

Town of Marlborough, Connecticut Recreational Trail Master Plan



**Drafted and Approved by the Nature Trails and Sidewalk Commission, with assistance
from the Planning and Development Director**

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Acknowledgements

With assistance from Peter Hughes, Planning and Development Director, the Marlborough Recreational Trail Master Plan was originally drafted, edited, and adopted in August 2007 by the Nature Trails and Sidewalk Commission:

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Cover picture: An existing trail in the Salmon River State Forest south of Flood Road, looking south. This trail is recommended to become part of the South Marlborough Connector.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Table of Contents.....	2
Purpose of the Master Plan.....	3
1 – Existing Conditions.....	4
History of Trail Planning in Marlborough.....	4
Existing Conditions	4
Initial Trail Projects.....	4
Elementary School Nature Trails	4
West Road Trail (Blackledge River Greenway).....	5
2 – Considerations for Trail Development.....	6
Regional Connections.....	6
Land Acquisition	6
Funding.....	7
3 – Recommendations	8
Recommended Trail Network	8
Trunk Trail Network.....	8
Blackledge River Greenway	8
Dickinson Creek Greenway	10
Main Street Trail and Bike Lanes	11
East Hampton to Hebron Trail	13
North Marlborough Connector.....	15
South Marlborough Connector.....	15
Trunk Trail Priority	16
Neighborhood Trails.....	17
Forest Trails.....	17
Specifications.....	18
Implementation Steps	19
4 – Appendix	
Figure 1: Existing Open Space Map	
Figure 2: Existing Trails Map	
Figure 3: Future Trunk Trail Network Map	

Purpose of the Master Plan

The purpose of the Recreational Trail Master Plan is to create a long-term vision for a Town-wide trail system, as well as short-term policies to implement this system. This trail system will serve many different users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, hikers, and mountain bikers, with a variety of trail types and features. The trail system is proposed to connect to surrounding Towns, allowing both recreational and commuter users to access the larger, regional trail network. This document should be referenced during the approval process for new developments, to ensure that proper trail easements are granted and that trails are constructed where appropriate.

1 – Existing Conditions

History of Trail Planning in Marlborough

In February 2005, the Town of Marlborough conducted a survey of Town residents to gauge citizen interest on a variety of topics, including the development of new recreational facilities. Specifically, residents were asked if they would support the development of a Town-wide trail network for recreational purposes. Over 50% of Town residents stated that they would support construction of a trail network. In addition, many of the comments supported the development of trails and retaining the Town’s rural character.

After the survey results were analyzed, the Community Development Advisory Commission (CDAC), discussed the role of Town Boards and Commissions in developing a trail network. CDAC recommended the formation of the Nature Trails and Sidewalk Commission (NTSC), a new Advisory Commission to the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen approved the creation of the NTSC in December 2005. In January 2006, the Board of Selectmen appointed the members of the NTSC. The NTSC subsequently had its first official meeting in May 2006. Since its creation, the NTSC has been organizing the initial two trail projects: construction of educational nature trails at the Elementary School, and construction of a trail along the Blackledge River between West Road and North Parker Road. The NTSC is also working on other projects that enhance pedestrian safety and aesthetics throughout Marlborough.

Existing Conditions

Many trails already exist on publicly-owned lands in Marlborough. All of these trails are forest trails. Some forest trails are over ten feet wide, and are used as access roads for loggers or State Forest maintenance vehicles. Other trails are narrower, barely defined footpaths. The existence of these trails is known by users of the State Forest, including hunters, fishermen, and avid hikers. However, these trails are largely unknown to most Marlborough residents. In 2006, the Planning Department cataloged most of the existing forest trails on public land and added them to the Town’s Geographic Information System (GIS) database. Figures 1 and 2 show existing trails and open space parcels in the Town.

Initial Trail Projects

Elementary School Nature Trails

In the early 1990s, a quarter-mile long nature trail was built to the west and south of the Elementary School as part of a Girl Scout Gold Award project. The trail was designed to be educational; signs labeling various plant species along the trail were placed, and a brochure was made as a guide for teachers and students. After several years of use by teachers and students, the trail fell into disrepair, and classes discontinued its use.

By 2002, interest in the trail was revived, and the Town applied for a construction grant from the State of Connecticut. A grant of \$14,400 was received from the State; in addition, the PTO and the School both contributed money, bringing the total sum of money available to \$34,000.

