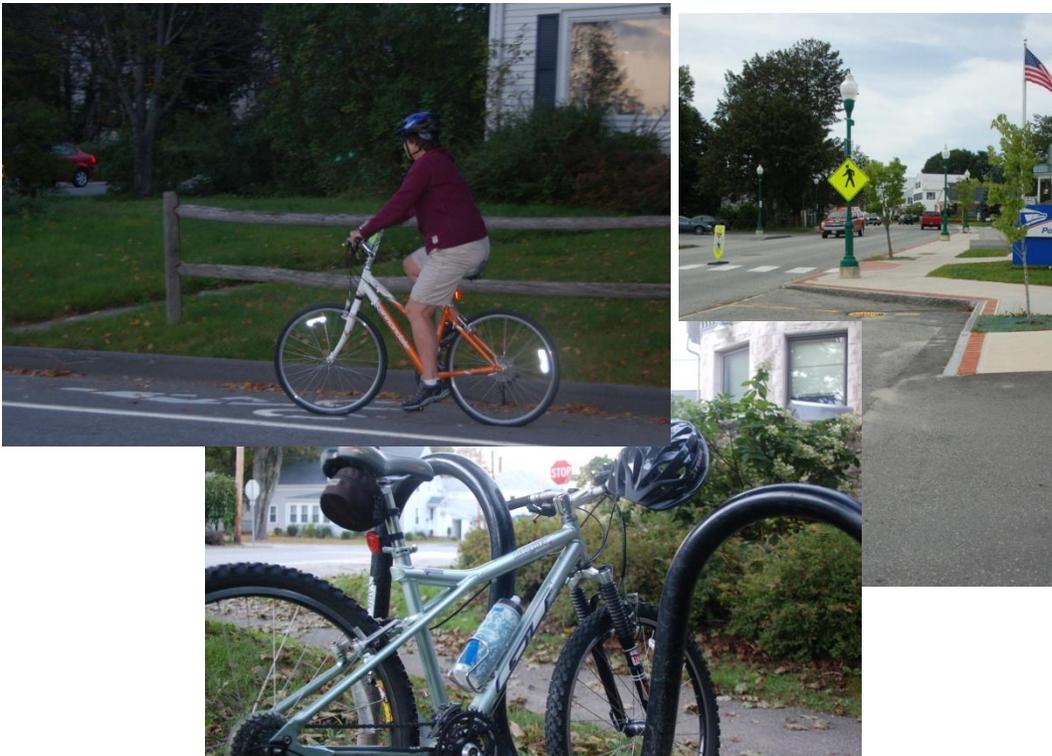


Winthrop Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan

“We play outside!”



FINAL DRAFT - September 2011

Winthrop Bicycle-Pedestrian Committee

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Members: Margy-Burns Knight

Pricilla Jenkins

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Winthrop Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan

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Introduction

Throughout 2009 and 2010, the residents of Winthrop spent hundreds of hours redesigning and updating their comprehensive plan. This 2010 Winthrop Comprehensive Plan served as the jumping off point for the community's effort to develop this Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and is frequently referenced here.

In 2010, the Winthrop Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee teamed with the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) to create a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Town. This plan assesses the current safety and conditions of the roads and sidewalks in Winthrop which are utilized by walkers, runners and cyclists. It also takes an inventory of many of the trails within the town. It will then propose projects for the development of safer bicycle and pedestrian opportunities throughout the community.

Winthrop presents some unique challenges and opportunities to cyclists and pedestrians. The greatest challenge is that the town has several high-volume traffic corridors. These corridors often cut directly across where people want to walk or bike, including near the three schools within town. Winthrop also has many narrow rural roads where people walk and bike but where sidewalks or bike lanes would not fit. On the plus side, the community has many assets which can be built upon, including a compact downtown area with good existing infrastructure serving cyclists and pedestrians as well as many active committees, enthusiastic residents and opportunities for connecting in town pedestrian routes with off-road recreational trails. Clearly the most important bicycle and pedestrian advantage that Winthrop demonstrates is a population that loves to walk and ride their bikes – and is anxious to do so even more.

As part of this plan, comprehensive surveys were made available to the residents of Winthrop. 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 work done by the Winthrop Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, have been compiled to create this plan.

This plan is intended to be a guideline for future action regarding bicycle and pedestrian development throughout Winthrop. The various proposals can be worked on in any order, depending upon community interest, sense of urgency, roadwork being planned by Maine DOT, 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 Winthrop town government and citizen approval, particularly when town funding is involved, and they have to meet all local and state laws and ordinances.

Winthrop is a town with a demonstrated commitment to health and safety. Its new slogan "We Play Outside" is frequently referenced in meetings, is highlighted on the town website, and is talked about within the community. This Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan supports not

only the transportation efforts of the Winthrop community, but the comprehensive health, safety and recreational efforts as well.

