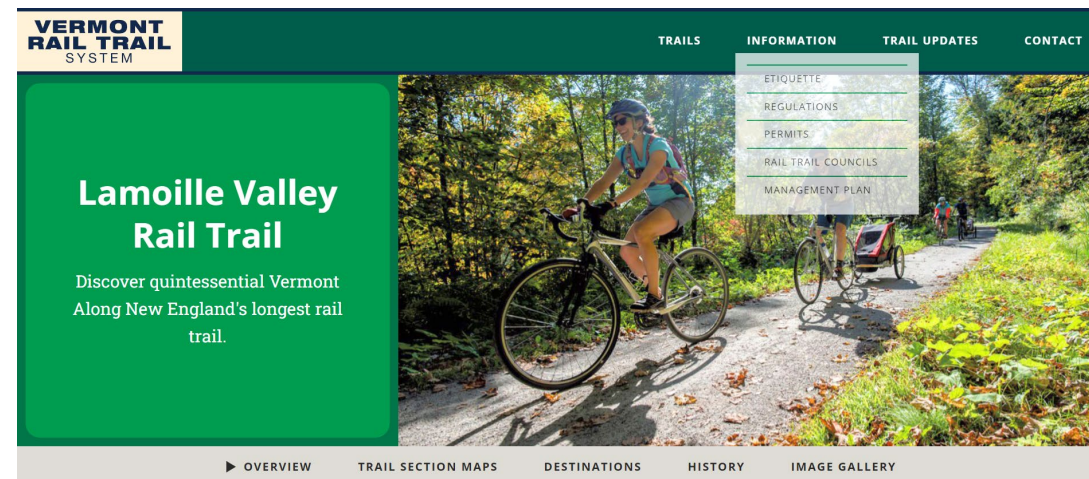
Legend		
TRAILHEAD TYPES		
Level 1 Trailhead		
Level 2 Trailhead		
Level 3 Trailhead		
TRAILHEAD AMENITIES		
	Existing	Proposed
Trail Map		
Benches		
Trash Receptacles		
Bike Racks		
Bike Repair		
Parking		
Water Fountain		
Picnic Area		
Restrooms		



Strategies and Recommendations: Economic Development and Community Connections

Tourism and Marketing 🚂 👥 🏞️

- Develop **LVRT visitor website** with **trip planning tools**
- Promote recreational tourism and **multisport synergies**
- Encourage **camping and lodging** opportunities in trilside communities
- Develop **regional marketing campaign**
- Support **trail friendly business program**
- Support **passport or quest program**
- Quantify **economic impact**



Strategies and Recommendations:

Economic Development and Community Connections

■ Educational and 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**



Trail Identity

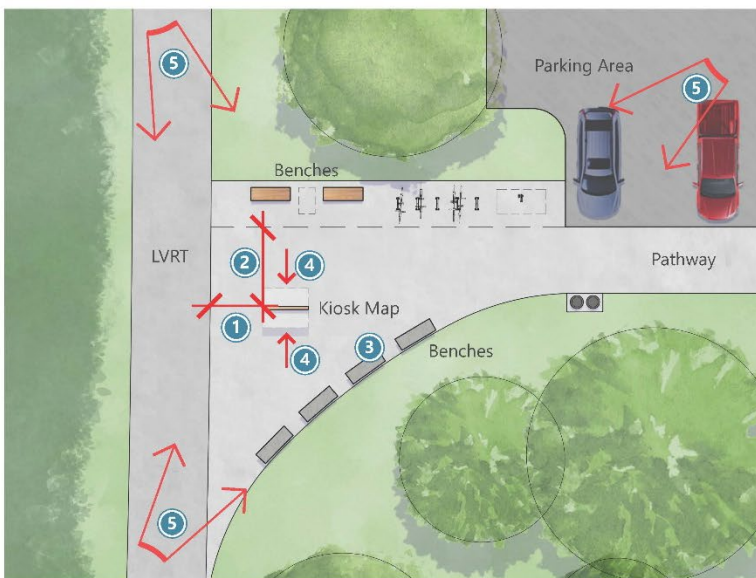
Kiosk Maps

Kiosk maps serve an important role with the trail network by providing trail users with multiple sets of information about the trail. These maps show the context of the trail, convey distance, and where trail users can expect to find certain amenities such as bike repair stations or restrooms. Beyond the trail, kiosk maps can serve as an important link back to communities and downtown centers by highlighting local business or attractions and advertising upcoming events. These maps are as important to trail users that have just arrived at a trailhead and are planning their trip as they are to users already on the trail, looking to see where they are.