In 2005, a new nature trail engineering design was performed and approved by the Conservation Commission. The new design consists of a total of two miles of trails south of the School. The first phase of the project will involve construction of a trail leading to a boardwalk at a vernal pool in Town Open Space south of the school. Classes will be able to use this trail and boardwalk for water quality and aquatic species research. This phase will also include a loop through forest in Town Open Space. Signs will be installed labeling various plant species along the trail. Teachers of all different grades will be able to use this trail for age-appropriate science lessons, as part of a revised science curriculum at the Elementary School. Other phases of the trail will be constructed as resources permit. The Town has also applied for another grant from the State to expand the trail network at the Elementary School.

West Road Trail (Blackledge River Greenway)

In 2005, the Town began planning a trail along the east side of the Blackledge River from West Road to Route 66. This corridor was selected because half of the corridor was in State Forest, with the other half being in either Town land or conservation easements with public access. The Town applied for a Recreational Trail Program (RTP) grant from the State of Connecticut, and presented the concept to Town residents at a public forum in November 2005.

In October 2006, the State announced that Marlborough would receive \$48,000 for Phase I of the trail, from West Road to the Foot Sawmill Brook. The engineering trail design for Phases I through III was performed and approved by the Conservation Commission. The Town has also applied for funding for Phase II, which will fund construction of the trail extending the West Road Trail from Lot 17 of the Blackledge Subdivision to the State Forest on North Parker Road.

2 – Considerations for Trail Development

Regional Connections

Like any other transportation system, multi-use trails become more effective as their network grows. Construction of a trail network solely within Marlborough will allow for recreational and transportation opportunities within the Town. However, without regional connections, the recreational and transportation benefits to the Town and region are limited.

The four Towns surrounding Marlborough presently have small trail systems. The Shenipsit Trail, a regional hiking trail, begins in East Hampton and runs north into Glastonbury and beyond. Many other hiking trails loop and branch off the Shenipsit Trail. The Airline State Park Trail also begins in East Hampton and continues east through Colchester, Hebron, and Lebanon.

In the development of trails in Marlborough, these and other regional connections should be considered. The Town of Marlborough should work with all four surrounding Towns to develop trails that cross Town lines. As surrounding Towns develop their own trail networks, it is recommended that Marlborough actively work with other Towns to develop connections into the larger State-wide trail system, including the Airline Trail to the south and the Charter Oak / East Coast Greenway to the north.

Land Acquisition

To develop an interconnected, Town-wide trail network, it is necessary to acquire land to connect existing areas of State Forest and/or Town Open Space. The Marlborough Open Space and Land Acquisition Plan of 2007 has defined several greenways in Town that connect existing protected parcels into corridors conducive to resource protection. These corridors could also accommodate trail development. The Open Space Plan lists several methods of land acquisition available to the Town to fulfill these objectives:

- 1) Fee Simple Purchase: Purchase of land, its title, and all its rights by the Town.
- 2) State Acquisition: Purchase of land by the State (most likely the Department of Environmental Protection, to be included as part of a State Forest).
- 3) Land Trust Acquisition: Purchase of land by a non-profit land trust (such as the Nature Conservancy) for either permanent stewardship or temporary holding until purchase by the State or Town.
- 4) Conservation Easements: Restrictions placed on land remaining in private ownership; a restriction allowing certain types of public access through an easement also has been used.

- 5) Subdivision Set-Aside: Land given to the Town by a developer when a large piece of land is subdivided.
- 6) Coordination with Neighboring Municipalities: Pooling of financial resources from multiple Towns to acquire land that serves the goals of the Towns.
- 7) Land Gifts/Donations: Lands donated to the Town by landowners.

Funding

Several sources of funding are available for trail construction. Since funding from any one source is limited, as many sources of funding as possible should be pursued. The Town should also watch for new grant programs that may become available.

- 1) Recreational Trail Program: This grant program is funded by the Federal Government, and administered by the State Department of Environmental Protection. This grant can be for a maximum of \$50,000 per year. This is the main source of funding for trails from the State.
- 2) Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP): This grant program is for economic development opportunities in small Towns. This annual grant has a maximum of \$500,000 per year per Town. Any grant would best be applied on trails closer to an area of economic activity, as a trail in that area could assist economic development.
- 3) Private Fundraising: Donations could be sought from Town and area residents for trail construction and maintenance. This form of funding may necessitate the formation of a non-profit “Friends of Trails” group to accept and allocate the donations.
- 4) Municipal Budget: Funding for construction and maintenance should come from the annual Town Budget, with revenue coming from property taxes. Municipal funding would augment grants from other sources.

