

Vassalboro Roadside Pedestrian & Bike Plan

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Prepared by

Kennebec Valley Council of Governments

The Vassalboro Roadside Pedestrian & Bike Committee

The Town of Vassalboro

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Introduction

In 2010, the Town of Vassalboro and the Vassalboro Roadside Pedestrian & Bike Committee teamed with the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) to create a Roadside Pedestrian & Bike Plan for the Town of Vassalboro. This planning effort was funded through Maine DOT using federal funds. This plan seeks to assess the current safety and conditions of the roads and roadside user ways in Vassalboro which are utilized by walkers, runners, and cyclists, make proposals in these existing assets, and propose projects for the development of new safe roadside user ways.

Vassalboro presents some unique challenges to cyclists and pedestrians; the town has several distinct villages, a mix of high-volume traffic corridors and narrow rural roads, very few areas with sidewalks or crosswalks, and a school which is located at a considerable distance from the villages. However, the community also has some assets which can be built upon, including an active Pedestrian & Bike Committee, a Recreation Committee, a Trails Committee, a Conservation Commission, enthusiastic residents, compact village areas, and opportunities for connecting roadside user ways with off-road recreational trails.

As part of this study, comprehensive surveys were made available to the residents of Vassalboro. Information about their walking, running and biking habits, as well as their recommendations for improving and enhancing opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists were solicited. The results of the surveys, in addition to input received at public meetings and prior work done by the Vassalboro Roadside Pedestrian & Bike Committee, have been compiled to create this plan.

This plan is intended to be a guideline for future action regarding roadside pedestrian and bike development throughout Vassalboro. The various proposals can be worked on in any order, depending upon community interest, sense of urgency, roadwork or water main work being planned by Maine DOT or the town, and funding opportunities. The projects are likely to be modified as they enter the implementation phase, and new projects may develop. All proposals have to go through the proper channels of Vassalboro town government and citizen approval, particularly when town funding is involved, and they have to meet all local and state laws and ordinances.

Community

Vassalboro is a rural residential town, located approximately seven miles south of Waterville and approximately ten miles northeast of Augusta in central Kennebec County. Within its 44 square miles are several more densely populated settlement areas: North Vassalboro, a small commercial and residential village, East Vassalboro, a small commercial and residential village, and Riverside and Getchell's Corner, small residential villages.

The "Lower Road" of the Maine Central (now state-owned) rail line runs along the Kennebec River on the western boundary, as does U.S. Route 201. State Route 3 (also known as U.S. Route 202) nicks the southeast corner of town. State Route 32, or Main Street as it's known in Vassalboro, runs the eastern length of town connecting North Vassalboro, East Vassalboro, and South Vassalboro.

The table below summarizes 2008 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) counts for various points in Vassalboro.

Location (Village)	2008 AADT
State Route 32, northwest of Preble Hill Rd (North Vassalboro)	3640
State Route 32, southeast of Maple St (North Vassalboro)	3160
State Route 32, southeast of S. Stanley Hill Rd (East Vassalboro)	2390
Bog Rd, west of State Route 32 (East Vassalboro, School Area)	1200
US Route 201, south of Webber Pond Rd (Riverside)	4730
US Route 201, north of Bog Rd (Riverside)	4370
State Route 3, southwest of Stone Rd (South Vassalboro)	7790
Stone Rd, northwest of State Route 3 (South Vassalboro)	520

A high crash location, as designated by Maine DOT, is an intersection or highway segment that experiences an abnormally high number of crashes relative to the traffic demands that are served. Although there are no high crash locations in Vassalboro as of the most recent published data (2008), several areas in Vassalboro, including Route 32 around East Vassalboro village and the section of Route 201 running through Riverside, have been designated as high crash locations by Maine DOT in the last ten years. An automobile accident that occurred on August 8, 2003, at the intersection of Priest Hill Rd. and Route 32 in North Vassalboro, resulted in two fatalities.

The town's population has grown from 2,618 in 1970 to 4,047 in 2000 (a 55% increase), well above that of the overall State of Maine for this time period (20%). The population was estimated to be 4,522 in 2009, and is expected to keep growing through 2030. The number of housing units grew from 965 in 1970 to 1,838 in 2000, a 90% increase. The median age of Vassalboro residents in 2000 was 37. Of the employed residents in 2000, the majority worked outside of Vassalboro and their average one-way commute time was 23.3 minutes.

Vassalboro contains or borders several valuable natural resources, including the Kennebec River and China Lake. The latter, along with Webber Pond and Three Mile Pond, draw a robust seasonal population to the town. Vassalboro is home to the Alonzo H. Garcelon Wildlife Management Area (WMA), managed by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the Vassalboro Wildlife Preserve and the Davidson Nature Preserve, both of which are protected by the Kennebec Land Trust (KLT).

The Garcelon WMA has a trail to Spectacle Pond that is open to the public, and both of the KLT preserves have trails available for non-motorized use (bicycles are prohibited at the Davidson Nature Preserve). Additional public trail systems in Vassalboro include the Anne Sturgis Sanctuary Nature Walk, owned by the New England Wildflower Society, the Town Conservation Trail located behind the Vassalboro Community School, the Vassalboro Town Forest Trail accessed from the Vassalboro Recreation Fields, and an extensive snowmobile trail system.

Vassalboro is blessed with many places that feature panoramic vistas of lakes, farm fields and open spaces, forests, and the western mountains. Just a few examples include the view of the west basin of China Lake from the East Vassalboro Boat Landing, the vista of western Maine, including Mount Blue, from Nelson Road, and the beautiful views from Taber Hill and Hannaford Hill. Vistas such as these are assets for the enjoyment and promotion of walking, jogging, and cycling throughout the town.

Vassalboro currently has a large number of cyclists, including individuals, clubs and groups. One such group, the Inland Group Ride, based at Inland Hospital in nearby Waterville, includes many Vassalboro residents and rides every Tuesday evening from April through September. In 2010 they collectively logged more than 13,000 miles, mostly on Vassalboro rural roads. Because of the lack of paved shoulders or bike lanes in most places, there are definite safety issues for them as well as for all cyclists. Paved shoulders or bike lanes, added over time, would enhance the safety and enjoyment of all cyclists, and the number of cyclists would likely increase. Two popular bike loops currently being used are illustrated in Appendix G.

There are many destination points concentrated in or near the villages of North Vassalboro and East Vassalboro. These destinations could be accessed more easily and safely if sidewalks, bike lanes, paved shoulders, crosswalks, and traffic calming measures were developed. Examples of these destination points include the Town Boat Landing, the Historical Society, the Town Library, the Friends Meeting House, the Recreation Fields, the Community School, the Grange Hall, Maine Federal Savings Credit Union, Saint Bridget's Catholic Church, North Vassalboro Baptist Church, stores in both villages, and Post Offices in both villages and at Getchell's Corner. Developing safe roadside user ways throughout both villages would likely increase usage and commerce.

Existing Resources, Plans, and Ordinances

Vassalboro has an active Roadside Pedestrian & Bike Committee, which meets monthly. This group has been advocating for enhanced pedestrian and bicycle friendly upgrades since 2007, and has met with Maine DOT to discuss options. This group pursued the grant that funded this plan, and they will be spearheading the effort to raise money for implementation of its various project proposals.

Vassalboro has not had a pedestrian and bike plan previously. However, the town does have a Strategic Plan, approved at the general election in November of 2006. The Strategic Plan does address alternative transportation (walking, running, and bicycling).

In Part 1, Goals and Policies, Transportation section, the Strategic Plan declares the following "key issue":

"The community needs creative strategies to deal with increased traffic, speeding, recreational use of roadways, visibility, and access to roads and driveways."

On pages 15 and 16, the Strategic Plan addresses the key issue with the following policies and implementation strategies:

- "The town should work with Maine DOT to encourage walking and biking opportunities along roadways including more road shoulders and sidewalks."
- "The Town Manager and the Conservation Commission shall advocate for road trails and other alternative transportation ways, especially whenever road improvements are planned by Maine DOT."

Timeline: On-going

- "The town shall require that proposed subdivisions address alternative transportation opportunities through a variety of options including preserving existing trails and paths and providing access to trails."
- "The Planning Board and the Conservation Commission shall work jointly to amend the Subdivision Ordinance to create options for walking and other alternative transportation."

Timeline: 2010

- "The town shall develop a master trail plan for the community which should include many forms of alternative transportation."

- "The Conservation Commission shall in cooperation with other municipal and regional groups develop a master trail plan for the town."

Timeline: 2009

The selectmen approved a Conservation Commission and a subcommittee, the Vassalboro Trails Committee, in April of 2007. The Conservation Commission is about to start work on a new water trail allowing access for the first time to the Kennebec River from Vassalboro for non-motorized watercraft. The Trails Committee has reviewed all known public town lands and has established a working relationship with the two land trusts which have three trails in Vassalboro. It has also developed a one-mile trail in the Town Forest.

In the fall of 2007 the Trails Committee created a subcommittee to specifically work on roadside non-motorized travel, called the East Vassalboro Sidewalk and Traffic Calming Committee. After a period of time, as it's mission broadened, the subcommittee renamed itself as The Vassalboro Roadside Pedestrian & Bike Committee (VRPBC).

In the fall of 2008 the Town of Vassalboro website was enhanced to facilitate town communication with the public and between town committees. The Conservation Commission, The Trails Committee, and The VRPBC all have links on the site which provide information about their missions and activities. For example, The Trails Committee link has information about the current public trails in Vassalboro.

The Planning Board passed an ordinance which requires new subdivisions to have an official private road alliance unless the town incorporates it into the town road system. No amendment to the Subdivision Ordinance that would require addressing options for walking and other alternative transportation, suggested as a part of the Strategic Plan, has been adopted. Nor has an amendment addressing the preservation of existing trails and paths and the provision of access to trails, again suggested as part of the Strategic Plan, been adopted.