Design Features + Placement

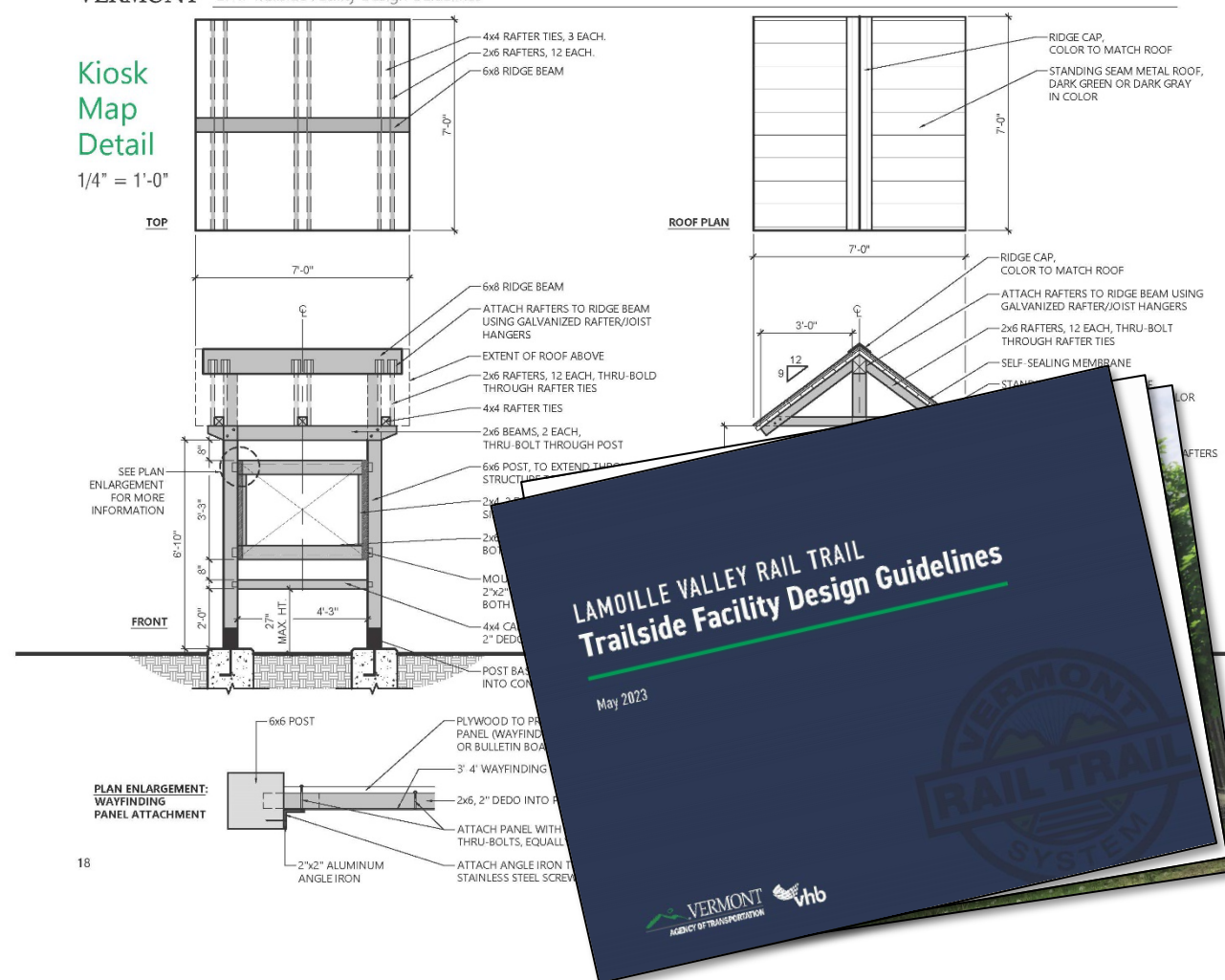
- 1 Set kiosk maps far enough off the edge of the trail to allow people standing with their bikes to view the map without impeding the trail (Minimum of 12' from the edge of the trail, if the map viewing area is parallel to the travel direction) (See Level 1 Trailhead for illustration)
- 2 Provide a minimum of 10-12' clearance in front of the viewing area of the kiosk to allow free movement around the space.
- 3 Provide a minimum of 8' clearance between the side of the kiosk map and nearby features.

- 4 Locate kiosk maps so that both sides of the kiosk can be visible from an accessible area. Reference ADA Standards for Accessible Design of walkway approaches and turning requirements for access to kiosk maps.
- 5 Kiosk maps should be placed in an area that serves multiple user groups (i.e., trail users arriving to the site by car and users already on the trail that are looking to reference their current location). Avoid placing kiosk maps in areas where it will go unnoticed from the trail.



Kiosk Map Detail

1/4" = 1'-0"





Graphic Identity

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)





Community Assistance

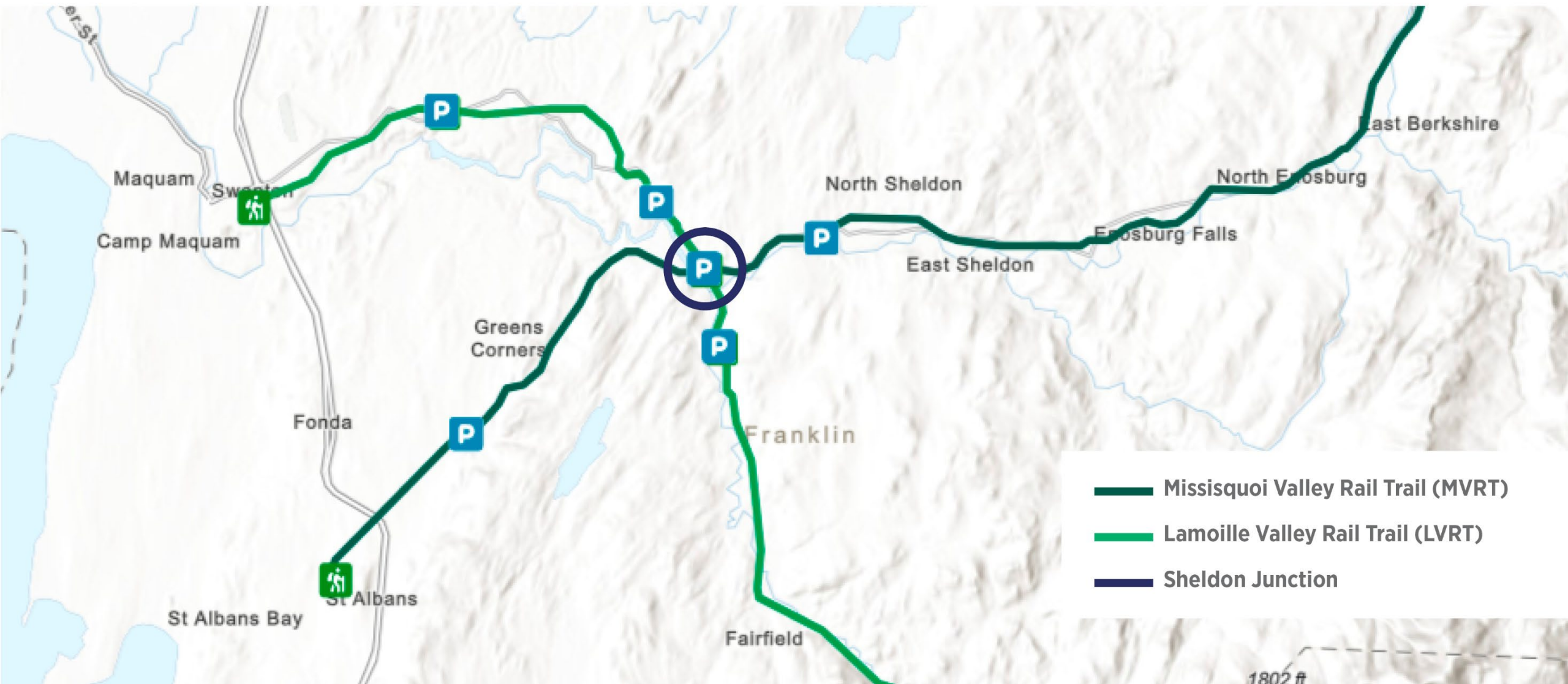


Leveraging a Community Asset

2023
Vermont
Public Places
Honor Award



Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail



Establish Local and Regional Context

- **Who is using the trail? Who do we want to be using the trail? What exactly are our goals?**
 - Understand demand
 - Consider existing community and economic development goals
 - **Community-oriented asset vs tourism-oriented asset (or both!)**
 - Define the trail "market" (and be realistic)
 - Identify aligned community partners and shared vested interests