3 – Recommendations

Recommended Trail Network

After considering the existing trail conditions in Marlborough, potential user groups, planned land preservation corridors, and opportunities for regional connections, it is recommended that the Town of Marlborough develop a three-tier trail network - a trunk trail network, neighborhood trails, and forest trails - that serves all areas of Town and provides recreational opportunities to as many residents as possible. Descriptions of the three tiers of the network are below.

Trunk Trail Network

The trunk trail network would be composed of six trails: three north-south trails and three east-west trails, making interconnections to regional and local trails. The trunk trail network would make several connections to other Towns, providing connection opportunities to regional and State-wide trail networks. The six trunk trails and their descriptions are listed below and are shown in Figure 3.

Blackledge River Greenway

The Blackledge River Greenway will be an eight-mile long north-south trail that will parallel the Blackledge River from Glastonbury to Colchester through the eastern side of Marlborough. Approximately half of the corridor is part of the Salmon River State Forest. An additional two miles of the corridor is within Town Open Space, with the remaining sections being privately owned. Several forest trails of various widths currently exist in the corridor, and could be included as parts of a unified, improved trail.

The Blackledge River Greenway will be both a local and a regional trail. It will serve as a connection to the State and national trail networks. South of Marlborough, it would extend to the Airline State Park Trail in Colchester, which connects East Hampton, Colchester, Hebron, and Lebanon, and may eventually extend to Willimantic and Middletown. North of Marlborough, it would extend into Glastonbury, Hebron (via Gay City State Park), and Bolton, before reaching the East Coast Greenway. The East Coast Greenway is almost complete between Willimantic and Hartford, and will eventually run from Maine to Florida. Locally, this trail will connect to the Blackledge Fishing Area, numerous fishing spots along the Blackledge River, and the West Road athletic fields. It will also pass near several neighborhoods, including the Jerry Daniels Road and Stony Brook / Buckboard areas. It also intersects all three east-west trails and the Main Street Trail.

Section 1 – Glastonbury Town Line to Jones Hollow Road

The Blackledge River Greenway will enter Marlborough and run along the west bank of the Blackledge River to Jones Hollow Road. This section is currently private, and no

path currently exists in this section. Cooperation with Glastonbury would be necessary to determine where the trail would cross the Town Line, and to provide a connection to Hebron Avenue.

Section 2 – Jones Hollow Road to West Road

The trail will continue along the Blackledge River between Jones Hollow and West Roads. This section is mostly Town Open Space, with a little private land near Jones Hollow Road. No trail exists in this section. Much of this section of trail will run along or through wetlands; therefore, some of the trail will need to be a decked boardwalk.

Section 3 – West Road to North Parker Road

After crossing the Blackledge River at West Road, the trail will run along the east side of the Blackledge River to North Parker Road. Some of this trail will be on Town Open Space, while the remainder will be on conservation easements that provide pedestrian access only. An existing forest trail runs along the river for most of this stretch. A bridge is necessary to cross the Foot Sawmill Brook, as well as a trail to connect the Woods Road to both West Road and North Parker Road.

Section 4 – North Parker Road to Route 66

This entire section is in the Salmon River State Forest, with the exception of a short, ~200 foot section that clips the corner of an abutting property. Paths exist paralleling the bank of the river. Some sections of this path are at least ten feet wide, while other sections are narrower. Several small streams will need to be crossed. The southern part of this section is currently blocked by trees that were felled to prevent illegal ATV usage. This section will need extensive clearing work.

Section 5 – Route 66 to South Main Street

This will be the longest section of the Blackledge River Greenway. The northern half of this section is on private land that may be partially protected by conservation easements, while the southern half is part of the Salmon River State Forest. There is an existing path that starts at South Main Street and heads north on the east side of the river until it ends deep in the State Forest behind Sandy Lane. There are several streams in this section that will need crossings.

Section 6 – South Main Street to Colchester Town Line

This section is entirely in the Salmon River State Forest. Two issues exist in this section. Route 2, a limited-access highway, bisects the State Forest. The trail would need to cross under Route 2 where Route 2 passes over the Blackledge River. In addition, the Blackledge River winds itself between South Main Street and Route 2 at the Blackledge Fishing Area, necessitating a river crossing to the west bank. The river would then need to be crossed again south of Route 2. An existing footpath leads from there to River

Road in Colchester. This footpath rises up onto a ridge above the east bank of the river, descending towards the Blackledge River twice at small streams. An alternative to this is a trail that stays on the ridge, with gradual descents to the Blackledge River at each end.

