

# Southern New Hampshire Rail Trail Alliance

## Derry - Salem - Windham

*An alliance for the implementation of the Salem to Concord Bikeway Plan*

### The NHDOT Plan

The Salem, Windham and Derry section of the NHDOT sponsored 2003 Salem to Concord Bikeway Plan represents a clear vision and opportunity for cooperation. The I-93 Final EIS (Chapter 11 item 5, and Chapter 2 Alternatives) outlines the NHDOT commitment to this project. The work of the three Towns, Derry, Salem, and Windham have and will continue to move planning to implementation toward completing the recommendations of the NHDOT Plan and I-93 EIS.

### SNHRTA the Bond

A strong bond between the three communities of Derry, Salem and Windham, has been and continues to be the groundwork for rail trail planning and implementation along the Manchester to Lawrence line. This synergy now has a solid foundation in the form of the "Southern New Hampshire Rail Trail Alliance" or SNHRTA.

The alliance is formed with the understanding that a cohesive approach to implementation will facilitate a more rapid, efficient, and comprehensive outcome with longer term solutions. This bond does not abdicate the individuality of each community group and the resulting context sensitive solutions that each group has achieved. The SNHRTA serves as a means to build on the ability, success, and resources of each group while retaining a strong communication system with each community. We are expanding those bonds into other communities such as Londonderry as we look at future phases. We do not see our respective "front yards" as the end game; we see a strong role for our organization in the completion of the State NHDOT Salem to Concord Bikeway. Connecting from the SNHRTA project area, then onto Manchester and Concord, is an outcome that produces a trail system that will provide a catchment area to serve over 25% of the State population.

### The TE Objective and Momentum

Our immediate focus is the 13.3 mile Salem to Derry section. To implement a portion of this section we respectfully submitted a TE application to augment the work of our communities.

The plan, direction and commitment are clearly articulated amongst all parties. Now the timing for a more rapid implementation is valid as the imminent construction for the lower portion of I-93 will impact all of our communities. As Rebuilding I-93 becomes a reality we see the need to employ the components of the project that offer alternatives to the motor vehicle. We not only see a need, we see an obligation.

### For Everyone Everyday Trails for New Hampshire

In a depressed economy we must implement every resource available for New Hampshire residents so they have multiple means to access opportunities. Let's have the Federal dollars leverage outcomes for local residents.

The immediate area of the SNHRTA area improvement will serve a population of over 70,000 New Hampshire residents engaging new opportunities to reduce vehicular trips. In Salem the trail motto "For Everyone Everyday" was coined as a means to articulate the everyday use that this corridor can deliver. This is supported by the Salem to Concord Bikeway Plan conducted by Rizzo Associates for NHDOT (page 69):

*"The rail-trail option, although within a dedicated right-of-way, is not located in secluded undeveloped areas. In fact, it passes through or adjacent to a wide range of developed areas including residential neighborhoods retail and commercial areas, recreation areas, and schools. The proposed park and ride lots along I-93 are located a short distance from the rail trail and can be readily accessed by on-road links. The proposed park and ride lot at Exit 5 in Londonderry is actually adjacent to the rail corridor."*

### "I-93 EIS Chapter 2

#### Alternatives, section 2.3.3.4

*Facilities for bicycles originally included in the layout presented in the Draft EIS have been eliminated from further study. NHDOT recently completed a separate Bikeway Feasibility Study in March 2003 to identify alternative transportation corridors for pedestrian and bicycle travel between Salem and Concord, NH. The study included consideration of on-road shared shoulder alternatives along local roads, the I-93 corridor bike path presented in the DEIS (described below), and a rail trail alternative. The study recommended the development of a rail trail facility located along the abandoned Manchester-Lawrence railroad corridor. The Feasibility Study recommended that the I-93 bicycle path layout not be pursued. The NHDOT is continuing to work with regional and local officials to implement the Bikeway Feasibility Study recommendations."*



**Derry Rail Trail Alliance  
Salem Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee  
Windham Rail Trail Alliance**

*The proposed park and ride lot at Exit 5 in Londonderry is actually adjacent to the rail corridor."*

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**Unfinished Section near Bridge over 111 in Windham**