Community

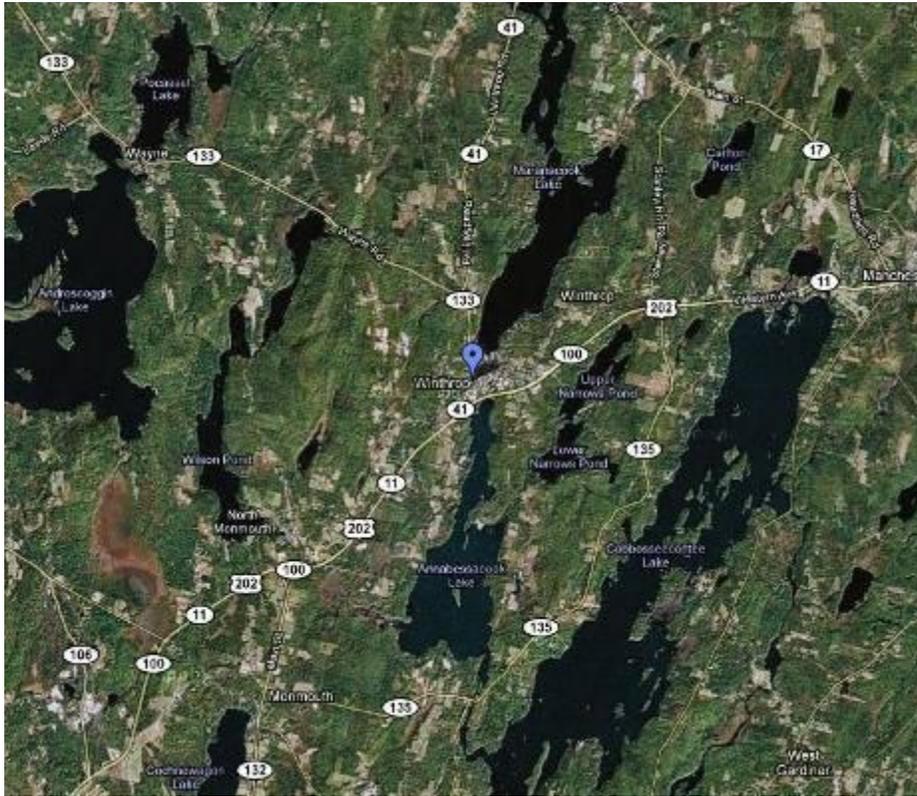
The Town of Winthrop is an industrial and suburban center, located about 10 miles west of Augusta on U.S. Route 202. Winthrop is served also by the "Back Road" of the Springfield Terminal Railroad. Its commercial downtown area is sandwiched between Maranacook and Annabessacook Lakes. Cobbosseecontee Lake and several smaller lakes are also located within Winthrop's 31 square mile extent. Even with 6,092 residents, 15.9 percent of Winthrop's housing stock is seasonal.

Winthrop provides an excellent quality of life. Housing is plentiful. Winthrop's independent school system provides a complete elementary and secondary curriculum. Several colleges, universities and technical schools are within commuting distance.

Historically, Winthrop's economy was built up from a mercantile village into a manufacturing town based on water power.

The town's population was 4,335 in 1970, reaching 6,092 in 2010 (a 40% increase), above that of the overall State of Maine for this time period (35%). The population is expected to keep growing through 2030 to a predicted 6,300. The number of housing units grew from 1,360 in 1970 to 3,295 in 2010, a large 142% increase. The median age of Winthrop residents in 2010 was 46. Of the employed residents in 2010, the majority worked outside of Winthrop and their average one-way commute time was 23.3 minutes. As Winthrop continues to grow, pressure will increase on the town's transportation infrastructure and the increase in bicycle and pedestrian use can help to mitigate any problems that may occur.

Winthrop contains or borders several valuable natural resources, including numerous lakes and ponds. The abundance of these water bodies draws a substantial seasonal population to the town. They also create the opportunity for many water-based activities. The water bodies within Winthrop generally have lots of public and private access. There is a public beach downtown on Maranacook Lake along with good access to the lake at Norcross Point with weekend milfoil checks throughout the summer, in order to protect water quality. Most lakes and ponds have at the least carry-in water access and many have public motor boat access as well. The lakes are used for fishing, boating and swimming every day during the summer season. In the winter the public use the lakes for ice fishing every day. Improving pedestrian and cycling access to all of these access points would be a great additional benefit to the town and its residents.



The many lakes and ponds in and around Winthrop

There are many casual and developed hiking and walking trails in Winthrop, including the old trolley bed (mostly used for snowmobiles but can be hiked), the Route 202 nature area, and the high school-middle school complex. But perhaps the best known and most extensive network of trails is located in the Mt. Pisgah Conservation Area.

Mt. Pisgah is the highest point of land in Winthrop, a popular hiking destination, and the site of a former Forest Service fire tower. The Kennebec Land Trust has holdings of over 600 acres surrounding the mountain. The fire tower itself, along with 94 acres, was deeded from the state to the Town of Winthrop in 2003. Since then, the Town, along with Kennebec Land Trust, has established a management plan, emphasizing low-impact recreation uses, such as hiking, picnicking, nature education, and primitive camping. Development for these uses is ongoing. Eventual plans call for a trail connection into downtown Winthrop. The community has long talked about and hopes to build a trail connection from the existing Roger Guerette Trail at the High School to Mt. Pisgah.

Winthrop is a very scenic town, but for many the scenery is only accessible via the transportation system by motorized vehicle. Route 202 and several minor roads provide the panoramic views of lakes and bogs; the trails up Mt. Pisgah lead to a scenic vista. There are no formally identified scenic overlooks or turnouts in Winthrop but there is no doubt to

the value of increasing pedestrian and cyclist access to the many areas of beauty within the town.

For those with not so far to go, or an inclination for physical activity, the options are bicycling or walking. Winthrop has a sidewalk network in the downtown area, though its physical condition is variable. Sidewalks generally do not receive the investment that roads do. Although downtown coverage of sidewalk is good, there are many gaps in the system that discourage more walking. Pedestrians are occasionally seen walking in the streets due to the lack of, or poor condition of sidewalks. Having raised curbs and obstacles such as utility poles, shop signs etc are problematic for those with strollers, wheelchairs or mobility scooters.



Example of good, adequate and poor sidewalks downtown



Example of good lowered sidewalk and where sidewalks end leaving gaps in the system

An expanded set of walking paths, including traditional sidewalks, would benefit downtown Winthrop. These paths could connect more major destinations, including the schools, recreation areas, and Mount Pisgah. They could also be considered as infrastructure to promote public health.

Bicycle travel in Winthrop is limited to on-street routes, or cross-country trails. Because Winthrop has a downtown area with schools, stores, the beach, and other attractions, there could be plenty of demand for in-town cycling, but it has not materialized into projects. There is a however a very short “bike route” with a dedicated lane across from the grade school on Highland Avenue.



The sole dedicated bicycle lane by the Grade School

The area outside of downtown provides opportunities as well. Bicycle touring is a large and growing component of tourism, especially in scenic areas such as Winthrop. However, most of Winthrop's rural roads are narrow and the shoulders are too poor to permit safe biking (or walking). Maine's Bicycle Map shows one bicycle tour, labeled the "Capitol Tour," that originates in Augusta, comes into Winthrop from East Monmouth up Route 135, and crosses Route 202 to the Metcalf Road, west to downtown Winthrop, then south on Annabessacook Road. Route 202 itself is not part of this route because of the heavy traffic.