Dickinson Creek Greenway

The Dickinson Creek Greenway will be a north-south trail that would parallel the Dickinson Creek through the west side of Marlborough. The five-mile long trail will begin at North Main Street and continue south to the Colchester Town Line. Approximately half of the corridor is currently under Town or State ownership, while the rest is on private land. Several segments of forest trails could be incorporated into an upgraded trail, including part of an existing forest trail that connects Quinn Road into Colchester.

This trail would eventually connect to the Airline State Park Trail in Colchester, just west of the Lyman Viaduct. Such a connection would require a two to three mile long trail from the Town Line to the Airline Trail through State Forest in Colchester. Within Marlborough, this trail would connect the fishing area near Flood Road along the Dickinson Creek, the Town Center (via the East Hampton to Hebron Trail), and the North Main Street industrial area. It also would run near Blish Park and the Sachem Village condominium complex off Hodge Road. This trail will also connect the Main Street Trail, the East Hampton to Hebron Trail, and the South Marlborough Connector.

Section 1 – North Main Street to Chapman Road

The Dickinson Creek Greenway will start at North Main Street, just south of Austin Drive. It will run through land currently privately owned until it reaches Chapman Road. The terrain along this corridor is difficult. The Dickinson Creek runs through a large wetland in this area. Immediately to the west is a steep hill, on the top of which is the Sachem Village condominium complex. Ideally, the trail would run at the foot of the hill, along the west edge of the wetland. Alternatively, the trail could run along Chapman Road between the Dickinson Creek and North Main Street.

Section 2 – Chapman Road to Route 66

The trail would continue to run along the west edge of the Dickinson Creek in this section. The southern one-third of this section is currently Open Space, but the rest is private land. For most of this section, there is a steep hill along the west side of the Dickinson Creek. There is enough room between the foot of this hill and the creek for a trail. The trail corridor itself would be gently descending from north to south. Just north of Route 66, the trail would enter land owned by the American Legion, and would need to rise about thirty feet to cross Route 66. The current culvert under Route 66 is not adequate for a trail to pass through.

Section 3 – Route 66 to Flood Road

After crossing Route 66, the trail will enter privately owned land and cross the Dickinson Creek on the old Route 66 bridge just south of Route 66. The trail will run along the eastern bank of the creek and wetland south to Flood Road. The southern half of this section will be in the Salmon River State Forest. The trail must stay to the east to avoid the large wetland north of Flood Road. It will tie into an existing trail that exits to Flood Road. The East Hampton to Hebron Trail is joined with this trail starting from just north of Flood Road towards the south.

Section 4 – Flood Road to Quinn Road

The trail will cross Flood Road and continue through the Salmon River State Forest all the way to Quinn Road. It will utilize an existing trail from Flood Road south, and then utilize a branch trail which ends on the east bank of the Dickinson Creek. A new bridge will be built across the Dickinson Creek. This bridge should have provisions for fishing, such as “bumpouts” where a fisherman can fish from the bridge without blocking the main path of the trail. A new trail will be built to connect the western end of the bridge to existing trails that lead to the end of Quinn Road, at the gate to the transfer station. The East Hampton to Hebron trail will be joined with this trail for the entire section.

Section 5 – Quinn Road to Colchester Town Line

This section will begin at the end of Quinn Road and reenter the Salmon River State Forest. An existing path runs through this corridor into Colchester, connecting with the Airline Trail just west of the Lyman Viaduct. Most of this path is narrow and is a major trail used for hiking or mountain biking. An improved, stone dust path should be constructed to bypass the existing path.

Main Street Trail and Bike Lanes

The Main Street Trail and Bike Lanes will be a northwest-southeast corridor that will parallel North and South Main Streets. Unlike the other trails that will be in the trunk trail network, this will be a primarily on-road or “with-road” trail. It will begin at the Glastonbury Town Line, to the east of Route 2, and continue south, through the Town Center, to the Colchester Town Line at South Main Street. The trail will run for about six miles. Since it will run along or on a Town Road for most of its length, the corridor is almost entirely owned by the Town.

This trail will create the only suitable bicycle / pedestrian link connecting the outer suburbs of Hartford to the Connecticut River Valley between Route 66 in Portland and Route 6 in Manchester / Bolton. Unlike the Blackledge River Greenway, which will connect Marlborough to the far eastern edge of Glastonbury, the Main Street Trail will connect Marlborough to South Glastonbury, Glastonbury Center, and eventually to Hartford. The trail will also run into Colchester, intersecting the Airline Trail, and continuing to the center of Colchester, with possible future connections to Norwich and New London. Within Marlborough, the Main Street Trail will connect to the parking lots at Exit 12, Blish Park, the neighborhoods west of the Lake,

Marlborough Country Barn, the Town Center, Richmond Memorial Library, and the Blackledge Fishing Area. The Main Street Trail also intersects all of the other five planned major trails.

