

LANCASTER TRAIL & BIKE WAY COALITION

Who Are We?

The Lancaster Trail & Bike Way Coalition (LTBC) was formed in 2013 with the mission of enriching the lives of residents by advancing the development, and ensuring the maintenance, of a diverse system of trails and bike ways, all in a manner that protects the ecologically-sensitive environment.

Our Goals and Core Values

The LTBC seeks trails and bike ways that promote:

- *Accessibility* – an infrastructure of trails and bike ways that are a part of everyday life and accessible to all people of varying abilities, ages and backgrounds
- *Healthy Lifestyles* – improved fitness, health and well-being for all people through trails and bike ways that offer opportunities for physical activity, recreation, rejuvenation and preventative health care
- *Economic Vitality* – a trail system that contributes to the financial strength and attractiveness of the community by enhancing business opportunities, tourism and property values
- *Sustainable Development* – a trail system that offers alternative transportation opportunities, contributes to the health and vitality of the community, and connects people to nature
- *Best Practices* – innovative, sustainable, and technically sound guidelines that are understood and applied by decision makers in the planning, design, development and construction of high-quality trail systems
- *Experiences in the Outdoors* – responsible and enjoyable opportunities that are afforded to all trail users and enthusiasts
- *Appreciation for the Outdoors* – inspiring trail experiences that cultivate an appreciation for our natural and cultural heritage
- *Learning in the Outdoors* – formal and informal educational and interpretive opportunities that promote understanding of our sense of place
- *Connectivity* – trail systems that link natural and cultural resources within the Town and with surrounding communities

This newly-formed group of trails and bike path enthusiasts will develop a town-wide vision and implementation plan for recreational trails and bike paths throughout Lancaster, and to connect these trails and paths in with other community's trail and path systems.

Our Charter

The following is an initial charter for the Coalition:

- Assemble team to study and plan for trail and bike path systems throughout Lancaster and in the Region.
- Work with the Montachusett Regional Trails Coalition to connect Lancaster's trails and bike paths with other community's trails/paths.
- Work to connect Lancaster's trails and bike paths with open space parcels, conservation areas, recreational areas and wildlife corridors.
- Develop a trails/bike path inventory and update the Lancaster Trails map accordingly.
- Plan for new trails and bike paths and determine methods and funding sources for their creation and maintenance.
- Promote the Lancaster trails and bike path systems throughout the community and region.

The membership of the Coalition includes representatives from:

- Community Development and Planning
- Conservation Commission
- Open Space and Recreation Committee
- Lancaster Land Trust
- Recreation Committee
- Thayer Memorial Park Committee
- Friends of the Cook Conservation Area
- Friends of the Nashua River
- Town Forest Committee
- Board of Health
- Commission on Disability
- Public Works

It became evident that Lancaster's trails are mostly informal trails or paths that have never been officially documented or mapped. It also became clear that there are many different

groups within Lancaster that are currently working on trail creation and maintenance. It would make sense for these individual groups to team together to try and link these trails and provide connectivity to all of the natural resources in this community, including conservation areas, recreation areas, water bodies, and even cultural and historical sites. This trail plan or vision can also encompass trails for different modalities, including walking/hiking, biking, horseback, dirt bikes/ATVs, snowmobiles, showshoeing, skiing, etc. We are looking to connect these trails so that we have a seamless network of trails and bike paths throughout Lancaster and into surrounding towns.

Our Work Plan

A three-year work plan is in place to act as the “blueprint” for the Coalition’s work. Pieces of the plan include:

- Assemble team to study and plan for trail and bike path systems throughout Lancaster and in the Region.
- Work with the Montachusett Region Trails Coalition to connect Lancaster’s trails and bike paths with other community’s trails/paths.
- Work with the Open Space and Recreation Committee to connect Lancaster’s trails and bike paths with open space parcels, conservation areas, recreational areas and wildlife corridors.
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- Promote the Lancaster trails and bike paths throughout the community and region.

2013

General

- Adopt the mission statement and goals/core values
- Identify sub-committees

Current Inventory

- Identify existing trails and ownership – formal and informal
- Identify existing bike ways and ownership – formal and informal
- Identify user group and modality type for each trail/bike way
- Initiate connection of existing trail and bike way systems

- Develop maintenance plans for existing trails and bike ways
- Establish funding sources for on-going maintenance and promotion

Marketing/Promotion

- Develop promotional materials
- Develop and attend trail-related events
- Develop web site

2014

New Trail/Bike Way Development

- Solicit public input for new trails and trail connection routes
- Identify all open space parcels, conservation areas, recreational areas, water bodies, wildlife corridors, cultural sites, historical sites, other points of interest
- Establish connection routes between existing trails and these points of interest
- Establish connection routes between Lancaster trails/bike ways and surrounding town's networks
- Establish funding sources for new trail/bike way development

Marketing/Promotion

- Continue to develop and attend trail-related events
- Develop trails tool box of useful information (maps, trail information, trail rules)

2015

- Begin construction of the new trails and bike ways

In its first year, the LTBC has accomplished the following:

- Inventory of all existing trails and bike ways
- Trail walks at each of the existing trails
- Town-wide map of all existing formal trails
- Individual trail maps for each existing formal trail
- Maintenance plan for all existing trails
- Signage plan for all existing trails

- Web page and brochure

Come Join Us!

We meet the second Wednesday of each month, at 6:30 PM, at the Lancaster Town Hall. If interested in joining, contact Noreen Piazza at npiazza@lancasterma.net or call 978-365-3326 x1311.

Happy Trails!