

Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Steering Committee

December 5, 2017 6:00pm Brick School Meeting Room

In attendance: Rick Katzenberg, Chair; Gordon Leedy, Community Development Director; Simon Corson, Planner, Community Development; Patrick Daniel, Recreation Commission Chair; Judy Shenk; Chris Shenk; Chris Buchanan, Lieutenant, Amherst Fire Department and Historic District Commission; Susan Durling; Carolyn Mitchell; George Bower; Mark Bender, Milford NH Town Administrator; Craig Fraley, Recreation Department Director; Porter Dodge, Amherst Middle School Principal

Rick Katzenberg began by asking for introductions. The attendees introduced themselves. Rick mentioned that Craig Fraley and Simon Corson have maps to share with the group. Craig began by showing the group a map created by the Nashua Regional Planning Commission that shows existing trails and potential trails in Amherst. Craig discussed an abandoned rail line that could serve as a rail trail for bicyclists and pedestrians. Craig stated that if this rail trail was open to the public, it would help achieve several goals of the 8 to 80 initiative. The 8 to 80 initiative is a core belief of the Recreation Department. The initiative directs the Department to design spaces that can be used by both eight year olds and eighty year olds. By taking this approach, the Department's properties can be used by the whole community. There was discussion clarifying the location of the rail trail and the potential challenges to building the trail were summarized. These challenges include funding to build bridges and improve the path by adding stone dust or comparable materials, as well as working with private property owners who own sections of the trail.

Simon displayed a map with an inventory of pedestrian infrastructure. This map shows the location and conditions of sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb ramps.

Rick introduced a senior at Souhegan Cooperative High School, who is an avid cyclist. The senior spoke about his experience cycling in the region, as well as his work building and servicing adaptive cycling equipment. He spoke about how the High School's administration supports students that are driven to contribute to their community. Simon stated he would be interested in working with the senior to open a line of communication with high school age students regarding multimodal transportation in Amherst.

There was discussion about the work of the Safe Routes to School Committee. Rick mentioned the proposed sidewalk on the east side of Boston Post Road from just north of Cross Road to Homestead Road. This proposed sidewalk was the highest priority infrastructure project proposed by the Safe Routes to School Committee. Susan Durling supports these recommendations, she stated that building sidewalks around the Middle School would provide greater connectivity to the area.

The group discussed how advocates worked diligently to inform the Safe Routes to School Plan created by the Nashua Regional Planning Commission, yet the recommended infrastructure has not been implemented. George Bower asserted that he had a Town-wide Transportation Master Plan from years ago that referenced the need for multimodal transportation options in Amherst.

There was conversation about generating a plan that puts Amherst in a strong position to seek funding, while fostering community support for pedestrian and bicycle projects.

Rick proposed breaking the Committee into four subcommittees. There was agreement from the group that working in small groups would be beneficial. These four working groups are roads, trails, Amherst Middle School, and vision. Rick asked for committee members to sign up for a working group following the meeting. There was discussion about when the next meeting will take place. The group decided on January 16 at 6pm.