Section 1 – Glastonbury Town Line to West Road

The Main Street Trail will start at the Glastonbury Town Line, east of Route 2. It will run through the Meshomasic State Forest, and connect to the old alignment of Route 2 that runs along the western edge of the East Glastonbury Fish and Game Club. Once the trail reaches the Club lodge, it will run along the edge of the Route 2 right-of-way to West Road. At least one bridge will be necessary; the trail will also utilize an existing crossing on old Route 2. The trail will also have to cross a steep hill which lies just east of Route 2, near the Town Line. Coordination with Glastonbury is necessary to connect the trail to Toll Gate Road at Exit 11.

Section 2 – West Road to Lake Road

There are two options for this section of trail. The first option is a pair of bike lanes from the end of Section 1, along West Road to North Main Street, and then south on North Main Street to Lake Road. There would be a bike lane in each direction. The second option is a multi-use sidepath running along West Road, and then along the west side of North Main Street. With either option, there will need to be an improved crossing across the Dickinson Creek. There will be connections with the Dickinson Creek Greenway, as well as to Blish Park (via Lake and Park Roads).

Section 3 – Lake Road to Hall Trail

This section of the Main Street Trail also has two options: bike lanes or a multi-use sidepath. The right-of-way of North Main Street is narrower in this section than along the rest of the trail, especially between Pettengill Road and Hall Trail. This section will likely have more pedestrian activity, due to its proximity to the Lake, Park, and Town Center. There will also be several crosswalks necessary to access the beaches on the east side of North Main Street. If bike lanes are chosen for this segment, a separate sidewalk for pedestrians should be considered, due to high traffic volumes.

Section 4 – Hall Trail to School Drive / Library

Through the Town Center, the Main Street Trail will be an off-road trail 200 to 400 feet west of Main Street. The trail will leave North Main Street near Hall Trail and connect to a new greenway corridor starting at the Marlborough Country Barn. This greenway corridor, proposed in the Town Center Plan, will run from the Barn to the Library. It will reconnect with South Main Street south of Johnson Road by crossing the Library property.

Section 5 – School Drive / Library to South Road

Bike lanes should be constructed on South Main Street for this section of the trail. Widening to accommodate bike lanes may be necessary at the top of the hill (near the Church), as well as at the stream crossing at the bottom of the hill. Since this section of the trail has a steep hill, an alternate route through the Meadowwood Open Space near South Road could be constructed.

Section 6 – South Road to Colchester Town Line

The Main Street Trail will continue along bike lanes on South Main Street from South Road to the Colchester Town Line. South Main Street will need to be widened in most of this section to accommodate bike lanes. The bike lanes across the Route 2 bridge can only be four feet wide, since the curb-to-curb width of the bridge is only 30 feet.

East Hampton to Hebron Trail

The East Hampton to Hebron Trail will be a five-mile, east-west trail across Marlborough. It will run from the East Hampton Town Line, through the Town Center, to the Hebron Town Line. Most of the corridor is already under Town or State ownership; however, there are two segments of privately-owned land that currently block completion of the trail.

This trail could connect to the village center of East Hampton by a trail along the Cattle Lot Brook from the Marlborough Town Line to the Airline State Park Trail. It will also connect into Hebron at the ends of West Street and Old Slocum Road, with a possible connection along Slocum / Old Slocum Road to RHAM and the center of Hebron. Within Marlborough, the trail will connect the Elementary School, Town Center, Business Park, all three north-south trails, and the South Marlborough Connector.

Section 1 – East Hampton Town Line to Quinn Road

The East Hampton to Hebron Trail will begin at the East Hampton Town Line, near the northern edge of the old landfill. The trail will run along the northern edge of the landfill to the end of Quinn Road, at the gate to the transfer station. This section is currently owned by the Town. By running along the northern edge of the landfill, elevation changes are minimized. A fence would need to be constructed to prevent trail users from accessing the landfill.

Section 2 – Quinn Road to Flood Road

At Quinn Road, the trail will enter the Salmon River State Forest and join the Dickinson River Greenway. See Section 4 of the Dickinson Creek Greenway for a description.

Section 3 – Flood Road to vicinity of School Drive

North of Flood Road, in the State Forest, the East Hampton to Hebron Trail will split from the Dickinson Creek Greenway and turn to the northeast. It will cross three private parcels before entering the Town Open Space west of the Elementary School. The trail will connect to Route 66 just west of School Drive.