The Planning Board, the Conservation Commission and the Trails Committee have been limited in updating the Subdivision Ordinance and creating the town Trails Plan because Vassalboro does not have a Comprehensive Plan. The Conservation Commission is working with different state groups and the Planning Board to find ways to move forward with the appropriate ordinances and a Trails Plan.

One goal of The VRPBC and The Trails Committee is to develop roadside user ways that connect with off-road trails, in some cases forming loops for pedestrians and cyclists. One such example currently being considered begins with sidewalks and paved shoulders/bike lanes from the East Vassalboro Village intersection to The Athletic Fields on Bog Road. These user ways would then connect to a proposed gravel trail encircling the Vassalboro Athletic Fields. The gravel trail would start at the entryway to The Athletic Fields and link to the off-road Town Forest Trail which has several entry points on the perimeter of The Athletic Fields. The Town Forest Trail goes through the Town Woods and would also create a loop connected to this proposed new gravel trail encircling The Athletic Fields.

Public Meeting

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Vassalboro Roadside Pedestrian & Bike Committee was held as a public meeting on May 26, 2010. Members of the public were encouraged to attend to learn more about the bicycle and pedestrian planning process, and to provide input for shaping the plan and its scope. More than twenty people attended the meeting, which was held at the Vassalboro Town Office. The important information discussed at this meeting is summarized here.

Attendees generally agreed that there are serious problems and deficiencies that keep Vassalboro from being bike and pedestrian friendly. General deficiencies and problems identified by the group included: inadequate paved shoulders, sidewalks, crosswalks, and street lighting; sidewalk snow removal; and road and sidewalk maintenance. Dangerous curves and narrow roadways were concerns, as well as a general need for safe, designated roadside user ways. There was also much discussion about the need to make the routes to Vassalboro Community School safer for the students who currently bike or walk to school, or who want to do so. Several high school students present at the meeting confirmed that this was an important issue to them.

The group also discussed the known assets in Vassalboro which benefit cyclists and pedestrians, or have the potential to. These assets include an active Roadside Pedestrian & Bike Committee, a Public Works Department (which could provide other “in-kind” assistance, such as equipment or personnel in lieu of using town money), existing sidewalks in the village of North Vassalboro, an off-road trails system being developed by the Trails Committee, and several densely settled village areas which provide walkable and bikeable amenities and destinations for residents.

After a broad discussion of goals, strategies and objectives for the plan, summarized in a later section, the group reviewed a draft survey to be distributed to Vassalboro residents soliciting information about their walking, running, and biking habits. It was agreed that a similar but separate survey should be distributed to the students at the Vassalboro Community School. Before adjourning, the group also took time to review some large-format maps of Vassalboro, for the purpose of identifying and marking specific issues and areas for pedestrian & bike development on them.

The information collected at the public meeting, combined with that obtained from the surveys, are the basis of the goals, strategies, objectives, and recommendations outlined in this plan.

Survey Results

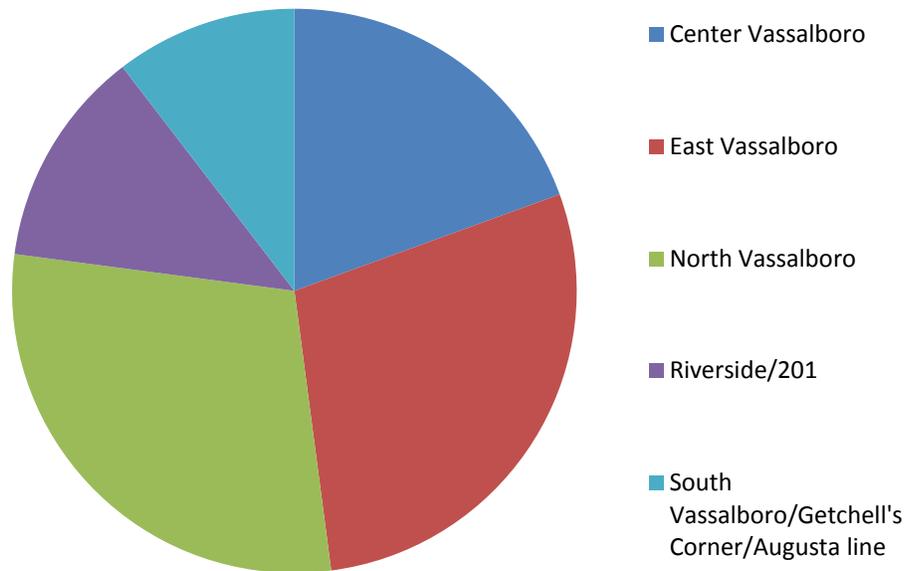
Surveys were prepared and made available to the residents of Vassalboro. The surveys included demographic questions, questions about walking, running, and biking habits, routes used and route condition problems. It solicited input on how walking, running, and biking facilities/areas in Vassalboro could be improved. A similar but separate survey was prepared for the sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade student population at Vassalboro Community School, and was distributed at the school. A total of 126 student surveys were filled out and returned, as well as 214 regular (non-student) surveys.

The Regular Survey

This paper-based survey had two sides. Many survey respondents did not complete the second side, which had a variety of open-ended questions about favorite routes and recommendations. It is unclear whether people chose not to complete the second side due to time constraints, or simply didn't realize that there was a second side. Respondents may have felt that they had nothing further to add, or were not familiar enough with the areas to offer suggestions and details. Many people did complete both sides of the survey. As an indication of the sample size, on many of the graphs presented on the following pages, the number of respondents to a question is noted as "n=".

Of the regular survey respondents (not students), the majority were aged 50 or over (59%), female (59%), year-round residents (98%). About a quarter of the respondents identified themselves as retired, and 2% indicated that they used a wheelchair, walker, scooter, or cane regularly. The survey sample contained a mix of residents from all parts of town (Figure 1).

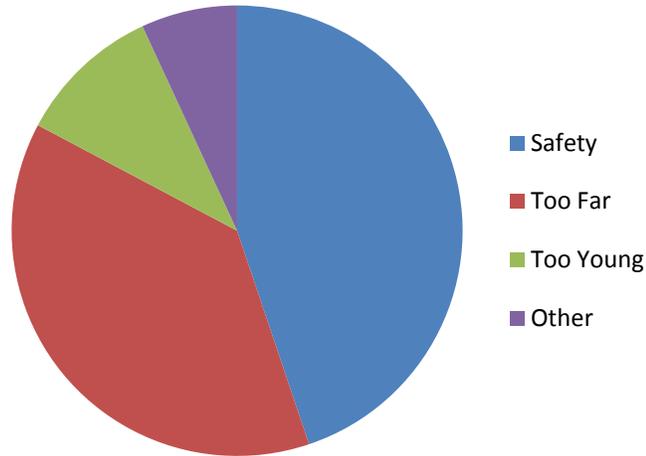
Figure 1. Areas of town in which respondents identified themselves as residing



n=144

Most of the respondents (86%) stated that they do walk, run, or bike regularly; the majority being pedestrians rather than cyclists. The reasons most commonly selected for walking/running/biking were exercise (36%), recreation (26%), and visiting (14%). Eighty-three percent of the regular respondents said that they walk, run, or bike daily or weekly. When asked what keeps them from doing it more often, the most frequently selected answers were lack of time (31%), safety concerns (30%), and road conditions (22%). Only 4% of the respondents stated that they have children that walk or bike to school (60% selected “N/A” to the question, which asked, “If you have children that attend Vassalboro Community School, do they walk or bike to school?”). The reasons given by parents to explain why their children don’t walk or bike to school are summarized in the following figure.