Understand Demand and Market

- Trail user counts
- Trail user surveys
- Market assessment

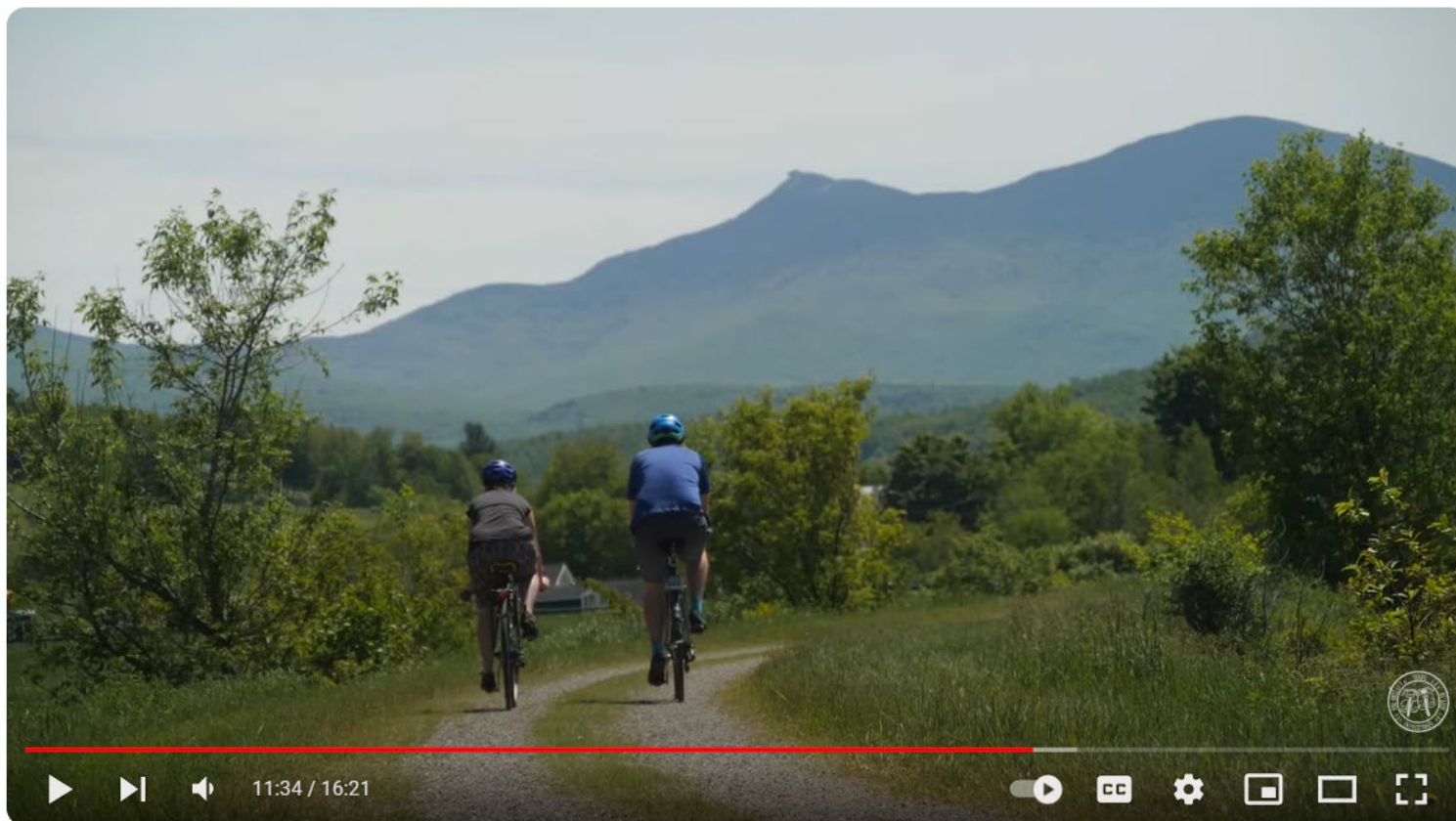


Regional Engagement





Regional Engagement



Gravel Riding on Vermont's NEXT Great Rail Trail?



Path Less Pedaled
168K subscribers

Subscribe

937



Share

Download



36K views 4 years ago #thesupplelife

Rail Trail Roundup • Come Join The Fun!

Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail Marketing and Wayfinding Project

The Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail Council and Northwest Regional Planning Commission are working with a consultant team to help increase tourism activity and the economic impact of the trail through enhanced marketing, wayfinding, and branding. The project will also create a trail friendly business program and provide technical assistance for local business owners. To kick off this year-long process, we are hosting a trail ride and a series of community events to provide information about the project and gather input from local residents and business owners. Hope to see you on the ride or at one of the community events!!