Section 4 – Vicinity of School Drive to Route 66 Business Park

Once the trail reaches Route 66, a combination of bicycle lanes and sidewalks will be used to carry the trail through the Town Center and across Route 2 to the Business Park. On-road bicycle lanes will be striped within the shoulders of Route 66 from west of School Drive to Main Street. Sidewalks would also be constructed from west of School Drive to Main Street. Bicyclists would use the bike lanes, while pedestrians would use the sidewalks.

From the Town Center, trail users would traverse the Town Green to Jones Hollow Road. Bicycle lanes would be built along Jones Hollow Road from the Town Green and across the Route 2 overpass. The Route 2 overpass is 34 feet wide, which would allow for one 12-foot vehicle lane and one five-foot bicycle lane in each direction. The bicycle lanes would continue to the access road of the Business Park. Trail users would then enter the Business Park.

Section 5 – Route 66 Business Park to Parker Road

There are two options for the trail along the Business Park access road. One option is the construction of bicycle lanes along the access road when it is constructed. The other option is for a parallel trail built along one side of the access road. The selected option would be used to connect either Route 66 or Jones Hollow Road to the off-road section of trail within the Park. This off-road section will extend from the access road northeasterly to the edge of the Business Park. An existing trail could be utilized for this. One private parcel will be crossed to connect the Business Park to the Town Open Space east of Avalon Lane. An existing trail heads north through the Open Space and turns east into the Salmon River State Forest, extending to the abandoned section of Parker Road in the State Forest. One major stream would be crossed in this section.

Section 6 – Parker Road to Hebron Town Line

The trail will cross Parker Road and continue east to the Blackledge River. A new bridge across the Blackledge River will be built, possibly including features for fishing. Just east of the Blackledge River, the trail will cross the Blackledge River Greenway. The trail will continue east to Old Willimantic Turnpike, incorporating it east to the Hebron Town Line. This section of trail will be new between Parker Road and Old Willimantic Turnpike. Other than the Blackledge River bridge, few watercourses would be spanned.

North Marlborough Connector

The North Marlborough Connector will be a two-mile, east-west trail across northern Marlborough, beginning where the Main Street Trail diverges from West Road and continuing to the Blackledge River Greenway at the Blackledge Soccer Field. With the exception of the West Road athletic fields and a small parcel of State Forest east of Isleib Road, this trail will run through land that is currently private. There are no known trails that could be incorporated into this trail.

This trail will provide a key alternative for pedestrians and bicyclists who wish to travel along the West Road corridor. The section of West Road between North Main Street and Jones Hollow Road is narrow, curvy, and hilly, and is not suitable for large numbers of pedestrians or bicyclists. The North Marlborough Connector will connect to the West Road athletic fields, as well as connect to the bus stop at Exit 12.

Section 1 – Main Street Trail to Isleib Road

The North Marlborough Connector will start at the Main Street Trail at West Road. It will run along West Road to Planeta Road to the southern edge of the East Glastonbury Fish and Game Club. The trail will then run near the southern edge of the Club until Isleib Road. No known forest trail exists along this corridor. Several small streams will need to be crossed in this section.

Section 2 – Isleib Road to Blackledge River Greenway

The trail will then enter the Meshomasic State Forest on the east side of Isleib Road. It will cross a parcel of private land, run along the north edge of the West Road Ball Fields, and then cut down to the Blackledge River Greenway at West Road. The West Road / Jones Hollow Road intersection will need to be modified to accommodate the trail crossing. At least one stream will need to be crossed in this section.

South Marlborough Connector

The South Marlborough Connector will be an east-west trail through southern Marlborough. The trail will be about three miles long, and connect two segments of the Salmon River State Forest. It will split from the joined Dickinson River Greenway / East Hampton to Hebron Trail just south of Flood Road and connect to the Blackledge River Greenway just south of Route 2. The trail will utilize several existing trail segments, as well as the proposed trail through the former Rankl Farm. If this section of the trail is constructed, then the entire length of this corridor would be under public ownership.

This trail will serve as a connection between two naturally-protected areas. Two popular fishing areas, the Blackledge Fishing Area and the Dickinson Creek, would be connected. In addition, if the East Hampton to Hebron trail is constructed into East Hampton, this trail could serve as an alternative for the Airline Trail, adding more choices of routes for bicyclists.