Figure 2. Reasons why respondents' children do not walk or bike to school



n=29

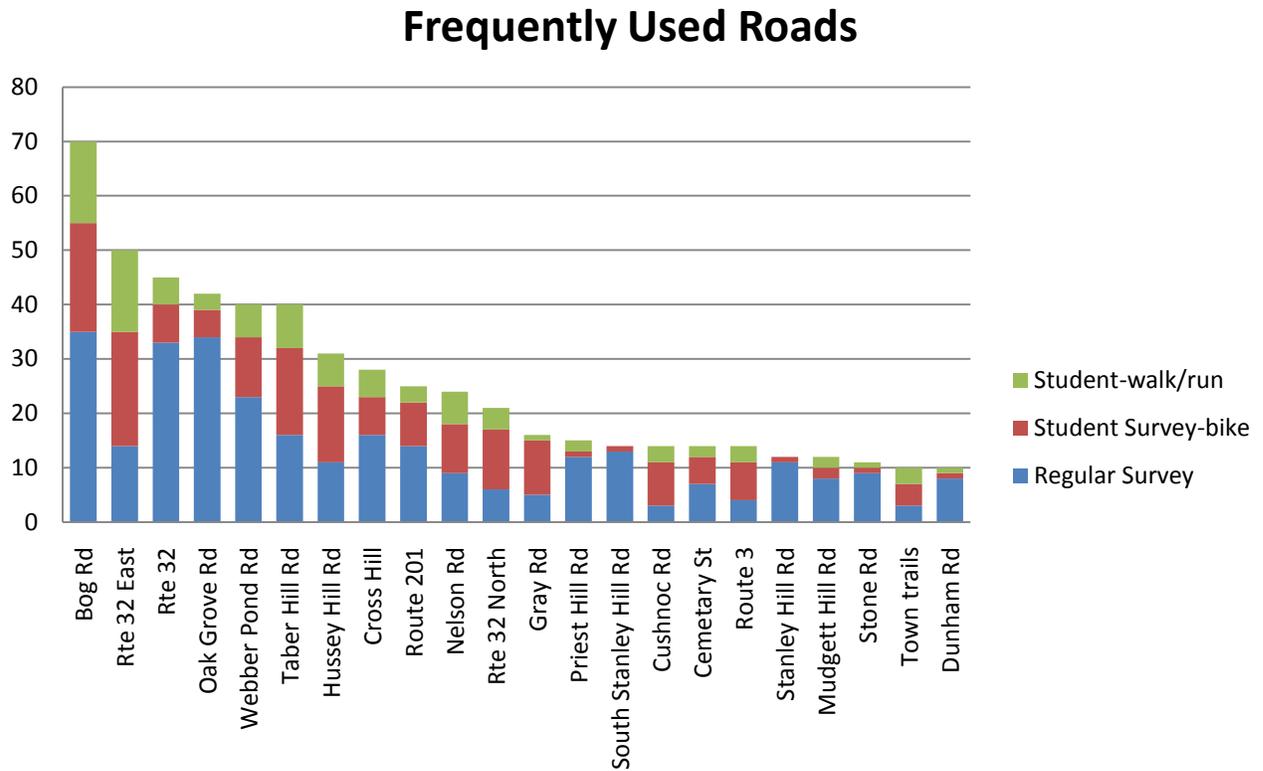
The Student Survey

The vast majority (94%) of the 126 students from the Vassalboro Community School who filled out the survey indicated that they ride a bike regularly; 67% indicated that they ride daily or weekly. When asked why they ride bikes, the most commonly selected reasons were just for fun (33%), exercise (25%), and to visit people (24%). The most common reason given by student respondents for why they don't bike more often was a lack of time (45%). Most students (82%) also indicated that they walk or run regularly; 75% indicated that they do so daily or weekly. The most common reasons for walking and running were similar to those given for biking (30% said exercise, 27% said just for fun, and 24% said visiting). Also, the majority indicated that a lack of time is what prevents them from walking or running more often.

All Survey Respondents

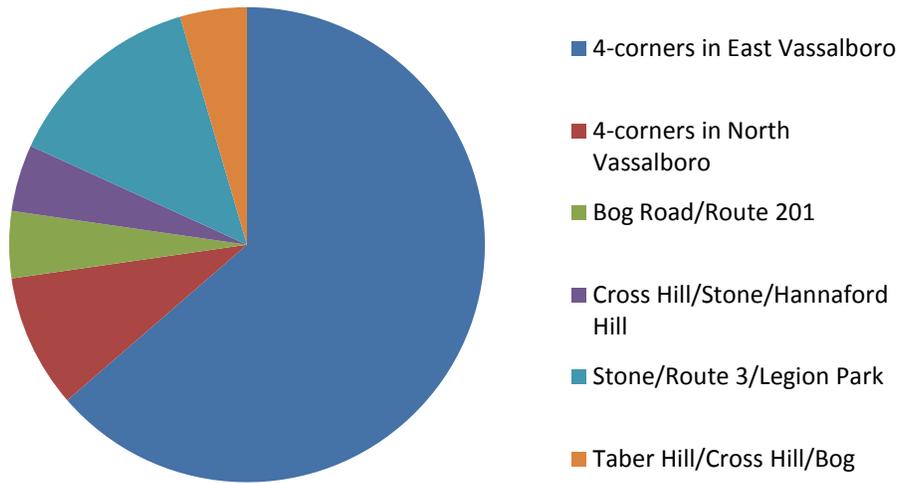
The following graph indicates the roads in Vassalboro that were specifically identified by student and regular respondents as places where they walk, run or bike.

Figure 3. The number of times a road was specifically mentioned as a location where the respondent walked, ran, or biked



All respondents were asked to identify intersections in Vassalboro that are difficult to cross. The graphic on the following page summarizes the most common answers.

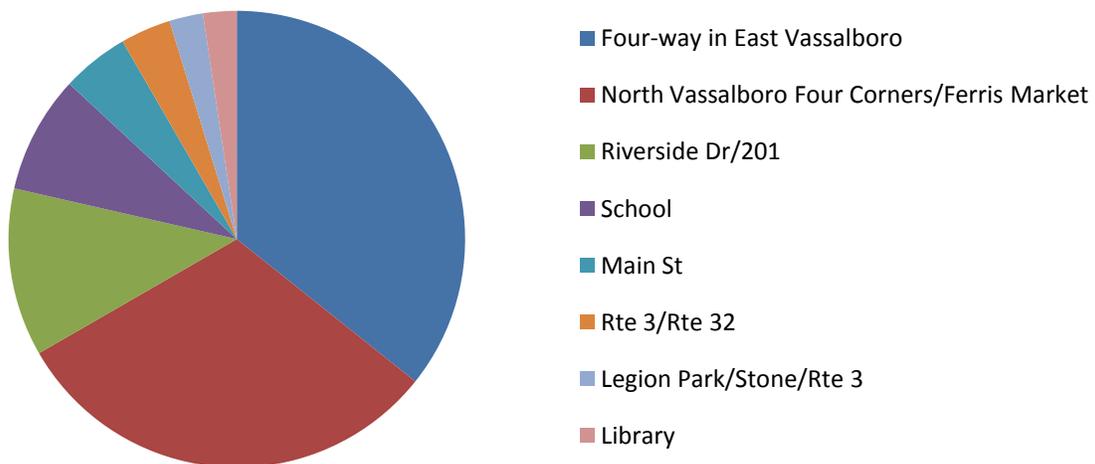
Figure 4. Intersections identified as "difficult to cross" by respondents



n=22

All respondents were asked to identify areas in Vassalboro that should have crosswalks. The results are indicated in the following graph.

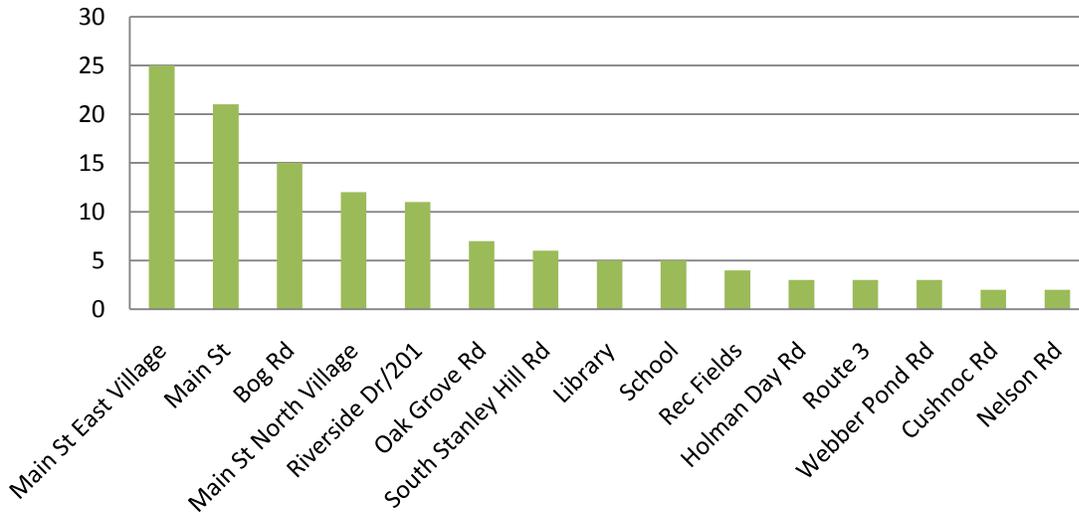
Figure 5. Areas identified by respondents as needing crosswalks



n=84

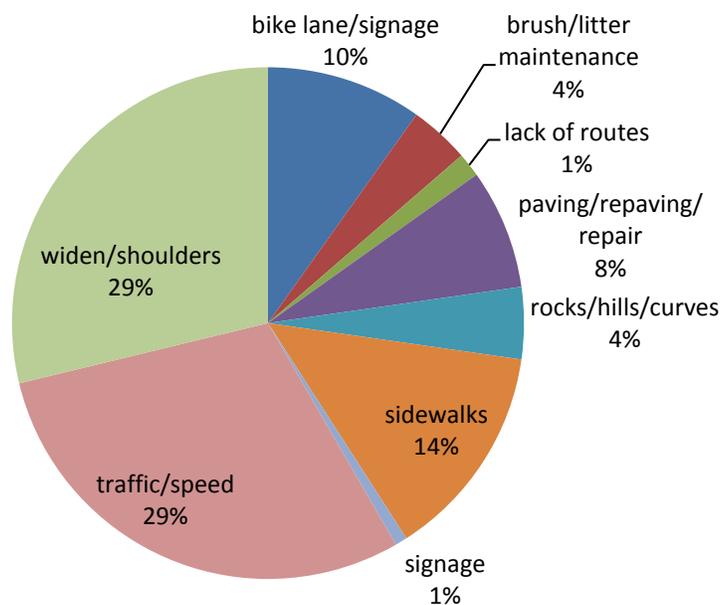
All respondents were asked to identify areas that should have sidewalks. The most common answers are summarized in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Areas identified by respondents as needing sidewalks



All respondents were asked to identify routes in Vassalboro in need of improvements, and to identify the improvements needed. The following graphic summarizes the most common general (not site-specific) recommendations.