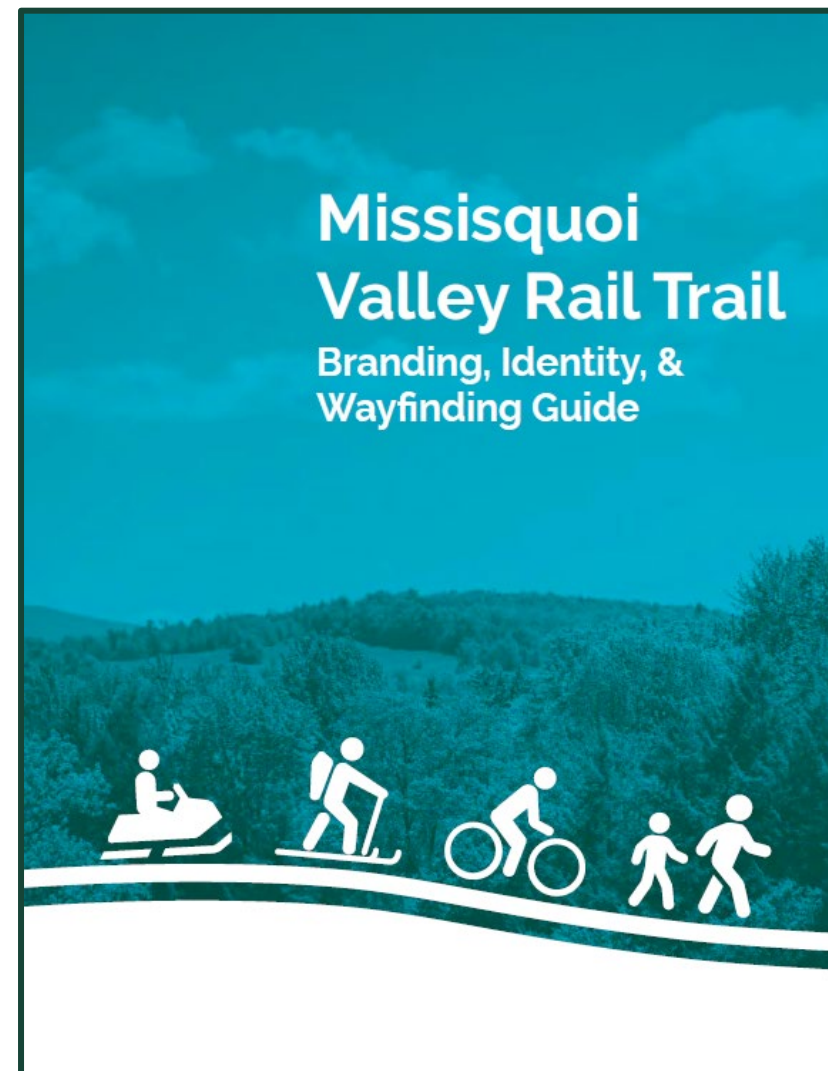
Itinerary

- 1 Thursday June 6th**
Second Trailhead Design Public Meeting
6:30 PM at the Enosburg Emergency Service Building
Presentation of trailhead designs from Conway School of Landscape Design students Greta Moore and Aja Mathews. Designs based on community input from first public meeting held April 30th.
- 2 Friday June 7th**
Breakfast Mixer and Kickoff
8:00 AM at the Maple City Diner, St Albans
Presentation/display and discussion on project goals and elements and how businesses and other stakeholders can benefit from the rail trail. Breakfast sandwiches, muffins, coffee and juice.
- 3 St. Albans to Abbey Trail Ride**
10:00 AM Departure from St. Albans Trailhead
11 miles from St. Albans to Pavilion
- 3 Picnic Lunch**
12:30 PM at the Abbey Pavilion, North Sheldon
Discussion on project goals and elements and how businesses and other stakeholders can benefit from the rail trail. Bag lunches provided.
- 3 Abbey to Enosburg Falls Trail Ride**
1:30 PM Departure from Abbey Pavilion
6 miles to Enosburg Falls
- 4 Friday June 7th Evening**
Mixer
5:30 - 7:30 PM at the 1906 Carriage Barn, Enosburg Falls
Presentation/display and discussion on project goals and elements and how businesses and other stakeholders can benefit from the rail trail. Display of Vital Village top 5 priorities. Appetizers and beverages provided. Cash bar.
- 4 Saturday June 8th**
Enosburg to Richford Trail Ride
8:00 AM Departure at the Historical Society, Enosburg Falls
10 mile ride to Richford
- 5 Picnic Lunch**
12:00 PM at the Missisquoi Overlook Park/Greenwood Dell, Richford
Discussion on project goals and elements and how businesses and other stakeholders can benefit from the rail trail. Bag lunches provided.
- 5 Richford to Pine Cone Trail Ride**
1:30 PM Departure from Richford
4 miles from Richford to Pine Cone
- 6 Ice Cream Social**
3:00 PM at the Pine Cone, Richford
Presentation/display and discussion on project goals and elements and how businesses and other stakeholders can benefit from the rail trail. Ice cream provided.

Please RSVP for each event and/or trail ride you would like to participate in by May 29th.
Greta Brunswick or Amy Adams can be reached at:
(802) 524-5958
gbrunswick@nrpcvt.com
aadam@nrpcvt.com
Project info: <http://mvrailtrail.org/mvrtproject.php>

Consultant Teams: SE GROUP TATLUM DESIGN

Trail Activation



Trail Activation



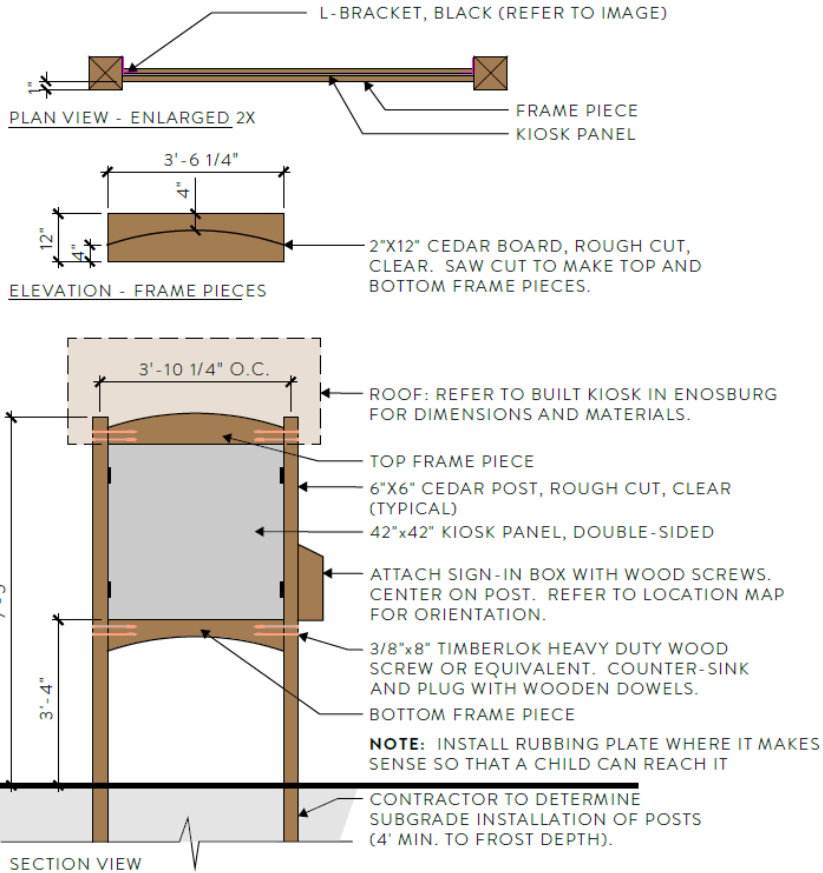
RAIL TRAIL KIOSK LOCATION MAP ST. ALBANS

1" = 20'

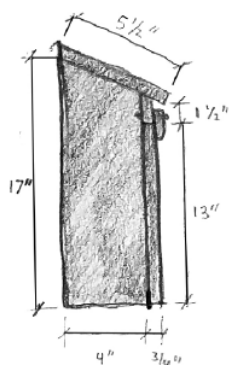


Trail Activation

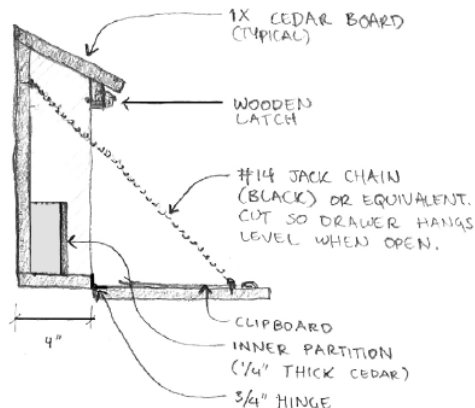
NOTE: CONTRACTOR TO REPLICATE CONSTRUCTION OF BUILT TRAIL KIOSK IN ENOSBURG FALLS AS BASIS OF DESIGN. REFER TO EXISTING KIOSK FOR ALL DIMENSIONS, MATERIALS AND HARDWARE. USE THIS DRAWING FOR REFERENCE ONLY. HARDWARE TO BE EXTERIOR GRADE. USE NATURAL WOOD FINISH.