Section 1 – Dickinson Creek Greenway / East Hampton to Hebron Trail to Ogden Lord Road

The South Marlborough Connector will begin at the Dickinson Creek Greenway just south of Flood Road. It will utilize an existing forest trail that runs to Ogden Lord Road. Two stream crossings are needed, as well as improved drainage along parts of the existing forest trail. Once reaching Ogden Lord Road, the trail will run along the west side of Ogden Lord Road for about a quarter mile until crossing Ogden Lord Road at the southern edge of the former Rankl Farm. This entire section will be in the Salmon River State Forest.

Section 2 – Ogden Lord Road to South Road

This section of trail will run through the former Rankl Farm. This section of trail will connect two segments of the Salmon River State Forest: one west of Ogden Lord Road and the other east of South Road. No trail exists here currently.

Section 3 – South Road to Blackledge River Greenway

The trail will cross South Road and enter the Salmon River State Forest. The trail will continue east and intersect the Blackledge River Greenway near where it crosses the Blackledge River. Several forest trails exist in this area; some may be incorporated into an upgraded trail. The descent to the Blackledge River can be steep in areas, and switchbacks or a curving trail will likely be needed.

Trunk Trail Priority

Priority should be given to trunk trail sections with the highest significance to the Town and the region. Other, less crucial sections should be built later. The recommended sequence of trail development is listed below.

Short Term (2007 – 2012)

Trail	Land Acquisition	Trail Construction
Blackledge River Greenway	Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Dickinson Creek Greenway	Sections 3, 4, 5	
Main Street Trail	Section 1	Section 1
East Hampton to Hebron Trail	Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Section 4
North Marlborough Connector		
South Marlborough Connector	Sections 1, 2, 3	Section 2

Medium Term (2012 – 2017)

Trail	Land Acquisition	Trail Construction
Blackledge River Greenway	**Complete	**Complete
Dickinson Creek Greenway	Sections 1, 2	Sections 3, 5
Main Street Trail	**Complete	**Complete
East Hampton to Hebron Trail	**Complete	Sections 3, 5, 6
North Marlborough Connector	Sections 1, 2	
South Marlborough Connector	**Complete	Sections 1, 3

Long Term (2017 – 2027)

Trail	Land Acquisition	Trail Construction
Blackledge River Greenway	**Complete	**Complete
Dickinson Creek Greenway	**Complete	Sections 1, 2, 4
Main Street Trail	**Complete	**Complete
East Hampton to Hebron Trail	**Complete	Sections 1, 2
North Marlborough Connector	**Complete	Sections 1, 2
South Marlborough Connector	**Complete	**Complete

Neighborhood Trails

The second tier of trails will be a network of neighborhood trails. Neighborhood trails will serve a variety of purposes, including connecting neighborhoods to other neighborhoods, connecting neighborhoods to the trunk trail network, and local recreation loops. Unlike the trunk trail network, which consists of six interconnected trails, many neighborhood trails will not be connected to other neighborhood trails; instead, they will connect to other tiers of trails or be stand-alone trails.

There are currently several areas where there is public land that could be used for neighborhood trails. An example of such a connection is between Pond View Lane, Emily Road, Farley Field, and the Elementary School Nature Trails, which would connect neighborhoods to recreational facilities. There are other areas where neighborhood trails are possible, and as more land is developed, construction of neighborhood trails by developers should be encouraged.

Forest Trails

The third tier of the proposed trail network is a series of trails within larger forest parcels. Most of these trails would be built within State Forest land; therefore, consultation with the State Department of Environmental Protection is necessary before construction. Minimal work would be necessary to construct these trails; many of them already exist.

Many of the existing State Forest trails that are not planned to be upgraded into a trunk trail should be included as a forest trail. Some of these trails need minor relocations to control erosion or to improve stream crossings. These trails should be inventoried, and marked with

color-coded blazing systems, similar to trail networks within State Parks. Note that blue-blazed trails are generally reserved for trails that are part of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association's Blue-Blazed Trail System. Forest trail networks should be periodically reviewed for modifications or expansions, especially if the forest parcel is expanded.

There are currently four large forest parcels suitable for development of forest trails.