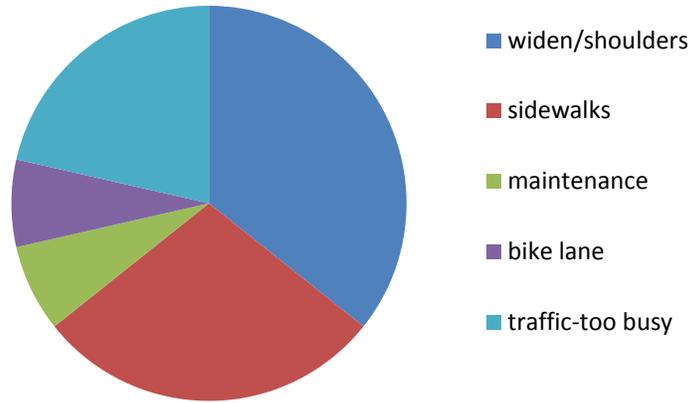
Figure 7. General improvements recommended by respondents



n=132

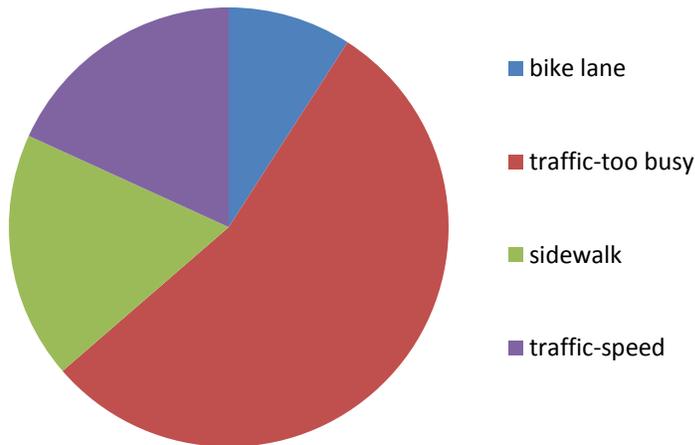
In addition to the general recommendations, respondents had several recommendations for specific areas/roads. The four most frequently identified roads, and the recommendations made for them, are summarized below.

Figure 8. Improvements needed on Main Street



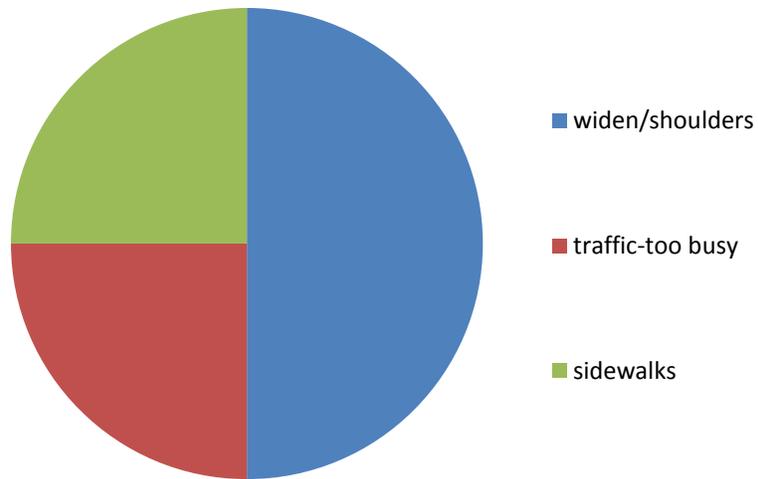
n=132

Figure 9. Improvements needed on Route 201



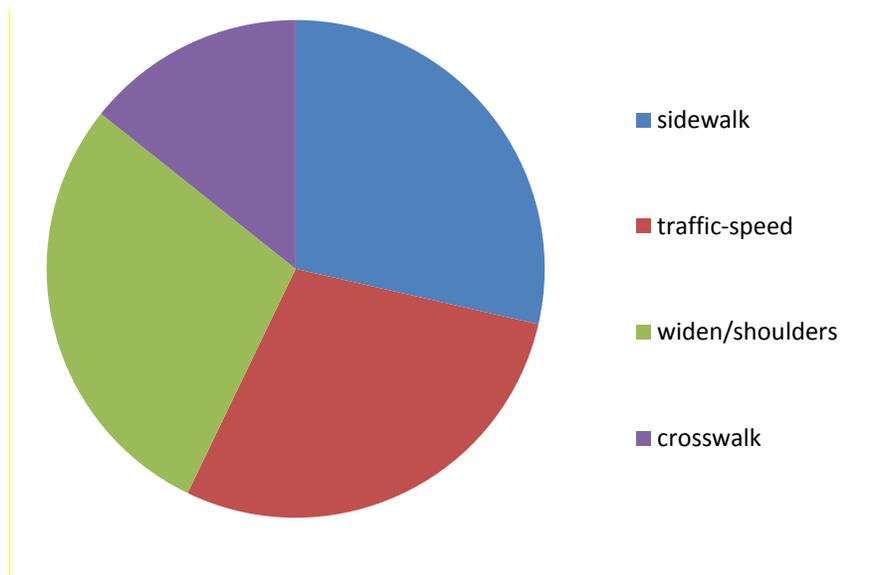
n=11

Figure 10. Improvements needed on Bog Road



n=8

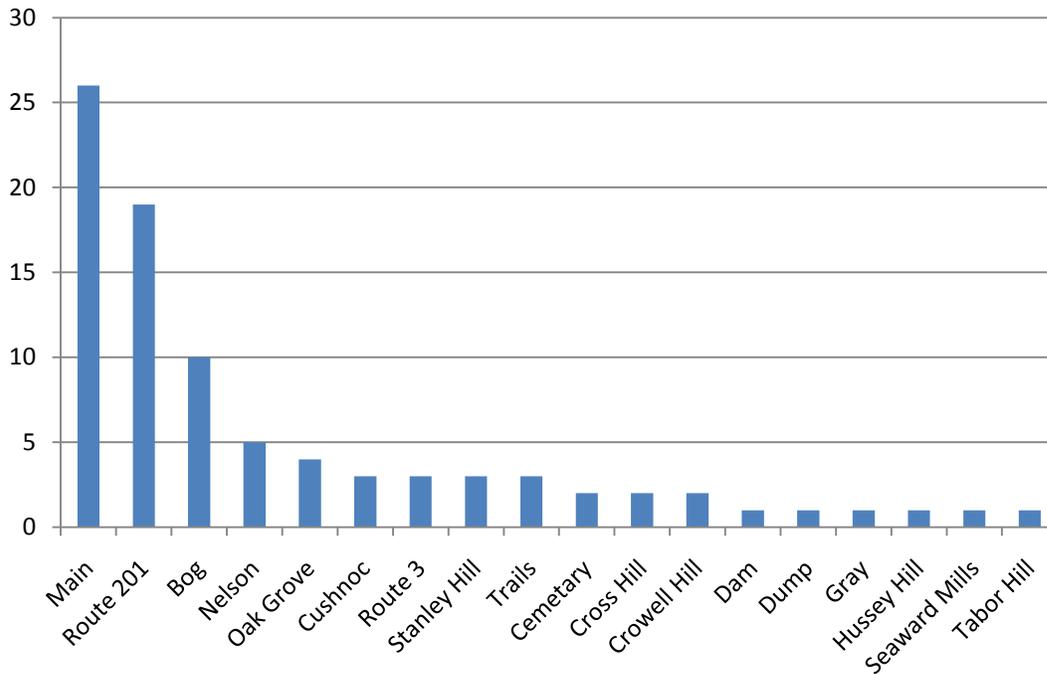
Figure 11. Improvements needed on South Stanley Hill Road



n=7

All respondents were asked to identify roads in Vassalboro that they would use more often as walking, running, and biking routes if they were improved. The most common answers are summarized below.

Figure 12. Roads that the respondent would use more often if improved.



Goals, Strategies, and Objectives

From information received at the public hearing and from the public surveys, a set of goals, or broad desired outcomes, was identified. These goals were then broken down into strategies, or approaches that can be taken to address the goals. Finally, objectives, or measurable steps to achievement, were assigned to each strategy. These goals, strategies, and objectives were identified for improving pedestrian and bicycle safety and facilities in Vassalboro.

- *Goal A:* Increase non-motorized travel, primarily by pedestrians and cyclists, throughout the community.

Strategy: Address the reasons residents give for not walking, running, or biking more frequently.

Objective: Improve frequently-used or potential pedestrian and bicycle routes to provide opportunities for safe exercise and recreation.

Objective: Improve maintenance on roads which are frequently used or potential pedestrian/bicycle routes.

Objective: Establish loop routes and routes to trails to provide more opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists.

- *Goal B:* Increase safety for non-motorized travelers along our roadways.

Strategy: Address the safety concerns identified by residents.

Objective: Incorporate sidewalks and crosswalks where possible in areas frequently used by pedestrians.

Objective: Incorporate paved shoulders, bike lanes, or widen roads frequently used by cyclists and pedestrians whenever possible.

Objective: Review speed limits and enforcement of traffic laws on Vassalboro roads.

Objective: Improve maintenance on roads which are frequently used or potential pedestrian/bicycle routes.

Objective: Implement traffic calming measures, such as signage and speed tables.

- *Goal C:* Increase safety for students wishing to walk or bike to Vassalboro Community School.

Strategy: Address specific safety concerns for the school route as identified by students and parents.

Objective: Incorporate sidewalks, paved shoulders, bike lanes, or widen Bog and Webber Pond Roads, where possible.

Objective: Review speed limits and enforcement of traffic laws on Bog and Webber Pond Roads near the school.

- *Goal D:* Create a safe roadside loop route for cyclists.

Strategy: Identify possible loop route and safety concerns associated with the roads in those loops.

Objective: Post route markers along designated loop routes.

Objective: Incorporate sidewalks, paved shoulders, bike lanes, or widen roads along routes whenever possible.

- *Goal E:* Connect roadside user-ways with off-road trail systems.

Strategy: Identify roads to existing trails, and propose upgrades to enhance user-ways along them.

Objective: Post route markers and trail signs along designated routes to trails.

Objective: Incorporate sidewalks, paved shoulders, bike lanes, or widen roads along routes to trails whenever possible.