An example of rural roads with narrow shoulders

A separate Winthrop-to-Kennebec bicycle trail has been recommended by several local and regional plans, most recently the Multimodal Corridor Management Plan being prepared by

KVCOG for this region. Such a trail could parallel Route 202 or utilize the old trolley bed, utility paths, or snowmobile trails to link the town with Augusta and Hallowell. The concept has the support of Winthrop and Manchester residents and this Committee strongly desires the connection to go ahead and will support all efforts that work toward achieving this goal.

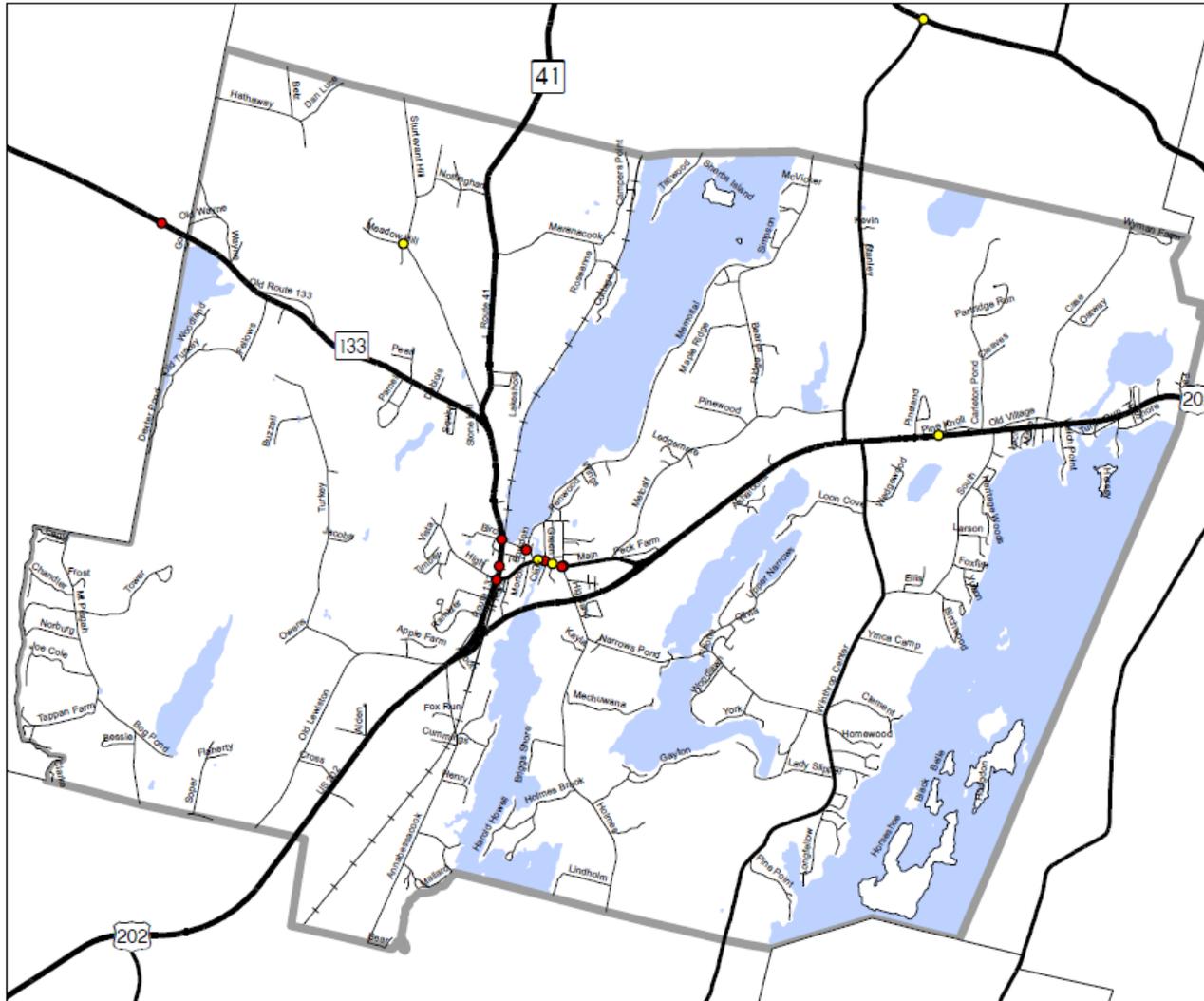
Traffic and Crashes in Winthrop

Vehicular traffic in Winthrop plays a large role in the safety and enjoyability of walking, running or cycling in the town. The table below summarizes 2008 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) counts for various points in Winthrop:

Location	2008 AADT
Annabessacook Rd.	1390
Narrows Pond Rd.	790
Route 202 @ Manchester TL	14,630 (2010 Data)
Route 202 w/o Rt. 135 No.	14,450
Route 202 e/o Highland Ave.	10,330
Rt. 41/133 n/o Main Street	7,000
Main Street (western end)	6,770

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. There are no high crash locations in Winthrop as of the most recent published data (2008). There are however some intersections where the community's perception is clearly one of danger and high accidents. The most frequently discussed are all along 202: at Rt. 135, at Highland Ave, and at Annabessacook Road.

Winthrop Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning



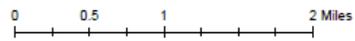
Legend

Crashes 2000-2010

- Involving Bikes
- Involving Pedestrians



Prepared by the
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Council of Governments
June 2011





The junction of Highland Ave and Route 202

The number of crashes reported involving Bikes and Pedestrians between 2000 and 2010 is shown on the enclosed map. This shows that there have been 7 accidents reported involving pedestrians and 4 involving bicycles, they are generally concentrated around Main Street and Route 133.

Existing Resources, Plans and Ordinances

Winthrop has Recreation, Conservation and Green Committees, which generally meet monthly. Along with the past Comprehensive Plan Committee, these groups have joined together to advocate for enhanced bicycle and pedestrian friendly upgrades and have met with KVCOG to discuss options. This led to the identification of Maine DOT monies that funded this plan, and they will be spearheading the effort to raise money for implementation of its various project proposals.