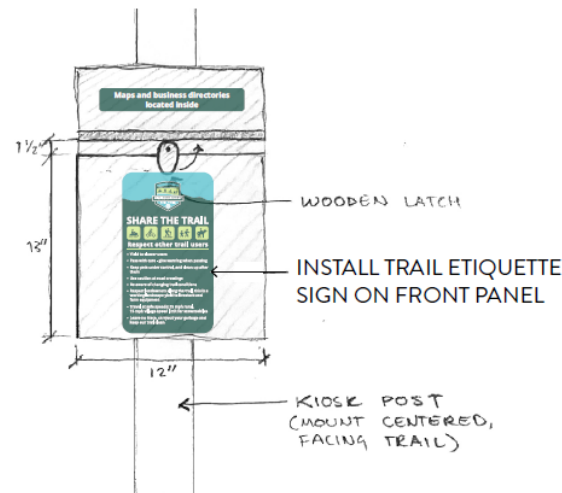
Trail Activation



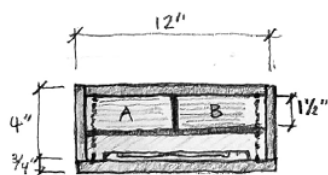
ELEVATION (CLOSED)



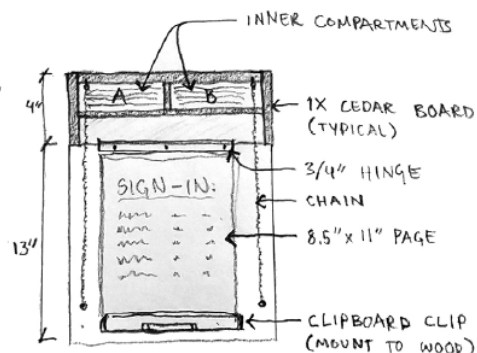
SECTION (OPEN)



FRONT VIEW



PLAN (CLOSED)



PLAN (OPEN)

NOTES:

ALL WOOD FINISH TO MATCH BUILT KIOSK IN ENOSBURG FALLS (SHOWN ON PREV. PAGE)

ALL HARDWARE AND FASTENERS TO BE BLACK OR TINTED TO MATCH FINISHED COLOR OF WOOD. USE EXTERIOR GRADE HARDWARE ONLY.

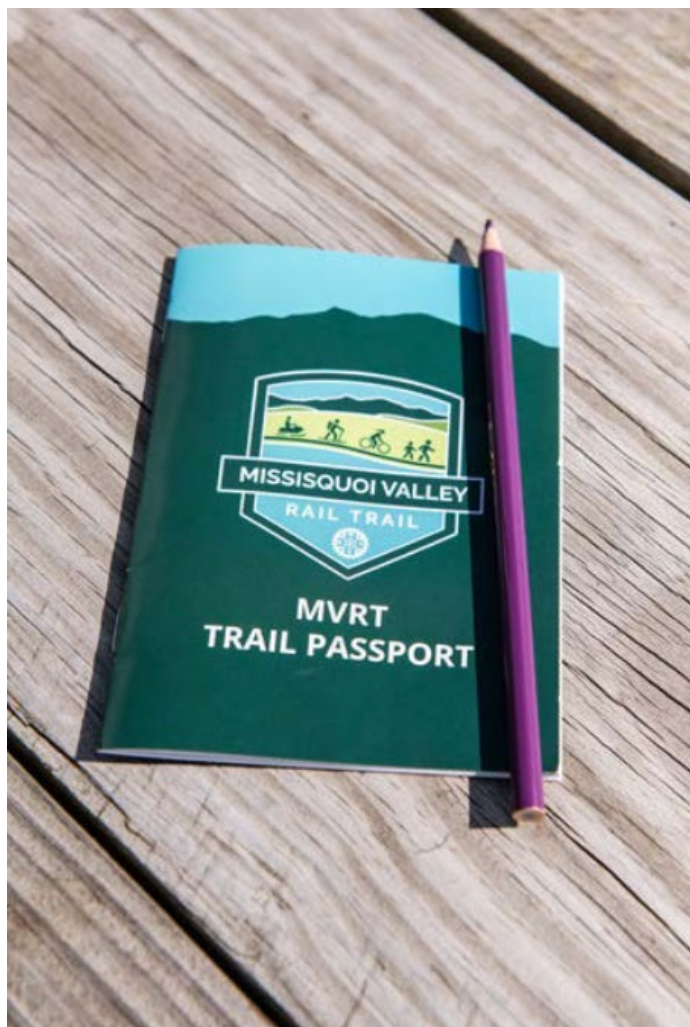
WOOD GLUE ACCEPTABLE ONLY FOR INNER COMPARTMENTS

NOT TO SCALE.





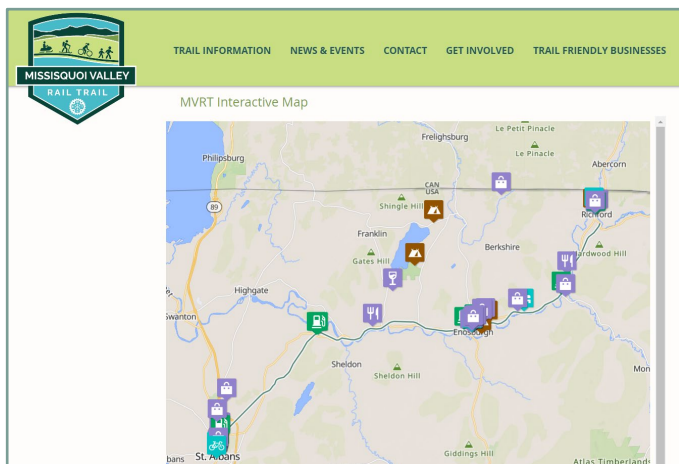
Trail Activation



Community Connection



www.mvrailtrail.org



MISSISQUOI VALLEY TRAIL FRIENDLY BUSINESS CHECKLIST

This checklist offers an easy-to-use tool for assessing how trail friendly your business is today, and for identifying steps to make trail users feel most welcome in the future. A good way to begin is to walk yourself through the process of arriving in your community by trail (or by car heading to the trailhead), and then making notes on points covered by the checklist as you go. Depending on your location and type of business, some checklist items may not apply. Use what is here as a guide and adapt it as appropriate.