Proposed Upgrades

The information collected over the course of this study indicates that several specific areas of Vassalboro need to be addressed. Each of these will be addressed below as individual phases of the goals, strategies, and objectives.

It is important to note that in the implementation phase of any project information will need to be gathered in many areas, such as engineering, existing ordinances, road classifications, and right-of- ways. For example, Bog Road is classified as a Minor Collector and Route 32 (Main St.) is classified as a Major Collector – State Aid. These classifications affect such things as maintenance and snow plowing.

Right-of-ways are often difficult to correctly determine and can be confusing because of many factors, such as very old or non-existent records, eroded or removed property markers, and roads that have moved slightly over time. However, right-of-ways, once determined, significantly impact what can be done in certain projects. For example, Maine DOT's Property Office does not have an official right-of-way for Bog Road on record. Landowners on the southwest and northwest corners of the East Vassalboro Village intersection have done preliminary investigations indicating that Bog Road is probably a "Four Rod Road". If this is the case, Bog Road's right-of-way would be sixty-six feet wide, including travel lanes (a rod equals 16.5 feet). Route 32, north of the East Vassalboro Village intersection, does have an official right-of-way on record, according to Maine DOT's Property Office, Research Division. It is a "Three-and-a-Half Rod Road", which translates to a fifty-seven and three-quarter foot total width and right-of-way, including travel lanes (Kennebec County, Volume14, page 61; 1863, 3 ½ rods wide).

Road jurisdiction also dictates the main funding sources for road improvements. *Arterial Highways and Major Collectors* provide for substantial through-traffic on corridors that connect local roads with major points of interest. Maine DOT is responsible for improving the states Arterials and Major Collectors (unless the road is within a Metropolitan Planning Organization [MPO] boundary) because they serve statewide needs. If the road is an Arterial or Major Collector, the municipality requests road improvements from Maine DOT or the appropriate MPO on a biennial basis (spring of even numbered years).

Minor Collectors link local roads with Arterial Highways and Major Collectors. If the needed road improvement is on a Minor Collector, the municipality must apply to the state through the Rural Road Initiative Program (depending on funding approvals for the program), and be willing to contribute one third of the cost of the road improvement. If the project is selected, the state will fund the remaining two-thirds (up to a total project cost of \$600,000). The Maine Legislature created the Rural Road Initiative (RRI) Program to allow

Maine DOT to partner with communities to fund improvements on Minor Collector roadways.

| *Local Roads* are found within communities and serve local needs. Local municipalities generally create a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which outlines which roads will be improved. Maine DOT provides some reimbursement funding to municipalities for improvements to and maintenance of local roads. Local municipalities may direct these funds towards roadway improvements, sidewalks, and crossing improvements.

Proposed upgrades and improvements for pedestrian and bicyclist safety and mobility are outlined below.

East Vassalboro (See Appendix A)

Based upon input from an Assistant State Traffic Engineer, the Bicycle, Pedestrian and Quality Community Program Manager at Maine DOT, residents and VRPBC members, and Town Officials, recommended East Vassalboro Village improvements would include the following:

Short-term:

The following improvements are relatively small-scale and easy to implement, and will be pursued in the near future. Refer to the road jurisdiction and the *Possible Funding Sources* section for details on implementation funds.

- A sidewalk going north on Main St. from the 4-way intersection on the east side to Saw Mill Rd. and/or to the saw mill (Main St. is classified as a Major Collector.)
- A sidewalk going south on Main St. from the intersection on the east side to the Boat Launch
- A sidewalk going east on South Stanley Hill Rd. from the intersection on the south side to the Friends Meeting House (South Stanley Hill Rd. is classified as a Minor Collector.)
- A sidewalk going west on Bog Rd. from the intersection on the south side to the Library (Bog Rd. is classified as a Minor Collector.)
- Crosswalks at the 4-way intersection across Bog Rd. and across Main St. on the south side
- Consideration of a crosswalk or crosswalks leading to the northwest corner of the Main St. intersection by the Country Store, pending traffic engineering evaluation
- Crosswalk on the Bog Rd. at the library

- Crosswalk on S. Stanley Hill Rd. at the Friends Meeting House
- Paved Shoulders/Bike Lanes in the village in all directions from the 4-way intersection
- Traffic calming measures throughout the village area, including signage and possible raised traffic tables and/or signed crosswalks and other measures to be considered
- Consideration of limited paved parking, in addition to sidewalks and shoulders, 31 feet from the 4-way intersection on Bog Road on the south side of the road, 20 feet from the intersection on Main St. on the east side of the road, and on Main St. on the east side of the road across from Freddie's Garage

Longer Term:

Due to road jurisdiction and/or significant road engineering and construction, the following improvements are more complicated to implement, and Vassalboro will request road improvements and work with Maine DOT to develop and pursue them over time.

- Address the problem of the very narrow bridge on S. Stanley Hill Rd., either by widening the bridge or more likely by building a separate pedestrian bridge or walkway.
- Paved shoulders/bike lanes from the four way intersection to The Recreation Fields on Bog Rd.

All actions listed above address Goals A, B, C, and D.

North Vassalboro *(See Appendix B)*

The following improvements are relatively small-scale and easy to implement, and will be pursued in the near future. Refer to the road jurisdiction and the *Possible Funding Sources* section for details on implementation funds.

- A crosswalk at the four-way intersection of Main St., Oak Grove, and Priest Hill Rd.
- A crosswalk on Main St. at Ferris' Variety
- A crosswalk on Main St. at the Catholic Church/Post Office
- Repair existing sidewalks along Main St.
- Extend sidewalks along Main St., ideally to Brookside Mobile Home Park.

- Consider new sidewalks along densely-populated areas of Oak Grove and Priest Hill Rd. to Main St. intersection. (Oak Grove Rd. is classified as a Minor Collector. Priest Hill Rd. is classified as a local road.)
- Traffic calming measures throughout the village area

These actions address Goals A, B, and D.

Riverside/Route 201 *(See Appendix C)*

The following improvements are relatively small-scale and easy to implement, and will be pursued in the near future. Refer to the road jurisdiction and the *Possible Funding Sources* section for details on implementation funds.

Short-term:

- Lower speed limits, if possible, along Route 201 (Route 201 is classified as a Minor Arterial.)
- Crosswalk at the intersection of Bog Rd. and Route 201, if paved shoulders/bike lanes are completed along Bog Rd. to that point, with appropriate signage and some sort of traffic calming measure at the crosswalk, such as a blinking yellow light
- Bike lane along Route 201

Longer Term:

- Paved shoulders/bike lanes along Cushnoc Rd. (Cushnoc Rd. is classified as a local road.)

These actions address Goals A, B, C, and E.

South Vassalboro *(See Appendix D)*

The following improvements are relatively small-scale and easy to implement, and will be pursued in the near future. Refer to the road jurisdiction and the *Possible Funding Sources* section for details on implementation funds.

- Lower speed limits, if possible, along Route 3 in South Vassalboro (Route 3 is classified as a Principal Arterial.)

- Four-way stop signs at the intersection of Cross Hill Rd., Hannaford Hill Rd., and Stone Rd., along with consideration of crosswalks (Cross Hill Rd, Hannaford Hill Rd., and Stone Rd. are local roads).

These actions address Goals A and B.

School Route *(See Appendix E)*

Due to road jurisdiction and/or significant road engineering and construction, the following improvements are more complicated to implement, and Vassalboro will request road improvements and work with Maine DOT to develop and pursue them over time.

- Paved shoulders and/or bike lanes along the entire length of Bog Rd. and south on Webber Pond Rd. to Lewis Rd. (Webber Pond Rd. is classified as a Minor Collector.)
- Traffic calming measures in school area, where possible

These actions address Goals A, B, C, D, and E.

Trails/Loop Routes *(See Appendices F and G)*

The following improvements are relatively small-scale and easy to implement, and will be pursued in the near future. Refer to the road jurisdiction and the *Possible Funding Sources* section for details on implementation funds.

- Loop route markers/way finding signs along proposed route: Bog Rd at Main St. to Taber Hill Rd., to Oak Grove Rd., to Main St., along Main St. back to Bog Rd. (Taber Hill Rd. is a local road)
- Loop route markers along existing bike loops
- Paved shoulders, bike lanes, and/or sidewalks, where possible, along the roads in proposed route and existing bike loops
- Route markers/way finding signs along roads leading to off-road trails:
 - Webber Pond Rd. to Vassalboro Wildlife Habitat Trail
 - Taber Hill Rd. to Davidson Nature Preserve Trail
 - Cushnoc Rd. to Annie Sturgis Sanctuary Nature Walk
 - Webber Pond Rd. and Bog Rd. to Community School Trail
 - Cross Hill Rd. to Spectacle Pond Trail
 - Bog Rd. to Town Forest Trail

These actions address Goals A, B, C, D, and E.

North/East Connectivity *(See Appendix H)*

Due to road jurisdiction and/or significant road engineering and construction, the following improvements are more complicated to implement, and Vassalboro will request road improvements and work with Maine DOT to develop and pursue them over time.

- Paved shoulders and/or bike lanes along Main St. connecting North Vassalboro Village to East Vassalboro Village

These actions address Goals A, B, and D.

Other Recommendations

In addition to the phases detailed above, the results of this study support some additional general recommendations.

Strategic Plan

In accord with Vassalboro's approved 2006 Strategic Plan, Vassalboro's Town Manager and the Conservation Commission should pursue an active role in collaborating with Maine DOT about proposed and pending work to be done on Vassalboro roads. The Conservation Commission and Planning Board should review the existing Subdivision Ordinance, draft the recommended changes to improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility and safety, and actively pursue the updates to the Ordinance. Additionally, the Conservation Commission should complete the master Trail Plan for the town.