Winthrop has not had a pedestrian and bike plan previously. However, the town does have a brand new Comprehensive Plan (updated 2010), as well as a Downtown Revitalization Plan from 2000. Both these plans directly address bicycle and pedestrian issues and this plan is specifically a way to implement several polices from the Comprehensive Plan:

Within Chapter 8 – Outdoor Recreation the top recommendation is as follows:

“Top Recommendations:

- *Maintain and improve the recreation trails, fire tower, and facilities at Mt. Pisgah. Plan for and develop a connecting trail from the downtown to Mt. Pisgah.*
- *Pursue the development of a walking path network in the downtown, along Mill Stream, and to Norcross Point.”*

Another strategy states:

- *Expand opportunities for off-road or hybrid bicycle touring, for both recreation and transportation, accessing downtown, lakes, and inter-local networks.*

In Chapter 9 - Transportation, Action Plan section, the Plan declares the following key issues and implementation strategies that all relate to Bicycle and pedestrian Planning:

“Local Policies:

- *Establish and prioritize transportation needs to further safe and efficient use of the system.*
- *Coordinate transportation and development policies to optimize efficiency of the transportation system and travel demand.*
- *Develop future transportation projects with consideration for changing economic and demographic demand and opportunities for multiple forms of travel.*
- *Consult with the Maine DOT to maximize the efficiency of the state-managed transportation network.*
- *Improve the overall walkability of downtown.*

Recommended Strategies:

- *Develop a road improvements plan for municipal roads, with specific goals and a predictable funding stream.*
- *Work with Maine DOT to implement pedestrian safety improvements at the Route 202/Highland Ave. intersection.*
- *Review and amend the zoning ordinance, as appropriate, to encourage a higher density of development downtown with lower congestion: reduce requirements for commercial parking supply, improve incentives for common-use downtown parking, and require Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations for major development.*
- *Amend the subdivision ordinance to require applicants to demonstrate that curb cuts onto public ways are the minimum necessary and at safe locations.*
- *Coordinate ordinance amendments with DOT access management requirements.*
- *Plan for a dedicated intercity bicycle path between Winthrop and the Kennebec Rail Trail.*
- *Establish community gateways at both ends of Main Street, to slow traffic and better define the village area.*
- *Perform a sidewalk inventory and pedestrian/bicycle plan for downtown, identifying needed bicycle facilities, additional work on sidewalks, and elements of a village pedestrian trail system for inclusion in the town's CIP.*
- *Coordinate transportation projects regionally, according to the Route 202 Multimodal Corridor Management Plan.*

Implementation:

Upon adoption of this plan, the Council will task the planning board to prepare recommended changes to ordinances, in conjunction with other recommended changes in this report. The town will seek to create a bicycle/pedestrian plan for downtown, and other bicycle improvements, in 2011. The town manager will continue to work with Maine DOT to implement recommendations affecting state highways, including the establishment of gateways to the downtown. The town manager will work with Maine DOT and highway foreman to establish a road improvements plan for town ways in 2012, with implementation into the CIP by 2013."

Within Chapter 10 – Public Health the top recommendation is as follows:

“to create a network of bike and walking trails, especially in and around the downtown, to Mt. Pisgah, and connecting Winthrop to Manchester and ultimately to the Kennebec.”

Additional strategies include:

- *Provide safe storage for bicycles in the downtown, at Mt. Pisgah, at each school, and other destination areas.*
- *Require walking and/or bicycle access and facilities for new development in the village.*

Within the Downtown Revitalization Plan of 2000 the strategies numerous calls for new sidewalks and road resurfacing to make the downtown more amenable to pedestrians and cyclists. With the overall goal of wanting to make the downtown a better place for walking and cycling, this in turn work to benefit the downtown as well.

Unfortunately there has been little progress of the desires outlined in the Downtown Plan to help improve Bicycle and pedestrian friendliness in downtown Winthrop. Hopefully a more focused concerted vision from this plan will be more successful.

All these areas of both the Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Revitalization Plan Clearly show the desire within the community to explicitly retain and enhance the pedestrian and cyclist friendliness of the town.

There is however, no mention of sidewalk or cycling facilities within the towns Zoning Ordinance. This is something that could become a major strategy to change the ordinance so that any future development is automatically bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

Winthrop has a sidewalk capital reserve account with a dedicated \$3,000 dollars in the 2011 budget for sidewalks. There is also \$5,772 in encumbered funds that have the possibility of being dedicated to bicycle and pedestrian improvement works subject to approval by the Town Council.

Public Meetings

An initial public meeting was held on March 22nd where all 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 Winthrop Town Office. Attendees generally agreed that there are serious problems and deficiencies that keep Winthrop from being bike and pedestrian friendly. General deficiencies and problems identified by the group included: inadequate paved shoulders, sidewalks, crosswalks, sidewalk snow removal; and road and sidewalk maintenance. Speeding traffic and narrow roadways were concerns, as well as a general need for safe, designated areas for pedestrian and cyclist use. A committee was then formed who agreed to meet monthly and when necessary to work on this plan as described in the next section (Planning Process).

A public meeting was held concurrently with the Town Council Meeting on September 12th 2011 where public input was solicited on a final draft of this report.

The Planning Process

The Winthrop Board Town Council appointed a Bike-Pedestrian Committee to oversee the project. All members are listed at the beginning of this Plan.

At the recommendation of KVCOG, the committee decided to solicit input from the community via electronic and paper surveys. Both school and non-school residents were surveyed with the committee approving survey questions and formats.

The town website provided links to the electronic surveys and information on where to obtain copies of the paper surveys. Surveys were available at the Town Office and Library. Surveys were also distributed and a presentation on the project was given at a Chamber of Commerce breakfast where the idea was very well received. In order to ensure that the public had sufficient opportunity to provide input, the survey period ran approximately a month between mid June to early July 2011.

At the end of the survey period, survey responses were tallied. One hundred and sixteen (116) surveys were received. This represents an excellent return rate especially for the relatively short time of collection. The only potential limitation was the inability to get a large response from school children via the schools as school was already over for the year.

The committee held a meeting on July 18, 2011 to review the results of the survey and prioritize recommended improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Winthrop. The committee also discussed other recommendations, all of which served as the basis for the final Winthrop Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan as presented in this document.