All Businesses	Yes	No	Notes
1. Do you have secure, ideally covered, bike parking facilities (e.g., bike racks) nearby?			
2. Do you have maps of the downtown, the community, and/or the region displayed?			
3. Can you and your staff answer the most common trail user questions (e.g., where they can check email or take a shower)?			
4. Do you have information on side trips, bike loops, and other points of interest in the area?			
5. Do you have basic equipment available for bicyclists' use: extra locks for the bike rack, a tire pump, some basic repair tools?			
6. Can a trail user recharge a cell phone at your business?			



Trail Promotion



TRAIL INFORMATION

NEWS & EVENTS

CONTACT

GET INVOLVED

TRAIL FRIENDLY BUSINESSES

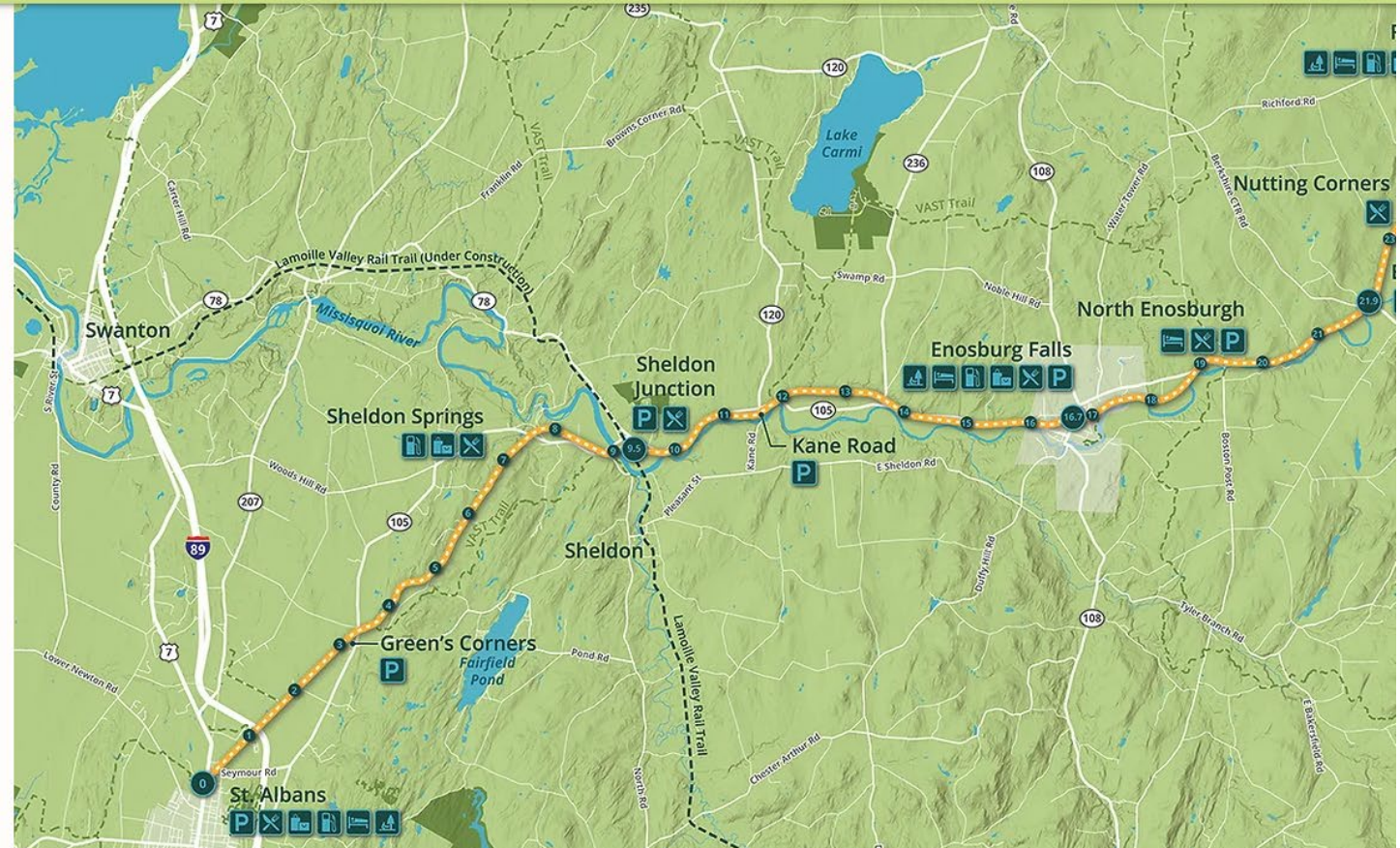
MVRT Overview Map

To see a larger map and download a pdf click [here](#).

Planning Your Visit

Trail Segments

The Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail (MVRT) is a hidden gem set within the rolling hills along the Missisquoi River. This multi-use trail offers a wide variety of year-round user experiences. There are 6 official trailheads along the route creating opportunities for an out and back or point to point ride.





Trail Promotion

Welcome to the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail!

With its bucolic setting, quiet river nooks, booming mountain views, and quintessential New England villages, the Missisquoi Valley is one of Vermont's true treasures. The New England Central Rail Line has been connecting the communities of the Missisquoi Valley since 1886—first by train and now by multi-use trail corridor. The 26.4-mile trail wanders through the villages, farms, forests, fields, and wetlands of Franklin County at a railroad's pace: slow, steady grades with sweeping bends.

For the full length of the Trail, you'll see the postcard images of Vermont you've grown to love. Interspersed between our historic village centers, you'll also find the families and working landscapes that created and continue to support this spectacular scenery. Come visit us and explore the MVRT!

SHARE THE TRAIL



Respect other trail users

- Yield to slower users
- Pass with care - give warning when passing
- Keep pets under control
- Use caution at road crossings
- Be aware of changing trail conditions
- Respect landowners along the trail, this is a working landscape yield to livestock and farm equipment
- Travel at safe speeds; 35 mph rural, 15 mph village speed limit for snowmobiles
- Leave no trace

Vital Trail Facts

Overall Length: 26.4 Miles

Allowed Uses: For safety and maintenance reasons, only non-motorized uses are permitted with the exception of snowmobiles, motorized wheelchairs, and maintenance vehicles. Motorbikes, ATVs and ORVs are not permitted on the trail. Vermont law prohibits the operation of snowmobiles on streets and highways.