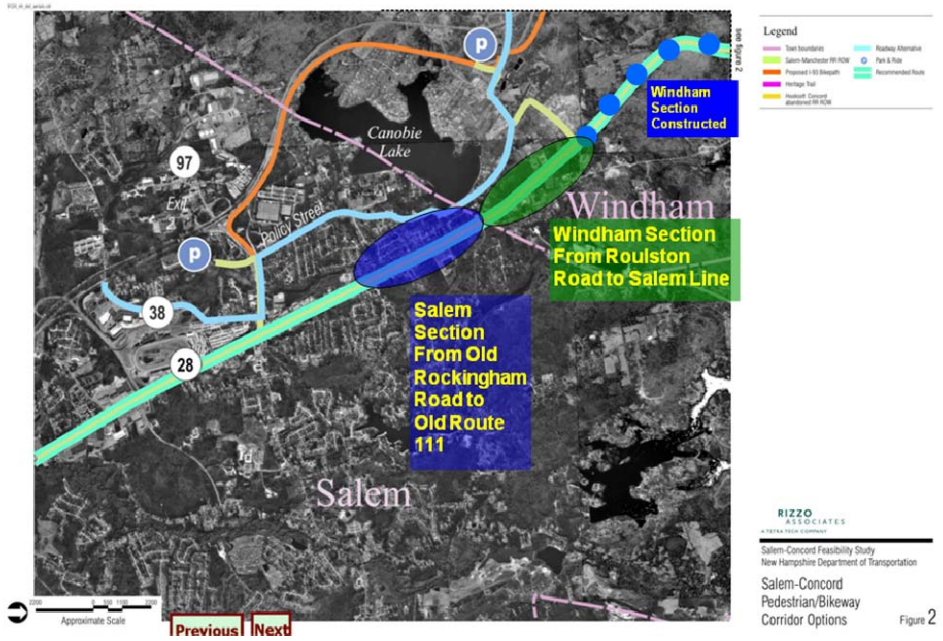


Figure 2

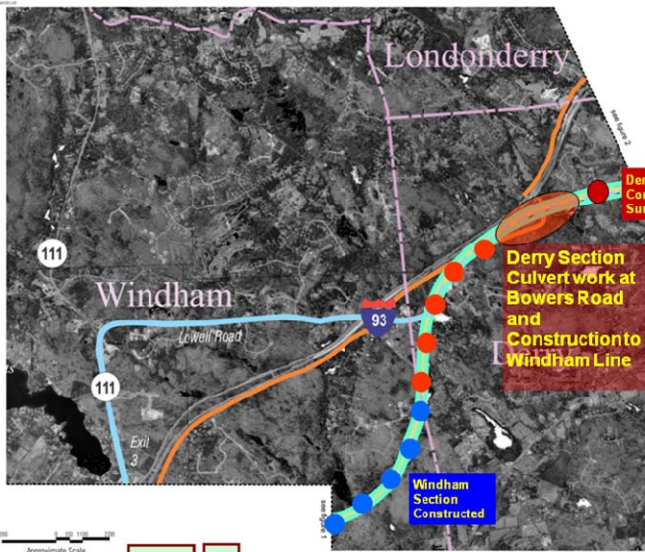
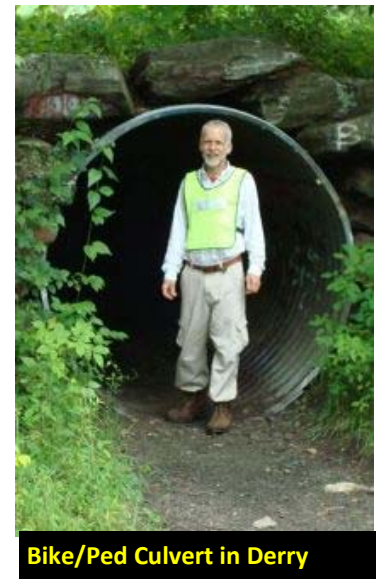