According to the timelines set for these recommendations in the Strategic Plan, they should all be completed or underway by now (2010). Each of these strategies play an important role in addressing the needs evidenced in this study. At the very least, the responsible parties need to meet to review the tasks and redefine the timelines.

Working with Maine DOT to improve roads, updating the Subdivision Ordinance, and the creation of a Trail Plan address Goals A, B, and E of this plan.

Enforcement of Traffic Laws

Many of the comments received by survey respondents and during public meetings indicated that violations of traffic laws (speeding, failure to yield, etc.) create dangerous conditions for walkers, runners, and cyclists in Vassalboro. Vassalboro has one part-time police officer who works 10-15 hours per week. This officer, along with the Kennebec County Sherriff's Office and the Maine State Police, is responsible for the enforcement of traffic laws, including speeding, in Vassalboro. It is recommended that the town work with all law enforcement officers who actively patrol Vassalboro, to ensure that the posted speed limits throughout the town are regularly being enforced, and dangerous driving practices are not overlooked.

Other traffic calming measures should be considered, such as signage and speed tables. Painted road lines, lettering, and pedestrian and bike logos on roadways signifying pedestrian and bike user ways should be implemented.

Enforcement of traffic regulations and other traffic calming measures to ensure the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists address Goals A and B of this plan.

Road Maintenance

Numerous respondents indicated that road conditions created a significant risk in several areas of Vassalboro. It is recommended that the Town of Vassalboro review its road maintenance schedule, and prioritize repairs to town-maintained roads which are frequented by cyclists and pedestrians. Needed repairs may include mowing, brush/debris removal, poison ivy removal, crack/pothole filling, and repaving.

In situations where the state has jurisdiction and is responsible for maintenance and repairs, it is recommended that the Town advocate for the prioritization of those roads which are frequented by cyclists and pedestrians. There may also be opportunities for the Town to provide some limited services on state roads, such as mowing and debris removal.

Repairs to the existing sidewalks along Main Street in North Vassalboro, which are crumbling and dangerous in many places, are also necessary.

Snow Removal and Sidewalk Maintenance

Citizens and town officials need to address the issues of maintenance and snow removal on current and future sidewalks and shoulders, including the appropriation of funds for the Public Works Department to cover the cost of labor and equipment to do this.

Possible Funding Sources

Community Development Block Grant Program
(Community Enterprise, Public Infrastructure)

Contact Gail Chase, KVCOG

Davis Conservation Foundation (trails)

<http://www.davisfoundations.org/site/conservation.asp>

L. L. Bean (trails)

http://www.llbean.com/customerService/aboutLLBean/charitable_giving.html

Anthem Charitable Foundation

www.anthem.com

The Betterment Fund

<http://www.megrants.org/betterment.htm>

Hannaford Charitable Foundation

www.hannaford.com

Safe Routes to School and other Quality Community Program Funding,
such as the Sidewalk Grant Program (80% State, 20% Town) through Ped & Bike MDOT

Contact Dan Stewart

dan.stewart@maine.gov

Bikes Belong Coalition

<http://www.bikesbelong.org/grants>

Local bond funding

General MDOT road improvements

Inland Hospital Mini-Grants

www.inlandhospital.org

Note: Since many funding grants require a community to have a Comprehensive Plan, a Comprehensive Plan for Vassalboro should be developed. The Vassalboro 2006 Strategic Plan does not qualify as a substitute for a Comprehensive Plan.

Appendix A. East Vassalboro Village

Proposed Upgrades East Vassalboro Village

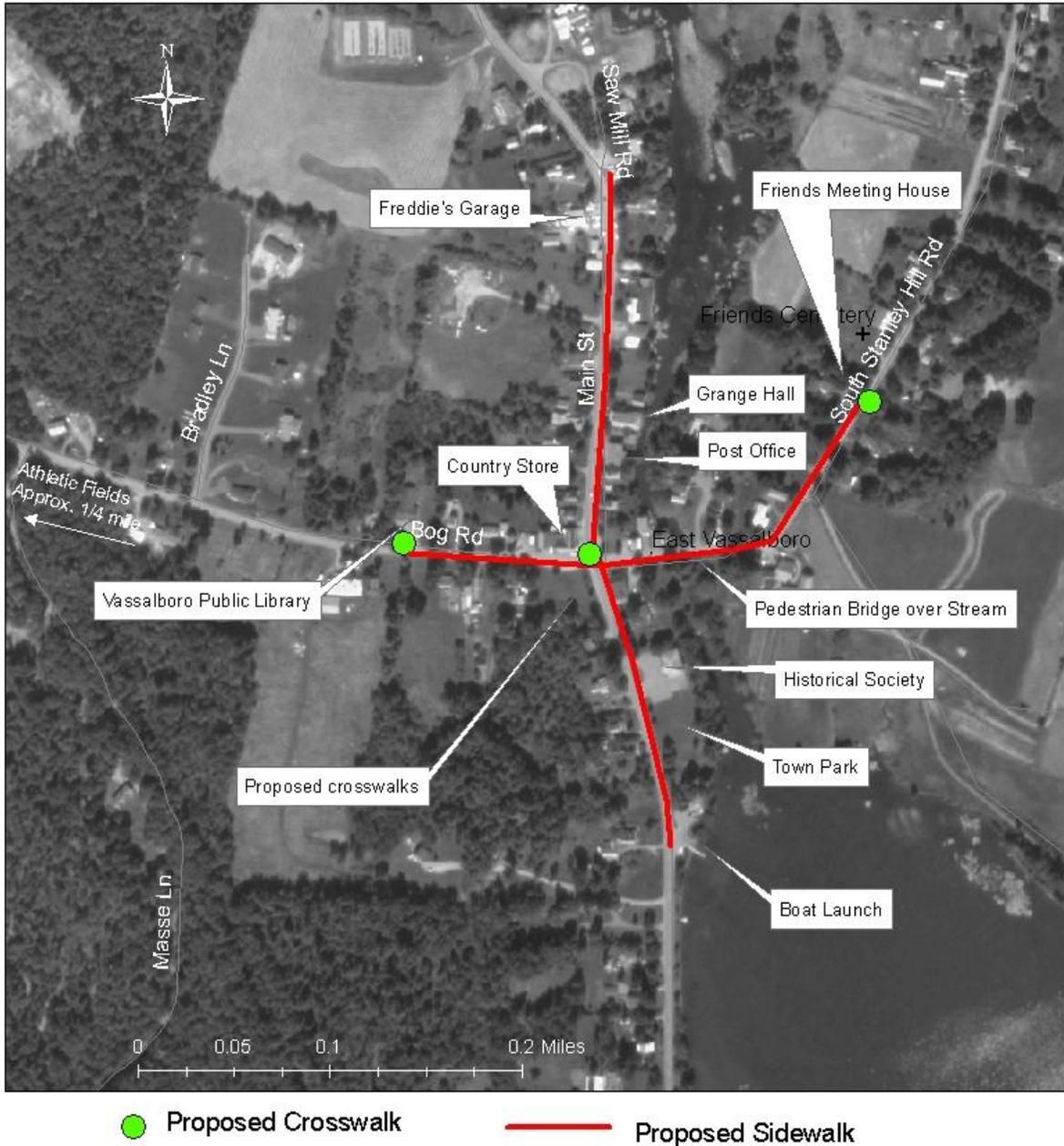


Photo 1. The four corners in East Vassalboro, where Bog Road and South Stanley Hill Road intersect Route 32 (Main Street).



Photo 2. Looking north on Main Street from the intersection.



Photo 3. Looking south on Main Street from the 4-way intersection.



Photo 4. Looking down Bog Road from the 4-way intersection.



Photo 5. Looking West on South Stanley Hill Road toward the intersection, showing the very narrow bridge over the outlet stream.



Photo 6. Looking towards the East Vassalboro intersection from the China Lake boat launch on Main Street.



Photo 7. Looking towards the East Vassalboro intersection from the north on Main Street.



Photo 8. A sidewalk along Bog Road would make walking to the public library easier and safer.