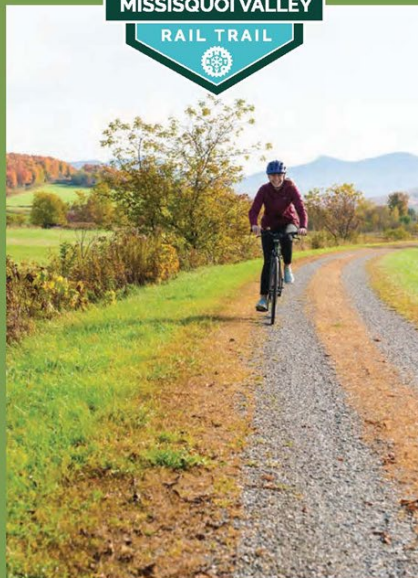
Grade: 3% maximum grade. Town road crossings may be greater. Steep side slopes (stay on trail).

Trail Width: 10 foot trail surface

Surface Type: Crushed stone with stone dust for the majority of the trail, 1/3 mile asphalt pavement in Enosburg Falls. Asphalt pavement at most agricultural crossings.

Speed Limit: 35 mph in rural areas. 15 mph in village areas.
End Points: St. Albans & Richford

Reporting Problems: To report problems along the trail (downed trees, washouts, etc.), call the Vermont Agency of Transportation District 8 at (802) 524-5926. If you observe violations of the law while on the trail, we urge you to report them to the Vermont State Police by calling (802) 524-5993.



#ExploreMVRT

Farms, Forests, Fields and Communities:
Come Enjoy Our Agricultural Heritage!

www.mvtrail.org

Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail



St. Albans to Sheldon Junction

Open, quiet farmland from St. Albans to Green's Corners. Beautiful wetlands and pines with some residential areas from Green's Corners to Sheldon Springs. Few road crossings, mostly of gravel roads.

Sheldon Junction to Enosburg Falls

The trail parallels the Missisquoi River offering scenic views of river rapids, quiet pools, working farms, and Jay Peak. Look for fox, deer, and other wildlife. Three crossings of VT 105.

Enosburg Falls to Richford

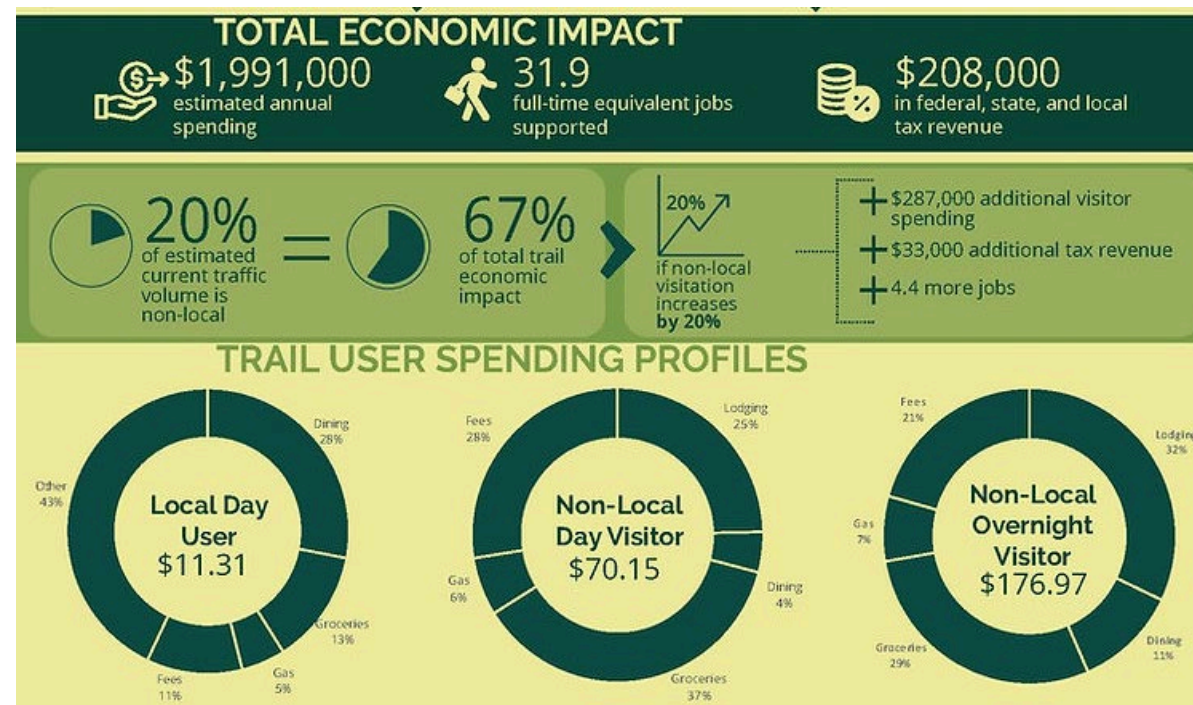
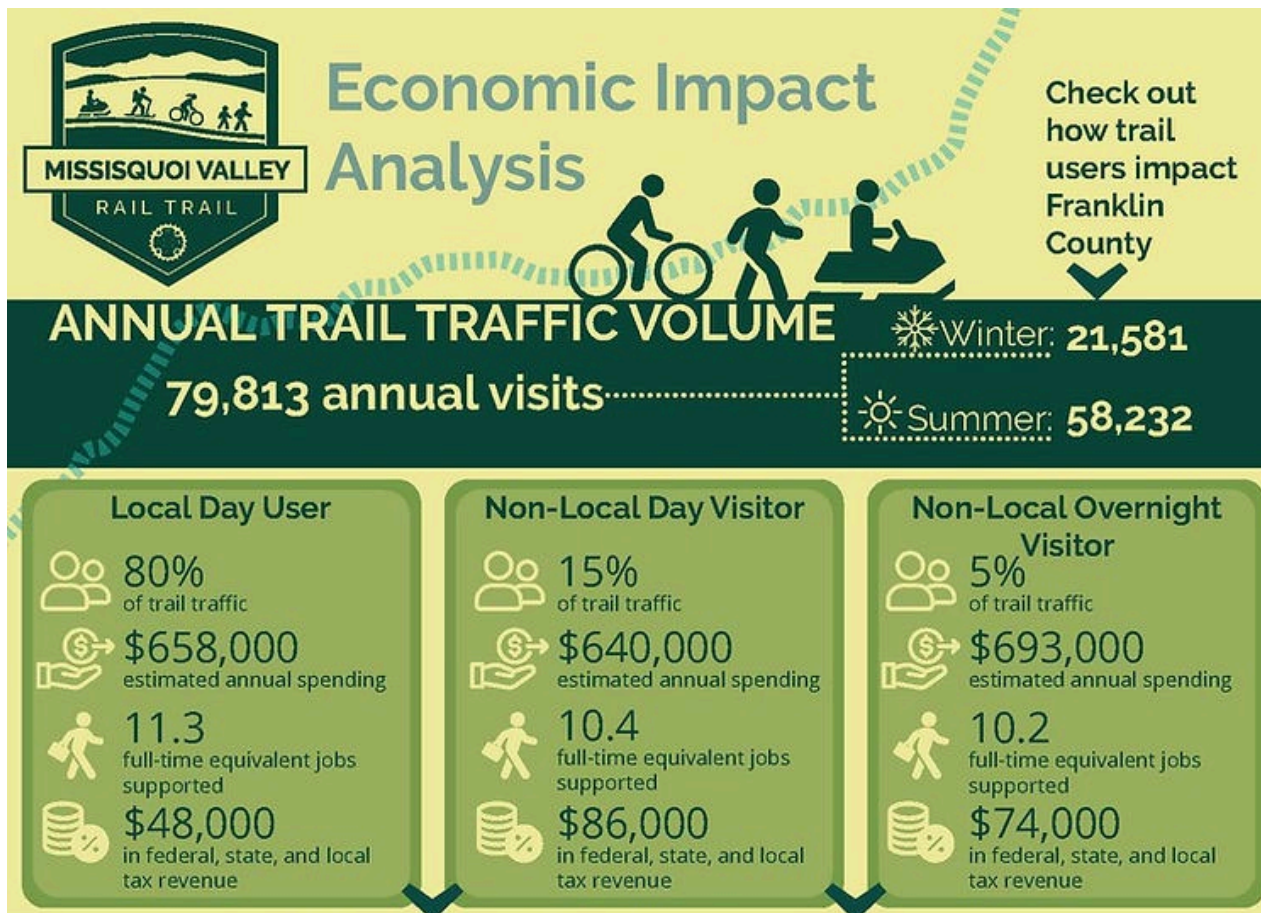
The trail parallels the Missisquoi River with outstanding views. The landscape offers a nice mix of sunny farmland, shaded forests, and quiet wetlands. Good segment for bird watchers. Multiple crossings of VT 105.