Figure 3



**Bike/Ped Culvert in Derry**

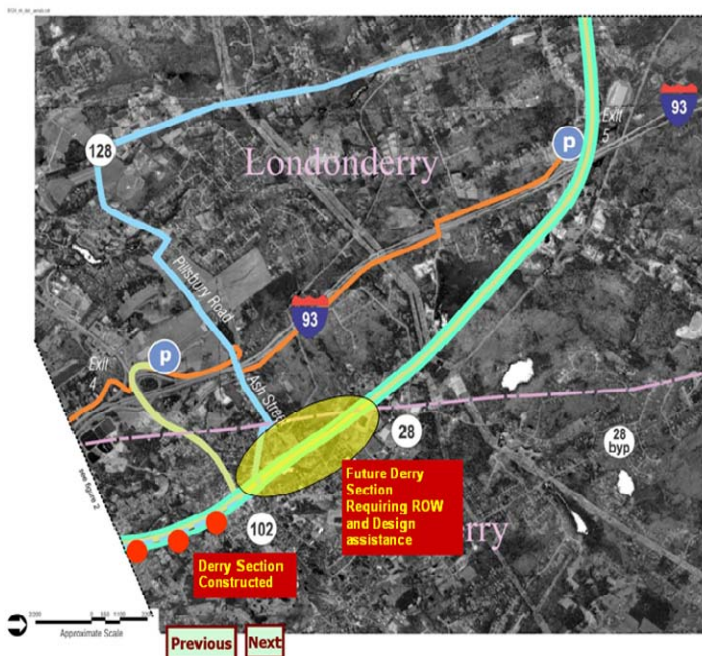


Figure 4



## Southern New Hampshire Rail Trail Alliance

# Southern New Hampshire Rail Trail Alliance

Town	Scope of Work TE Application 2009
Derry	Construction of a culvert and crossing at the Bowers Road area to facilitate uninterrupted access to the full width trail system. This is in conjunction with 2 miles of trail already constructed, and 2 miles of trail to be constructed by the Derry Rail Trail Alliance to the Windham line.
Windham	Completion of the Windham section of rail trail from Roulston Road to the Salem Town line. This will complete the Windham section and make a connection to the Salem first phase section, thereby connecting Salem to Derry.
Salem	Construction of the first phase of the 5-mile Salem section. This phase represents 1.1 miles in a commercially developed area adjacent to Route 28. This section will provide access for the three communities to commercial and employment opportunities.
Total Project	Above projects creating accessible 10 miles of trail connecting three communities, two of which are in the top ten in population while accessing open space. The trail system will serve communities with a combined population of over 70,000 people. In Salem alone there are over 4,800 households within a ¼ mile of the trail system.

*the catchment area which is very consistent with the utilization developed in the 2006 Salem-Concord Bikeway Demand Estimate. With longer term acceptance and use of the corridor it is conceivable that corridor use could increase to levels approaching the high end estimate developed in this study of one trip for every 18 residents."*



**Constructed Section in Derry**

## What is the project?

Each town has a separate yet crucial project to facilitate the connection of 10 miles of trail across three communities. The individual project scopes are shown in the table to the left. The Town of Derry requires a crucial bike/ped culvert that provides safety through traffic separation. The culvert facilitates the safe connection to an additional 2 miles of trail. The Town of Windham needs to get to the Salem Town line from the \$600,000 NHDOT bridge over 111. The Town of Salem is deferring trail connection on the southern portions to facilitate a seamless connection between Windham and Derry. Salem will then work back into the community connecting to the Massachusetts line. The unified approach creates a logical implementation sequence and reprioritizes work for the greater trail purpose.

Salem augmented the Rizzo Demand Model and took the study to greater detail. Based on the Conclusions section of a Demand Analysis conducted by Roger Hawk Planning Resources for the Town of Salem, September 4<sup>th</sup> 2009 the project will generate a considerable use:

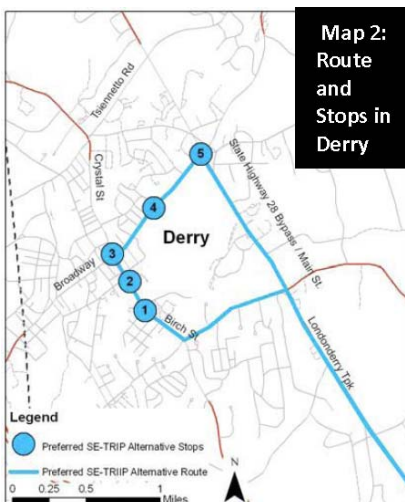
*"Based on the analysis conducted for this project it is reasonable to conclude that the annual utilization of a completed pedestrian/bicycle corridor adjacent to Route 28 in Salem will be in the range of 736,000 to 2,018,000 trips per year for both bicycle and pedestrian travel modes. This result is a low end estimate for average daily use of about one trip for every 34 residents within*

## I-93 : Where's the Local Intermodal?

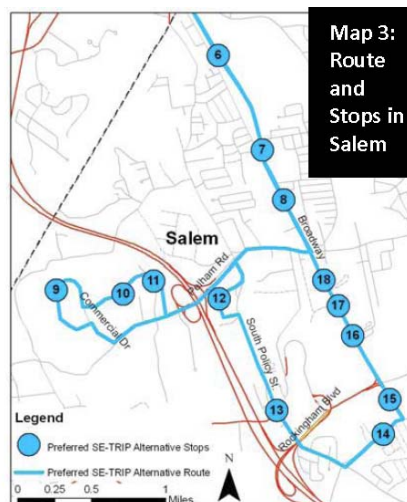
A premise of the 2003 NHDOT sponsored Salem to Concord Bikeway Plan is to develop an intermodal system parallel to the I-93 project. That outcome is becoming a reality through local organizations like SNHRTA and NHDOT investments in key bridges. What SNHRTA brings to the intermodal table is coordination with alliance partner, the Town of Salem, which is planning a regional bus system. The Town of Salem has developed an analysis for the Salem-Derry area to provide fixed route transit. The origination of the system is the 1,649 commuters who travel into Salem from Derry on a daily basis according to the 2000 census. The provision of a fixed route will also augment the successful CART brokerage bus system.