Comments and advice was solicited from Maine Department of Transportation, both the Bicycle, Pedestrian and Quality Community Program Manager as well as the Regional Traffic Engineer and the Bicycle Coalition of Maine/Safe Routes to School Program Manager.

Winthrop's Highway Foreman and Chief of Police also were invited to attend committee meetings and comment on and contribute to the plan.

Survey Results

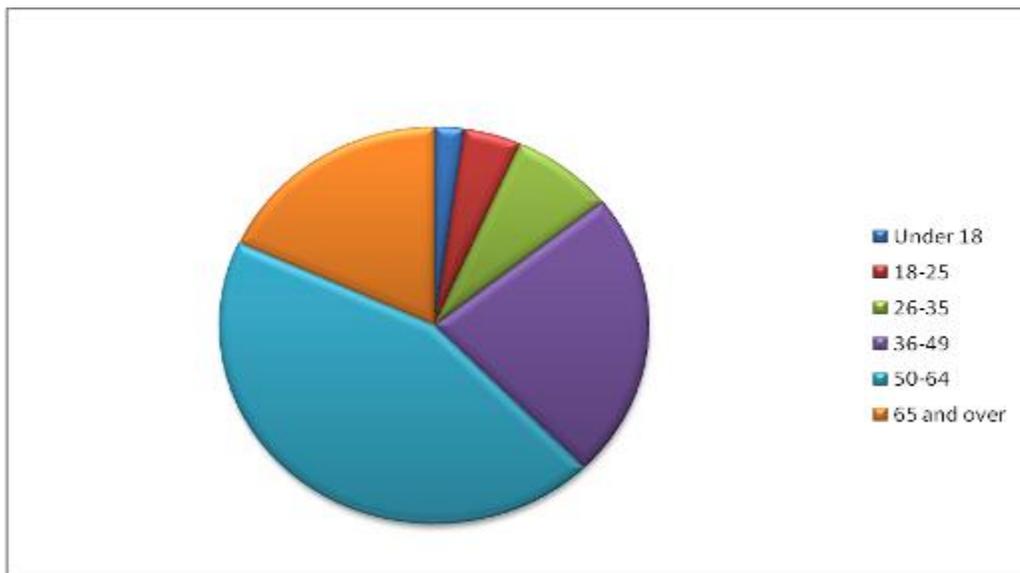
Surveys were prepared and made available to the residents of Winthrop. The surveys included demographic questions, questions about walking, running, and biking habits, routes used and route condition problems. It solicited input on how walking, running, and biking facilities/areas in Winthrop could be improved.

This paper-based survey had two sides and the web based survey had two parts of 10 questions each. Many survey respondents did not complete the second part of the web survey, which had a variety of open-ended questions about favorite routes and recommendations. It is unclear whether people chose not to complete part two due to time constraints, or simply didn't realize that there was a second part. 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.

Question Breakdown

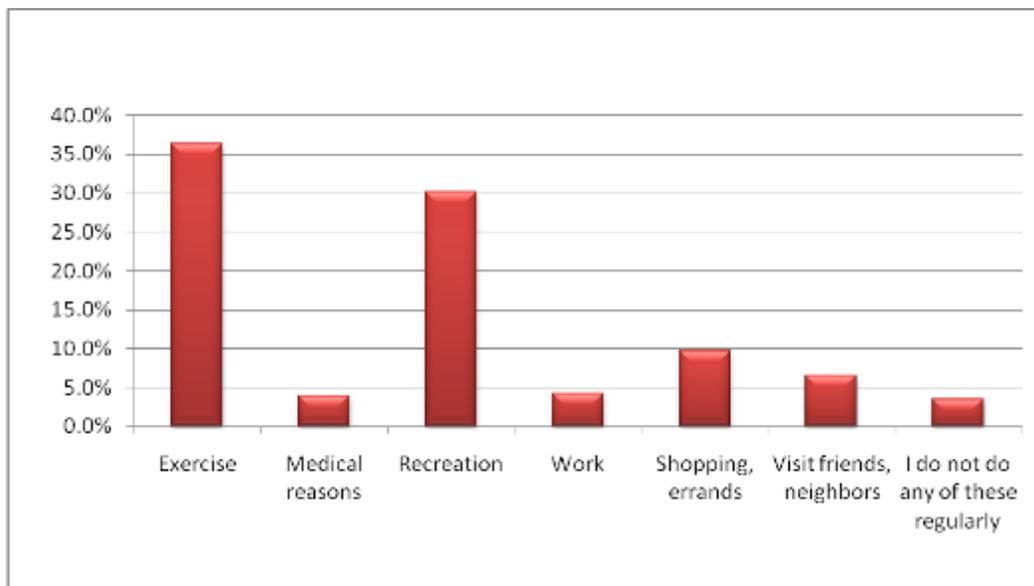
Of the survey respondents the vast majority were aged 50 or over (72.7%), female (60.3%), year-round residents (93.7%). Just under a quarter of the respondents identified themselves as retired, and almost 3% indicated that they used a wheelchair, walker or scooter regularly. The survey sample contained a mix of residents from all parts of town.