- 1) Salmon River State Forest (Dickinson Creek Valley): Even though three of the six trunk trails run through this parcel, some additional footpaths can be included as part of the forest trail network. One notable forest trail is the existing hiking trail from the end of Quinn Road to the Airline Trail in Colchester. This trail should be preserved as a forest trail, instead of being developed into the trunk trail proposed for the same corridor. The trunk trail should roughly parallel the forest trail.
- 2) Salmon River State Forest (Blackledge Corridor): Several footpaths in this State Forest can be converted into forest trails. There are existing loops off of South Road near the 4H camp that would connect to the South Marlborough Trail. North of Route 66, old roads, including Parker Road and segments of Old Willimantic Turnpike, would be considered to be forest trails. The large parcels of unpreserved, undeveloped land south of Route 66 and east of the Blackledge River should have forest trails constructed if they are protected in the future.
- 3) Meshomasic State Forest (Finley Hill area): This section of State Forest, acquired in 2002, is the newest area of State Forest in Marlborough. Several loops exist in this parcel, some of which were cleared when this parcel was originally being surveyed for a subdivision. This parcel can provide a connection to the Shenipsit Trail (one of the Blue Blazed Trails) just over the Town Line in Glastonbury. This is the only section of State Forest in Marlborough without a parking area for visitors.
- 4) Meshomasic State Forest (Route 2 area): This small section of State Forest also can provide connections to the Shenipsit Trail in Glastonbury. A forest trail should be constructed from the intersection of North Main Street and Portland Road to the Shenipsit Trail south of Route 2. This trail, in combination with the Main Street Trail on the north side of Route 2, would shorten the detour needed for the Shenipsit Trail to cross Route 2 by about two miles.

Specifications

The different trail networks should meet basic design standards, as listed in the table below.

Type of Trail	Width	Surface Material	Base Material	Bridges
Off-Road Trunk Trail	8 to 12 feet	Stone Dust or Asphalt	Gravel / Crushed Stone	Yes
On-Road Bike Lane	4 feet min.	Asphalt	Gravel / Crushed Stone	Yes
Multi-use Sidepath	8 to 10 feet	Asphalt, Concrete, or Stone Dust	Gravel / Crushed Stone	Yes
Neighborhood Trail	4 to 8 feet	Stone Dust	Dirt	Yes
Forest Trail	1 to 4 feet	Dirt	Dirt	Sometimes

Implementation Steps

The following steps should be taken so that the recommendations of this Plan can be implemented effectively.

- The Planning Commission should include this Plan’s vision for a three-tiered trail network in the 2008 Plan of Conservation and Development.
- Meet with representatives (Parks and Recreation Directors, Town Councilmen / Selectmen, Planners) from Glastonbury, Hebron, East Hampton, Colchester, and Bolton. Acquaint them with this Plan, and describe how the Town trails could connect to their Towns, and the larger State-wide trail network. Prioritize development of the Blackledge River Greenway, from the Airline Trail in Colchester to the East Coast Greenway in Bolton.
- Build upon the Town’s existing relationship with the Department of Environmental Protection on trail issues. Emphasize the importance of utilizing State Forest land to complete trunk trail sections.
- Work with the Department of Transportation on trail segments along State roadways. Obtain permission to route the Main Street Trail along the Route 2 right-of-way north of West Road. Create bicycle lanes on Route 66 through the Town Center and over the Route 2 bridge (if applicable) for the East Hampton to Hebron Trail. Negotiate a design for the Blackledge River Greenway in the Route 2 area (including the Route 2 crossing). Improve the West Road / North Main Street / Exit 12 area as a junction of the Main Street Trail, North Marlborough Connector, forest trails, and pedestrian activity due to the bus stop.
- Obtain permission from the Department of Environmental Protection to create, maintain, and blaze forest trails within State Forest parcels.
- Include trail development as a goal of the ten-town Salmon River Partnership, as a means of protecting critical riparian and forest corridors.

- Encourage landowners of privately-owned parcels in trail corridors to convey an easement for the proposed trail.
- The presence of a trail corridor should be one of the criteria when considering Open Space acquisition.
- Ensure that parcels in trail corridors that are subdivided allow for conservation easements or Open Space corridors with public access for pedestrians and bicyclists. These easements should be located along suitable terrain for a trail (such as avoiding steep grades). Use this document to ensure that proper trail easements are granted and that trails are constructed where appropriate.
- Organize a framework to allow for volunteers to assist in constructing and maintaining trails, such as through the creation of a “Trail Corps” or “Friends of the Trails” group.
- Seek State greenway designation for all conservation corridors in Marlborough.
- Aggressively pursue all possible funding sources for trail development. Note that the trail being funded is part of a larger Town-wide network that connects to surrounding Towns.
- Work with the Town’s Public Works Department and the Board of Selectmen to include bicycle lanes during the next reconstruction of South Main Street, and to add either bicycle lanes or a sidepath as part of the next reconstruction of North Main Street.
- Review this Plan every two to five years. Note the progress that has been made on implementing the Plan’s recommendations, and update the Plan as necessary.