The planned bus system is integrally tied to the SNHRTA project as many of the stops are adjacent to the proposed rail trail. The intent of planning both the Rail Trail and transit at the same time creates the opportunity to plan the connections. The key to an integrated program is the ability to provide safe bike routes for people to seek and depart from transit using a Bike/Ped option.

Beyond the local transit planning the NHDOT Salem to Concord Bikeway Plan clearly shows connections to park-and-rides. If we can get people to Boston it makes sense to get them to work locally.



**Map 2:  
Route  
and  
Stops in  
Derry**



**Map 3:  
Route  
and  
Stops in  
Salem**

# Southern New Hampshire Rail Trail Alliance

## More than Letters Grassroots Cooperation Leading to Sequenced Implementation

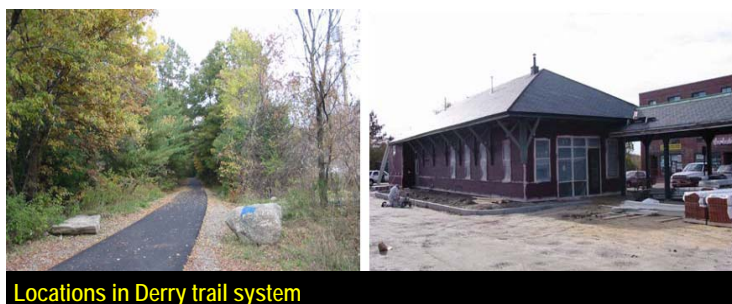
The objective studies tell us that this project will be a success. The expanding use of the improved Windham and Derry sections created by efforts of volunteers represent clear evidence of commitment and use.

This is not a project that is principally supported by boilerplate letters. By the time we are through a process locally our support and project objectives are well tested. Derry has an online petition to track continued support, with over 254 signatories in favor. Salem conducted a survey of 2,800 households with over 240 responses indicating a positive support and articulating the project needs in the community. Windham has the most effective form of support, a near completed trail system developed by supporters and volunteers and heavily used by people in the region. Finally and as important this project has its foundation in the State NHDOT Salem to Concord Bikeway.

To implement our sections we have taken the true grassroots approach engaging local residents to take part as volunteers and as donors. Already Derry and Windham have built close to nine miles of trail with over \$900,000 of local funds and over 2,500 hours of volunteer time. We come to this process with momentum and success in hand, not with a rough concept looking to TE as the only funding opportunity. Our partnership across three communities is based on the realization that separate single community short trails have little merit as a transportation solution. Our approach is to become a major partner to implement the NHDOT Salem to Concord Bikeway in conjunction with I-93. The evidence of Bike/Ped bridge construction over Route 111 is an indication that NHDOT is committed, now we need to augment those investments and move forward with the corridor.

## Sequencing and Synergy Better than Redundant Competition

When you have a standing plan such as the Salem to Concord Bikeway Plan the ability to make decisions across multiple groups, and set priorities becomes more effective. As a unified



Locations in Derry trail system

organization we have sequenced the implementation priorities over three communities, eliminating the need to review three competing applications.



SNHRTA members on tour

We asked ourselves; Should we play it safe and create segmented small opportunities for single communities? Or; Should we facilitate a major regionally coordinated project that provide facilities for everyday New Hampshire residents in highly populated areas? We agree that regional cooperation begets a multitude of enhanced outcomes well beyond the benefits derived from the grant scoring security of separate small individual community projects.

## The Perfect Storm of Rail Trails

The perfect convergence of Rail Trail outcomes .....

- an Alliance of three communities with a common purpose,
- eliminating competition and setting priorities
- clear ability to implement ,
- plan established by the State of New Hampshire DOT,
- I-93 EIS commitments,
- integrated into local transit planning and existing park and ride systems,
- connecting employees to employers,
- connecting a population to a natural environment,
- serving over 70,000 people locally,
- filling a substantial gap in an overall system that will connect over 25% of the State's population



Bridge over Route 111

..... the outcome is the SNHRTA project.

If everyone expects to have true local intermodal opportunities ready, commensurate with the I-93 project then by all means rely on the SNHRTA as a partner. It is for that reason we respectfully submitted a TE application to expedite the Salem to Concord project implementation. Please, we encourage you to visit our websites and find out more.

SNHRTA website:

<http://www.snharta.org>

Derry Rail Trail Alliance:

<http://www.derryrailtrail.org>

Salem Bike Ped Committee:

<http://bwanh.org/sbpc>

Windham Rail Trail Alliance:

<http://www.windhamrailtrail.org>