Figure 1. Age of Survey Respondents



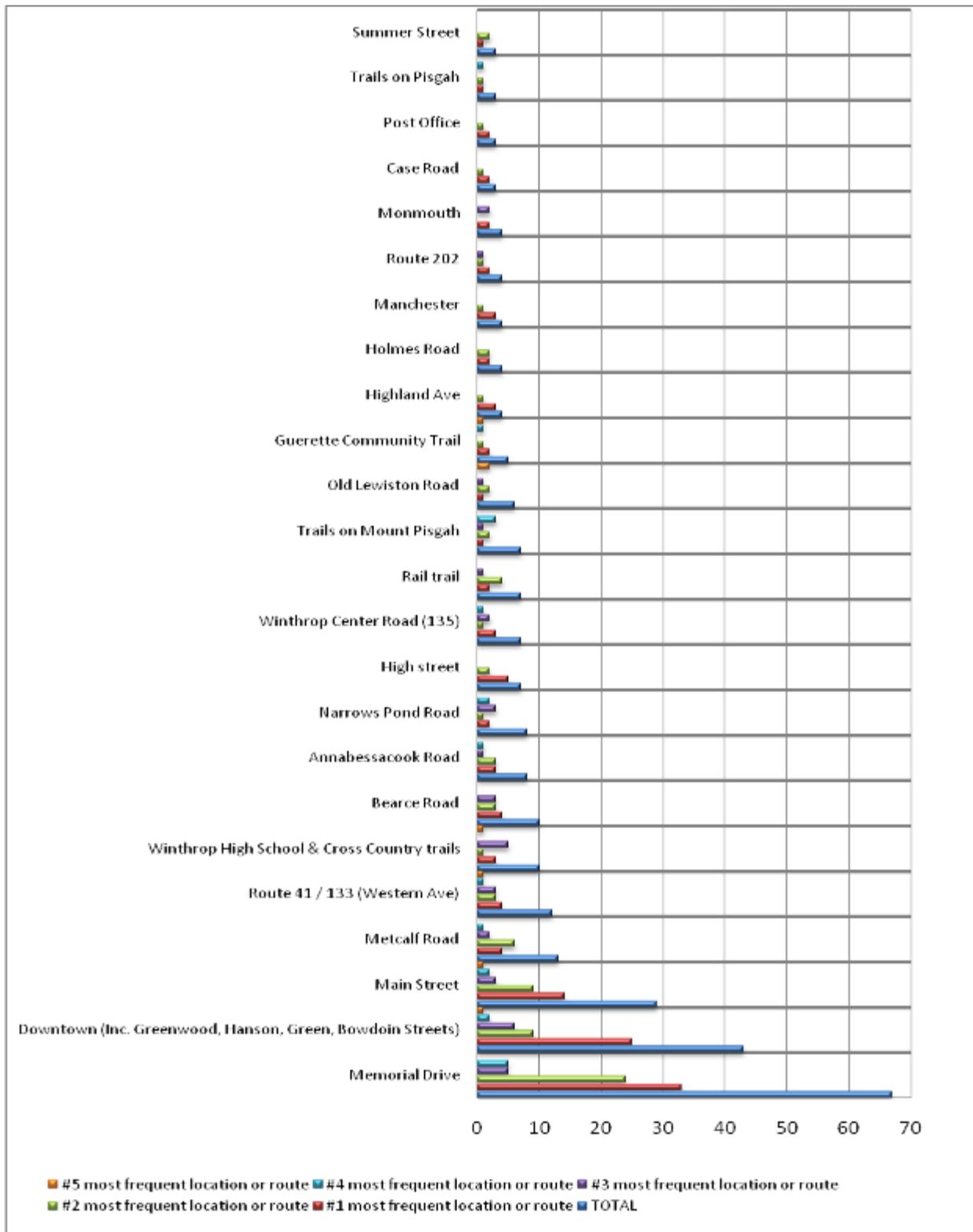
Most of the respondents (90.4%) stated that they do walk, run, or bike regularly; the majority being pedestrians rather than cyclists. The reasons most commonly selected for walking/running/biking were exercise (36.3%), recreation (30.1%), and shopping/errands (9.7%). Eighty percent of the regular respondents 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 (36.8%), safety concerns (21.8%), and road conditions (21.8%). Almost one fifth of the respondents stated that they have children that walk or bike to school (55% selected “N/A” to the question, which asked, “If you have children that attend Winthrop Schools, do they walk or bike to school?”). The main reason given by parents to explain why their children don’t walk or bike to school is safety concerns regarding heavy and speeding traffic, particularly on Route 202.

Figure 2. Reasons why respondents Walk, Run or Cycle in Winthrop



The following graph indicates the roads and/or general areas of Winthrop that were specifically identified by respondents as places where they walk, run or bike.

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



The deficiencies or problems that were experienced by these routes and suggested improvements were mainly identified as speeding traffic (this was particularly relevant to Route 202) and areas with no sidewalk or shoulder (particularly Memorial Drive, Metcalf and Narrow Pond Roads).

Respondents stated that if improvements were made then they would be likely to walk, run or bike in many different areas but Memorial Drive was the most popular.

Figure 4. Problems and deficiencies and possible improvements suggested by respondents