Appendix B. North Vassalboro Village

Proposed Upgrades North Vassalboro Village

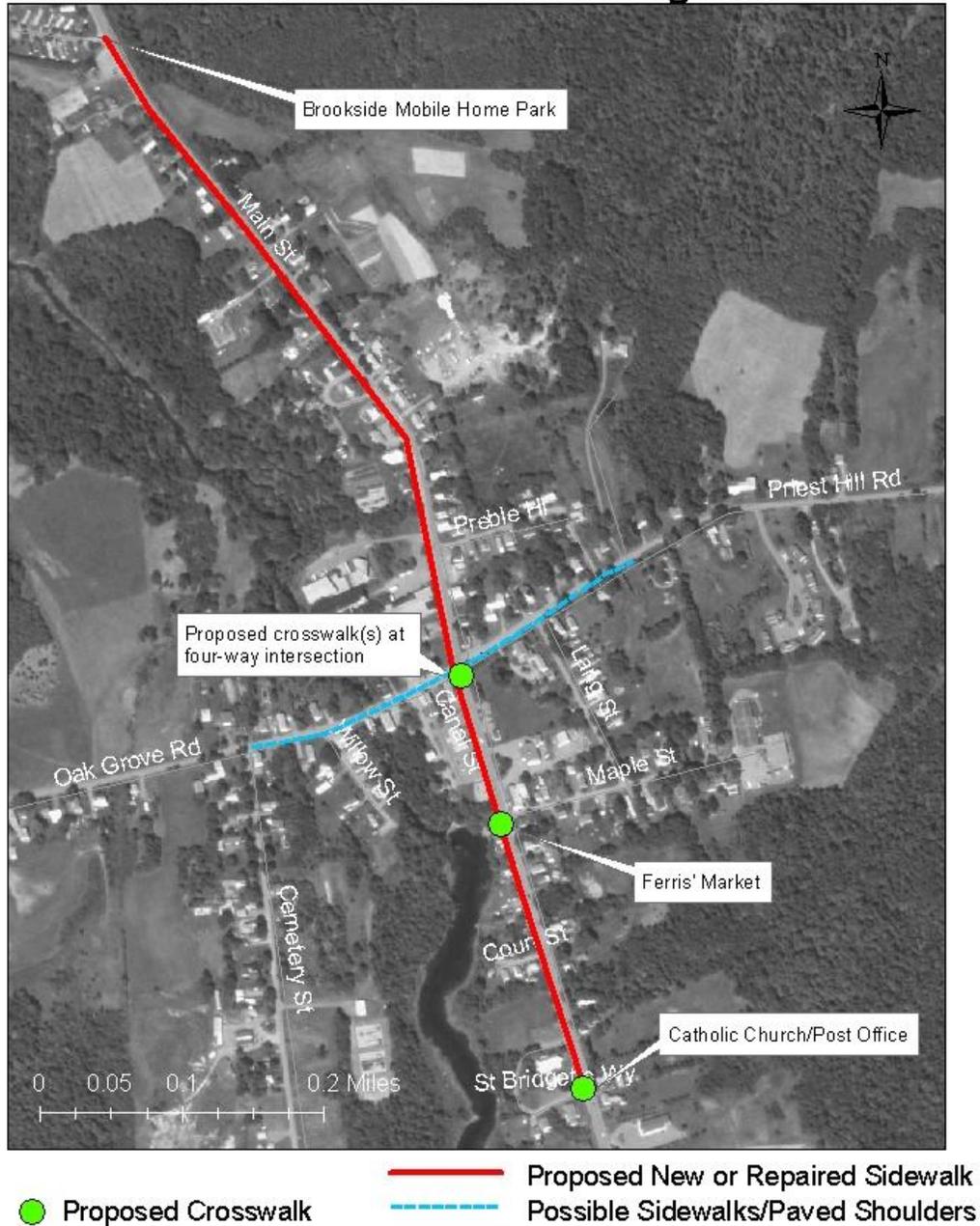


Photo 9. A view of the four corners in North Vassalboro, where Oak Grove Road and Priest Hill Road intersect Main Street.



Photo 10. The deteriorating condition of the existing sidewalks in North Vassalboro makes them hazardous.



Photo 11. Ferris' Variety in North Vassalboro. Existing curb cuts make this an ideal location for a crosswalk on busy Main St.



Appendix C. Riverside and Route 201

Proposed Upgrades Riverside Village

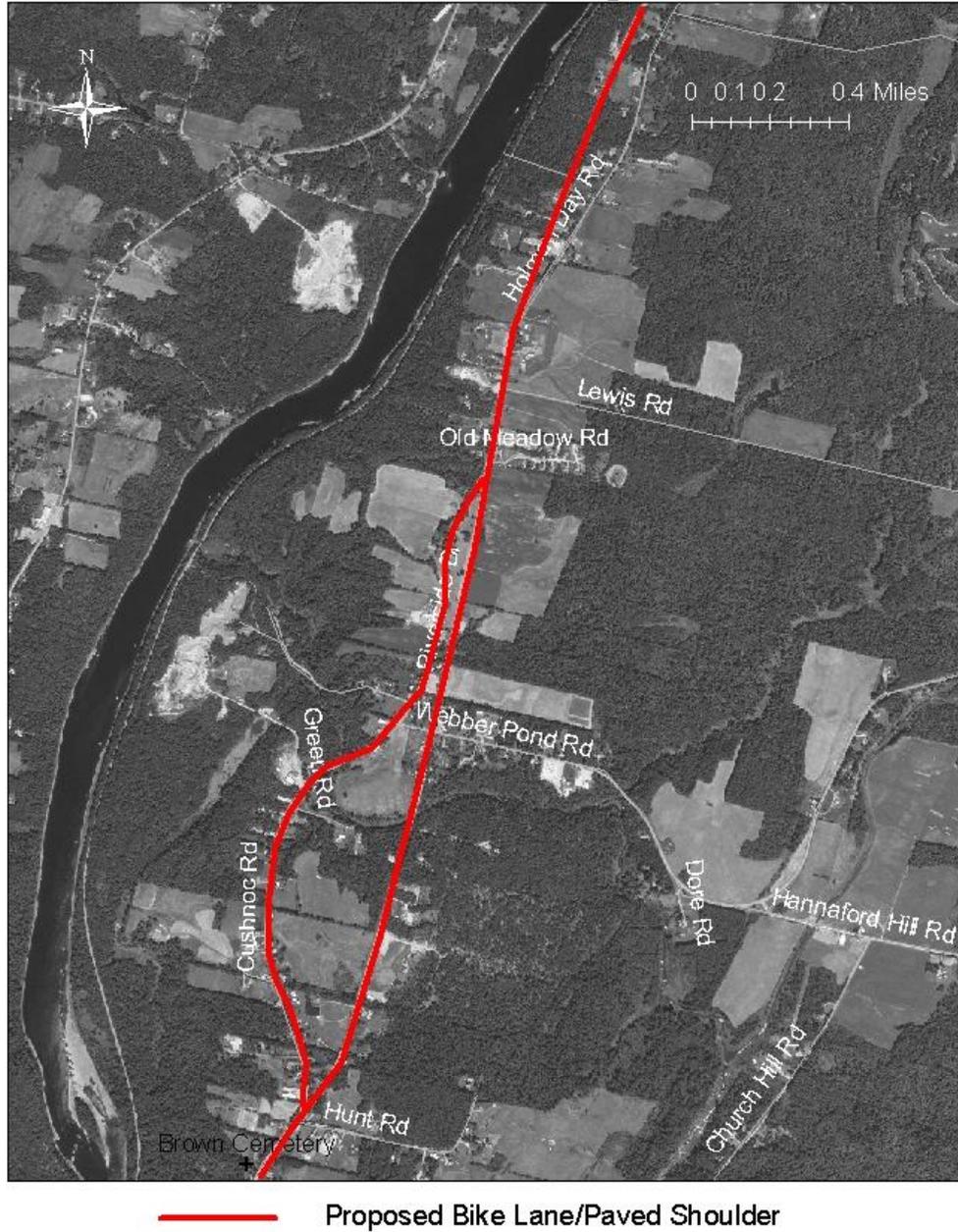


Photo 12. A wide, paved shoulder on Route 201 provides an area for pedestrians and bicyclists, but heavy, speeding traffic keeps many away.



Photo 13. Route 201.



Photo 14. The Cushnoc Road provides a scenic place to walk or ride a bike, but it has several hills and curves. Without a paved shoulder, pedestrians and bicyclists are forced into the road, which can be dangerous.



Appendix D. South Vassalboro

Proposed Upgrades South Vassalboro Village

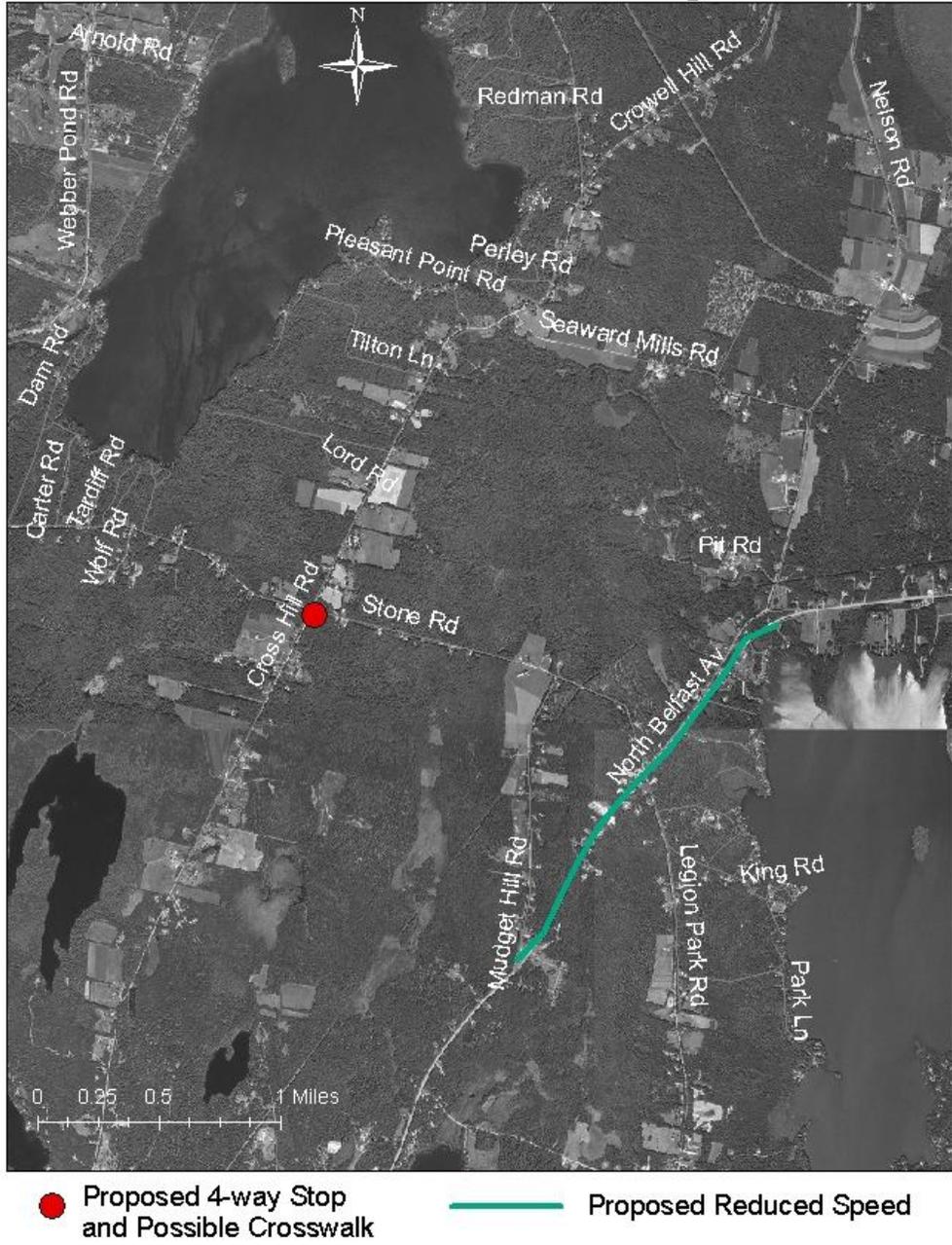


Photo 15. The intersection of Stone, Hannaford Hill, and Cross Hill Roads.



