Planning Trails in Challenging Community Contexts:

Ashland Upper Charles Trail
AGENDA

- Overview
- Challenges
- The Route
- Next Steps
Planning For Local Connectivity
Early Support

- Board of Selectmen appointed 9 member AUCT committee
  - 1 Member of BOS
  - 1 Member of Planning Board
  - 1 Member of Open Space and Recreation Committee
  - 6 other cycling advocates

- Mission
  - Design and build a multi-use path across Ashland

- Appointed “until completion”
The Beginning

- The AUCT Committee
  - Mapped routes
  - Generated community support
  - Established Goals

- Made recommendation to BOS
- BOS wanted professional opinion
- Hired Alta Planning + Design and Kleinfelder with mitigation funds to conduct trail routing feasibility and analysis
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Challenges

- Topography
- Busy Arterial / Collector Roads
- No Abandoned Rail Corridor
- Residential Development
Challenges

- Lack of Available Rail Corridor

Pinch Point at Historic Ashland Train Station
Challenges

- Topography + Sub-divisions
- Nyanza Superfund Cap
Challenges

- **Downtown:** challenging on-street portion
Challenges

- Ashland State Park and elsewhere: need for boardwalk segments

DCR’s Alewife Greenway Trail, Arlington
Challenges
Trail Route Options Evaluation

Pre-Implementation Criteria

(1X Weighting)

1. Community Support
2. Ease of Construction
3. Property Access
4. Permitting Requirements

Post-Implementation Criteria

(2X Weighting)

1. Trail Safety
2. Linkage to Destinations
3. Visibility and Access
4. User Experience

Trail Route Options Evaluation - Ashland High School Trail Alignment Options

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A score between 1 and 5 should be entered for each criterion. The following Trail Scoring Rubric explains how to approximate a score.

Trail Scoring Rubric

1. Trail Safety
   - Prioritize options that provide trail-user separation from motor vehicle traffic.
   - 5: Shared Use Path on abandoned rail line or through undeveloped areas
   - 4: Separated on-road facility (e.g., bike lanes) for bicyclists with adjacent sidewalks
   - 3: Trail roadway for bicyclists with adjacent sidewalks
   - 2: Limited roadway for bicyclists between adjacent sidewalks
   - 1: No roadway for bicyclists

2. Link to Destinations
   - Prioritize options that will build the greatest connectivity to parks, schools, the MBTA station, retail areas, and other destinations.
   - 5: Connects to several trail heads or parking areas
   - 4: Connects to several destinations in the corridor
   - 3: Connects to one destination in the corridor
   - 2: No links to destinations in the corridor
   - 1: No links to destinations

3. Visibility and Access
   - Prioritize options that have close proximity to logical trail heads, parking areas, and other access points.
   - 5: Close proximity to trail heads and parking areas
   - 4: Close proximity to access points
   - 3: No access points to trail

4. User Experience
   - Prioritize options that offer the most scenic, recreational, and educational experience for the trail user.
   - 5: Trail option has high-quality user experience
   - 4: Trail option has high-quality user experience
   - 3: Trail option has low-quality user experience
   - 2: Trail option has low-quality user experience
   - 1: Trail option has very low quality user experience

5. Ease of Construction
   - Prioritize options with lesser engineering challenges and reimbursement to the community.
   - 5: Can be built with little or no improvement
   - 4: Construction has minor engineering challenges and will cause minor inconvenience
   - 3: Construction has major engineering challenges and will cause significant inconvenience

6. Property Access
   - Prioritize options that require fewer easements, the sale, or purchase of private property.
   - 5: Option requires no impact to private property
   - 4: Option requires easements or acquisition of a private property
   - 3: Option requires easements or acquisition of a private property
   - 2: Option requires easements or acquisition of a private property
   - 1: Option requires easement or acquisition of a private property

7. Community Support
   - Prioritize options that will generate the most community and political support.
   - 5: Option is likely to generate significant support within the community
   - 4: Option is likely to generate strong support within the community
   - 3: Option is likely to generate some support within the community
   - 2: Option is unlikely to generate support within the community
   - 1: Option is unlikely to generate support within the community

8. Permitting requirements
   - Prioritize options that involve fewer regulatory hurdles.
   - 5: Can be constructed with only Local Approval
   - 4: Requires only “general permit” at state or federal level
   - 3: Requires permits at state and federal levels
   - 2: Requires permits at state and federal levels
   - 1: Requires permits at state and federal levels
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Trail Route Options
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Trail Route Recommendations
West

Further engineering analysis needed to determine safest crossing location(s)

New bridge over brook crossing required

Explore ways to place trail within DCR parkland

Existing bridge

Big Indian Reservation

Hopkinton State Park

Howe Street

Holly Lane

Cross Street at pipeline easement, looking east

Cross Street looking south

New trail bridge, required

Preferred Route (requires new trail bridge)

Explore DCR permitting for trail use on state-owned parcel

Gas Pipeline Alignment

Indian Brook

Indian Brook Road

Whittemore Drive

Boy Scout Camp Area

Boy Scouts Parcel

Alt. Route 1 (if state land is not available)

Alt. Route 2 (if using existing bridge)
Alignment: Central

- **Ashland State Park Route**
  - Incorporates MBTA Access Road sidepath
  - Exclusively off-street
  - More scenic route

- **Downtown Loop**
  - Provides connections to destinations
  - Uses only existing rail bed within Ashland
  - Primarily on-street bike facilities
Downtown: On-Street

- **Ashland State Park Route**
  - Incorporates MBTA Access Road sidepath
  - Exclusively off street
  - More scenic route

- **Downtown Loop**
  - Provides connections to destinations
  - Uses only existing rail bed within Ashland
  - Primarily on-street bike facilities
Alignment: State Park

- Existing sidewalk under construction
- Trail bridge over stream
- Trail alignment TBD to provide adequate buffer to homes - yet avoid the vernal pools in the area
- Approximate boundary of boardwalk segment
- Trail incorporates existing path at top of dam
- New trail bridge required over spillway
- View north from Main Street where a trailhead is visible
- Parking lot/trailhead opportunity
- Existing hiking trails

**Trail Recommendations**
- Green: Cliff Road
- Red: Sidepath
- Blue: Bike Lanes
- Blue: New Crosswalk
- Red: Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon

**Scales**
- 0 to 750
- 750 to 1,500
- 1,500 to 2,250
- 2,250 to 2,750
- 2,750 to 3,000

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Lessons Learned from Elsewhere

- Several cemeteries have posted regulations that were developed in collaboration between cemetery operators and trail advocates

Regulations include:

- Ride slowly and follow posted speed limits (typically 15 MPH)
- Yield to funeral processions, cemetery visitors and maintenance vehicles
- Remain on posted/marked trail routes but find an alternative route during funeral services
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East

Recommended Alignment - East Ashland

See Ashland High School Inset

See Cedar Street Inset

Alternate Market Basket route (potential wetland impact and conflicts with beaver dams)

See Pond Street Inset

East Terminus

Future connection to Sherborn
Alignment: High School

Ashland High School Trail Alignment Options

<table>
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<td>Alt. Option B</td>
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The map shows the recommended alignment and alternative options for the trail, considering the high school area.
Planning: Next Steps

- Community Support
- Permitting
- Detailed Engineering
- Final Design and Construction
The Plan:

https://www.ashlandmass.com/DocumentCenter/View/3212

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