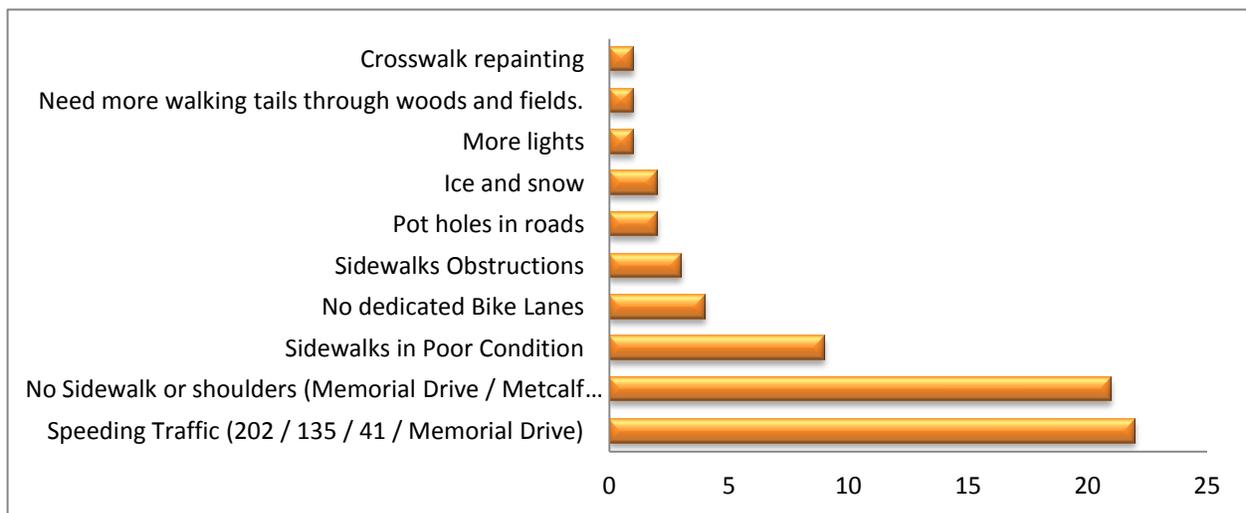
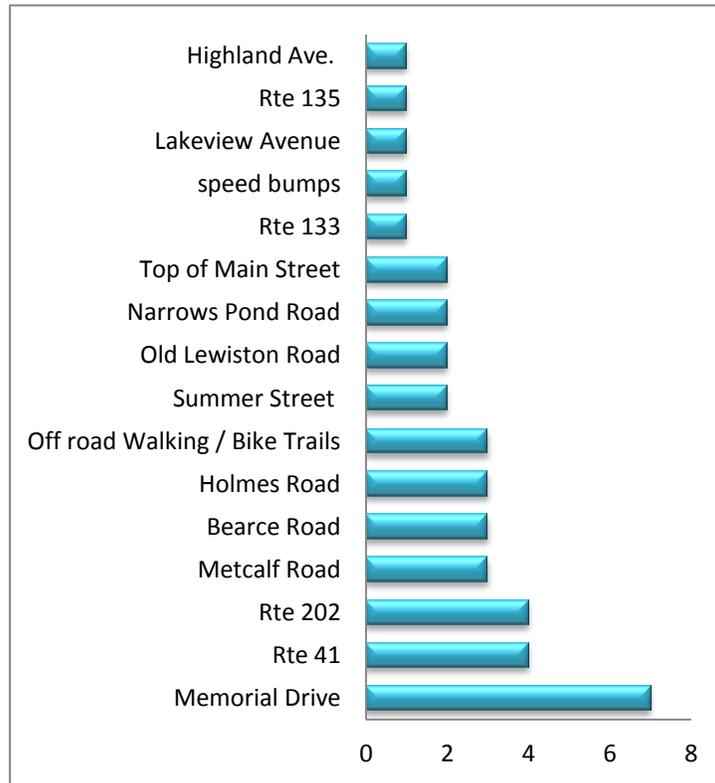
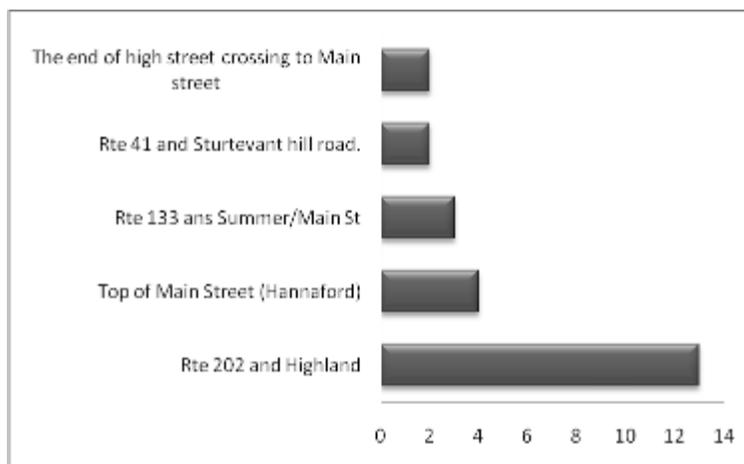


Figure 5. Areas where if they were improved respondents would likely use more



All respondents were asked to identify intersections in Winthrop that are difficult to cross. The graphic summarizes the most common answers. Unsurprisingly Route 202 was identified as the worst.

Figure 6. Intersections identified as "difficult to cross" by respondents



All respondents were asked to identify areas in Winthrop that should have crosswalks and sidewalks. The results for locations of new sidewalks are indicated in the following graph.

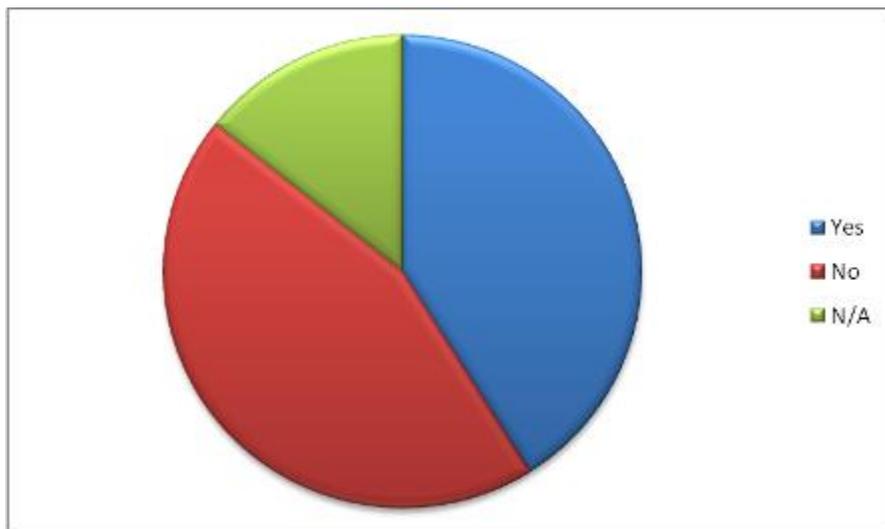
There were only 10 responses to the question of crosswalks but the majority highlighted Route 202 as requiring more / better crosswalks.