Appendix E. Bog Road; the Route to School

Photo 16. A paved shoulder, lined as a bike lane, along the Bog Road would make walking or biking to the Vassalboro Recreation Fields, the Town Forest Trail, and the Community School easier and safer.



Photo 17. A student walking or biking to school must negotiate the narrow Bog Road, often with heavy traffic.

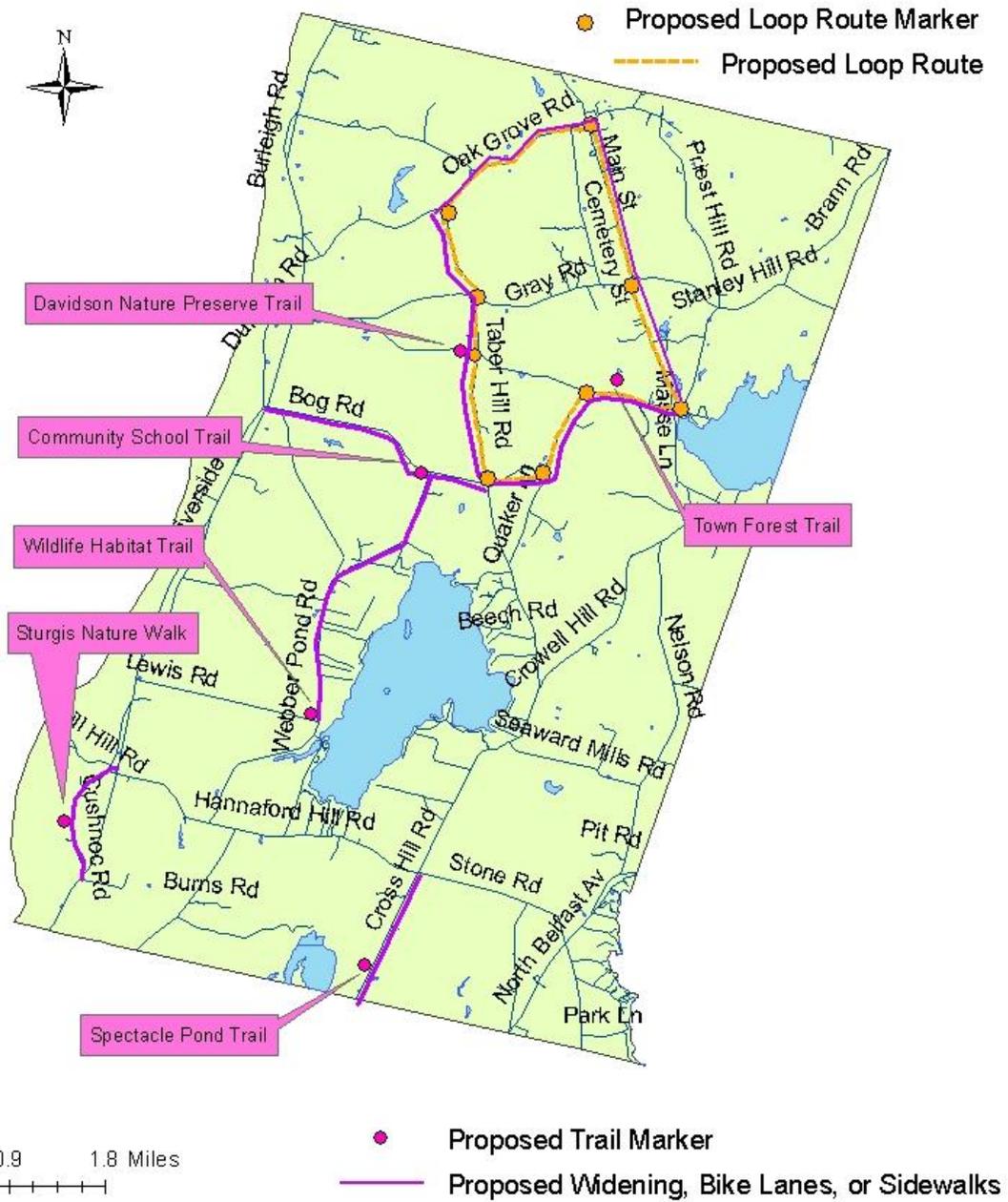


Photo 18. A reduced speed sign flashes to alert drivers to the school zone, but very few students walk or bike to school on the Bog Road, which has no sidewalks, crosswalks, or shoulders.



Appendix F. Trails and Loop Routes

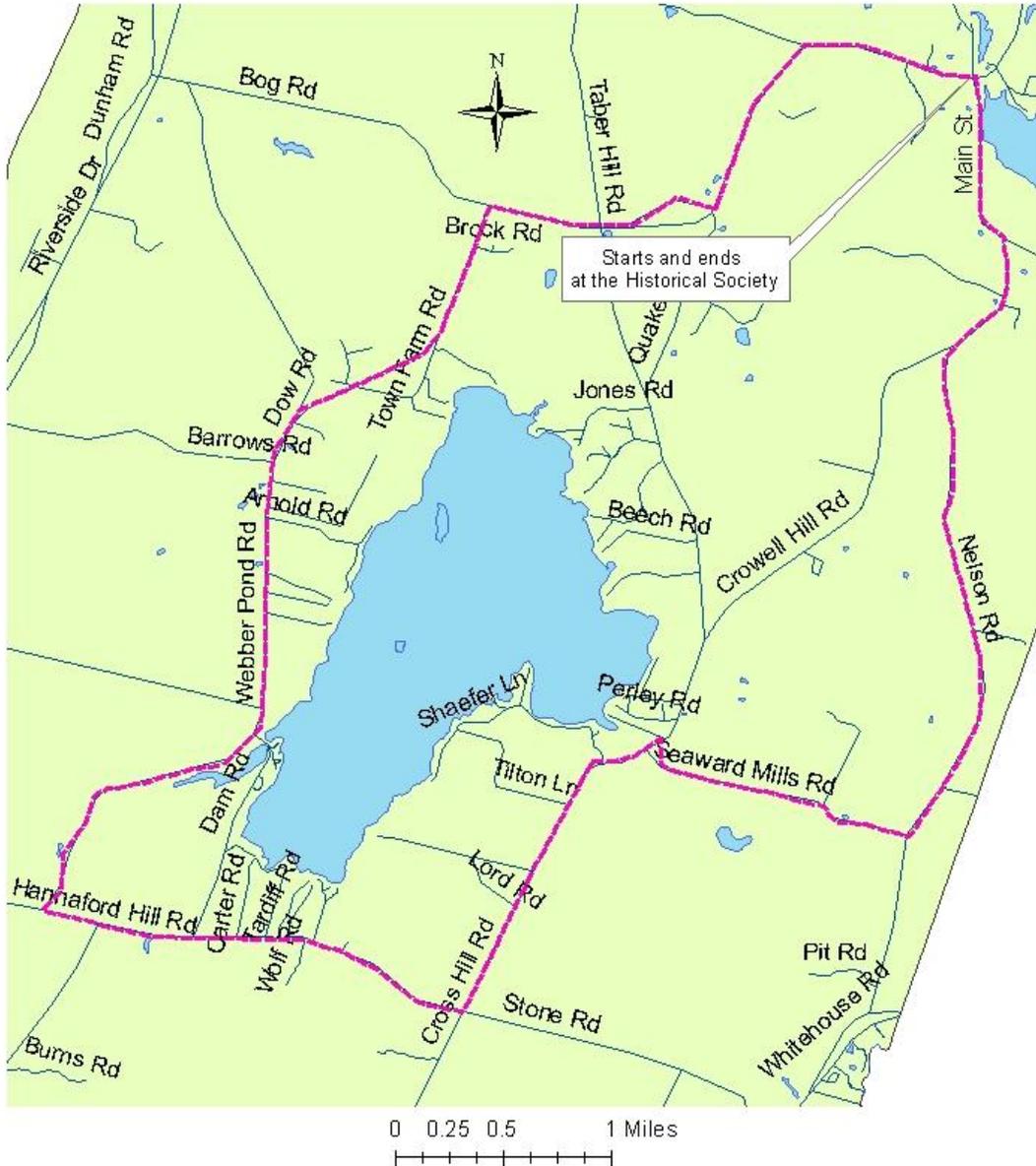
Proposed Upgrades Trails and Routes



Appendix G. Existing Popular Bike Loops

Nelson Webber Bike Loop

Approximately 17 miles



Webber Riverside Bike Loop

Approximately 12 miles



Appendix H. North-East Connectivity

Photo 19. Main Street at the Vassalboro Town Office, looking south towards East Vassalboro.



Photo 20. Main Street at the Town Office, looking north towards North Vassalboro.



Photo 21. Main Street in Vassalboro, between the North and East Villages. The lack of a paved shoulder and the thick roadside vegetation make biking and walking unsafe.