Implementation and Sustainability

- Demonstrate community benefit and return on investment to create buy-in
- Identify and align shared vested interests
- Have a plan and commit to a process
- Treat trails like **core local infrastructure**-foster a long-term commitment to stewardship, promotion, and maintenance




Demonstrate Community Benefit





Demonstrate Community Benefit




Economic DevelopmentEquityNatural HazardsPublic LandsOutdoor RecreationTax Policy

Library of Trails Benefits

This Trails Benefits Library is a collection of studies on the positive impacts of trails on businesses, public health, and quality of life. Use this form to search by type of benefit, use, year, and region.

Benefit	Use	Year	Region
Select Benefit...	Select Use...	Select Year...	Select Region...
Access (7)	Cycling (70)	1985 - 2000	Midwest
Business impacts (77)	Equestrian		
Consumer surplus (15)	Hiking		
Property value (14)	Mountain Biking		
Public health (31)	Northeast		



Mascoma River Greenway Survey and Count Results

UVLSRPC — January 26, 2020

[Overview](#)[Travel and Destinations](#)[Access](#)[Experience](#)[Community Value](#)[Counts](#)

881

Number of Survey Respondents

The majority of respondents who completed the survey were from Lebanon, with about two thirds living in the city. Others towns in the Upper Valley were also well represented, and there were also almost a 100 responses from further afield in New Hampshire, Vermont and other states.

240

Daily MRG users (East of I-89)

The proportion of survey respondents by age peaked in the 41 to 60 age bracket. There were relatively few responses from younger MRG users (under 25); the survey asked about the age of the respondent and did not include questions about the age of those accompanying the respondents on their trips on the MRG, so we don't have information about, for example, the number of children using the MRG.

Demonstrate Community Benefit



FUTURE ECONOMIC IMPACT POTENTIAL

ECONOMIC SCENARIOS

Average Spending Per Day



\$160.23 (overnight visitor)

\$70.52 (non-local day visitor)

\$13.12 (local day user)



66%

of spending from
overnight visitors

BASELINE GROWTH

 **135,949**
annual visits

 **\$3,914,000**
project total annual
sales activity

 **\$538,000**
in tax revenues

 **63**
potential full-time
equivalent jobs
supported

MODERATE GROWTH

 **145,733**
annual visits

 **\$4,196,000**
project total annual
sales activity

 **\$576,000**
in tax revenues

 **68**
potential full-time
equivalent jobs
supported

SIGNIFICANT GROWTH

 **163,499**
annual visits

 **\$4,707,092**
project total annual
sales activity

 **\$646,000**
in tax revenues

 **75.7**
potential full-time
equivalent jobs
supported

Leverage Shared Vested Interests

Who has a material stake in the success of this project?

Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council:

- Town representatives
- Regional Planning Commission
- VT Association of Snow Travelers
- VT Agency of Transportation
- VT Forests, Parks, and Recreation
- Regional Chamber of Commerce



Have a Plan and Commit to a Process

Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail Branding, Identity, & Wayfinding Guide



Annual Calendar Of Action Steps

This outline represents the tasks of the Rail Trail Council and Northwest Regional Planning Commission to "operate" the marketing and Trail Friendly Business program on an annual basis. It is expected these tasks would be allocated to several individuals across both organizations (and possibly partner organizations like RiseVT, local schools, etc.), and that a work plan to complete these tasks would be developed each year by the council and the RPC.

JANUARY

- Determine advertising budget and schedule for the year
- Review Brochure Distribution Plan for the year

FEBRUARY

- Follow up with statewide brochure distribution partners (Local Motion, Velo Quebec, VAST, race and event organizers, etc.)
- Check in on Kiosks for trail friendly business directories and maps/brochures for winter season

MARCH

- Coordinate with municipalities and business associations in St Albans, Enosburg Falls, and Richford for local brochure needs and trail friendly business messaging to their members/ local businesses
- Send brochures to partners
- Update to Spring Header Images on social media accounts

Trails as Core Infrastructure

- Should we think about trails the same as roads, sidewalks, and sewers?
- Useful framework for long-term community stewardship and investment
- Emphasizes the importance of investing resources in the near- and long-term for maintenance, promotion, enhancement, and coordination
- Using an asset management approach:
 - Operational planning and budgeting
 - Capital improvement planning and budgeting
 - Incorporation into community planning efforts





Owner Recap and Perspective

- Get started!
 - Section by section...
- Momentum drivers
 - Local Champion
 - Funding
 - Building Capacity
 - Collaboration
- Reflections



Q/A and Discussion



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Thank you!