Figure 7. Areas identified by respondents as needing sidewalks



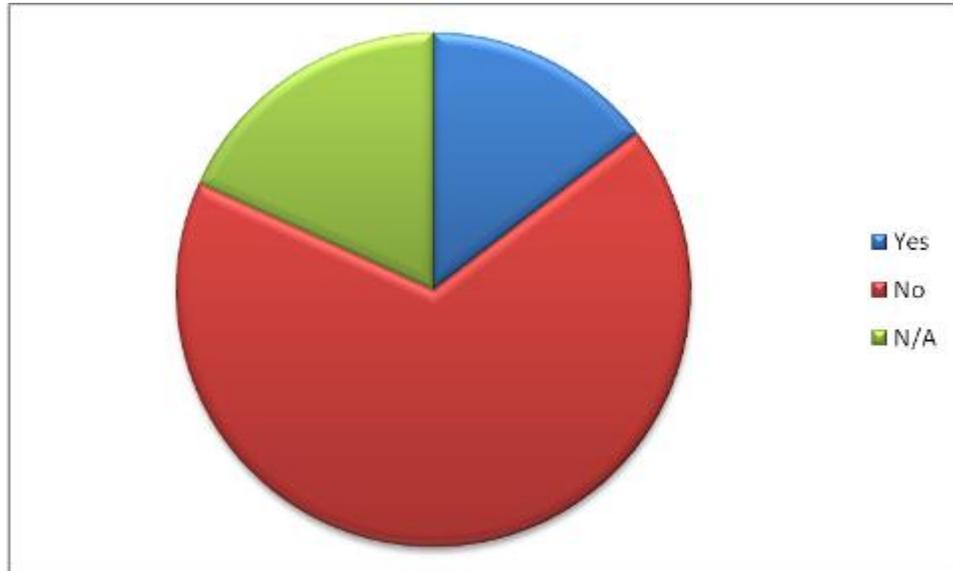
The issue of Bicycle racks in town was evenly divided with only slightly more people saying they would use them if available than those who say they wouldn't, 45% to 41%

Figure 8. Willingness to use Bicycle racks



The idea of a bicycle sharing program was less popular with respondents with the majority 67.3% believing they would not participate in such a program

Figure 9. Willingness to use a Bicycle Sharing Program



Identification of Bicycle and Pedestrian Features and Issues in Winthrop

In a number of meetings, using maps and local knowledge, the Committee has discussed and identified numerous bicycle and pedestrian based features and areas of concern within the town. The results of the survey also informed these issues and trends within the town. These include the following general points that are listed either town-wide or relating to the downtown area of Winthrop:

Downtown

- Existing Sidewalk locations and Condition (example below)



- Popular walking routes with no sidewalk (examples below)



- Known hazardous areas for pedestrians and cyclists (examples below)



- Routes for possible new off-road trails
- Existing Crosswalk locations (example below)

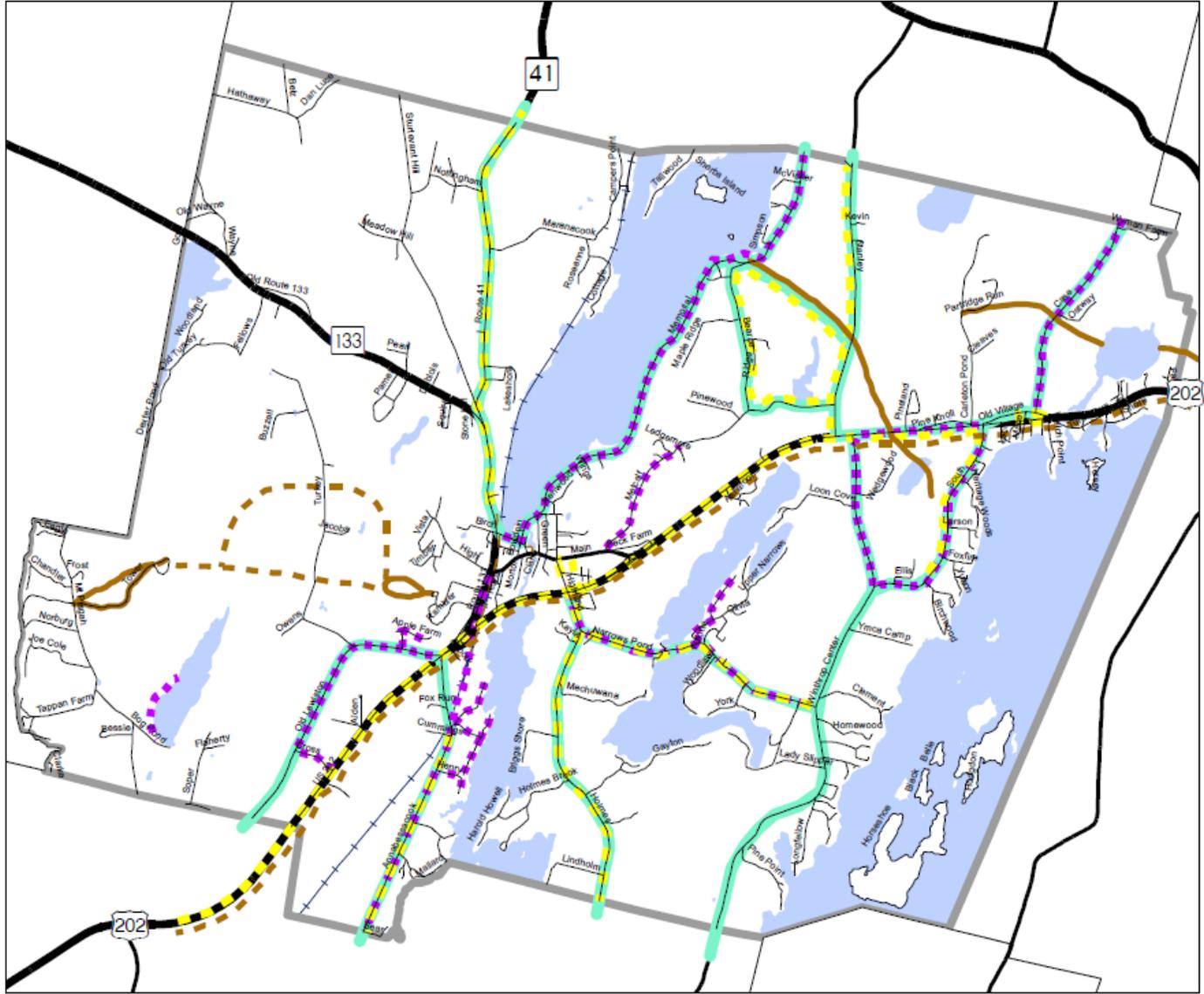


Town wide

- Frequent Bicycle Routes
- Existing off-road recreational trails
- Known hazardous areas for pedestrians and cyclists
- Routes for possible new off-road trails
- Popular walking routes with no sidewalk

The following two maps illustrate the above features and issues both town-wide and downtown:

Winthrop Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

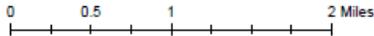


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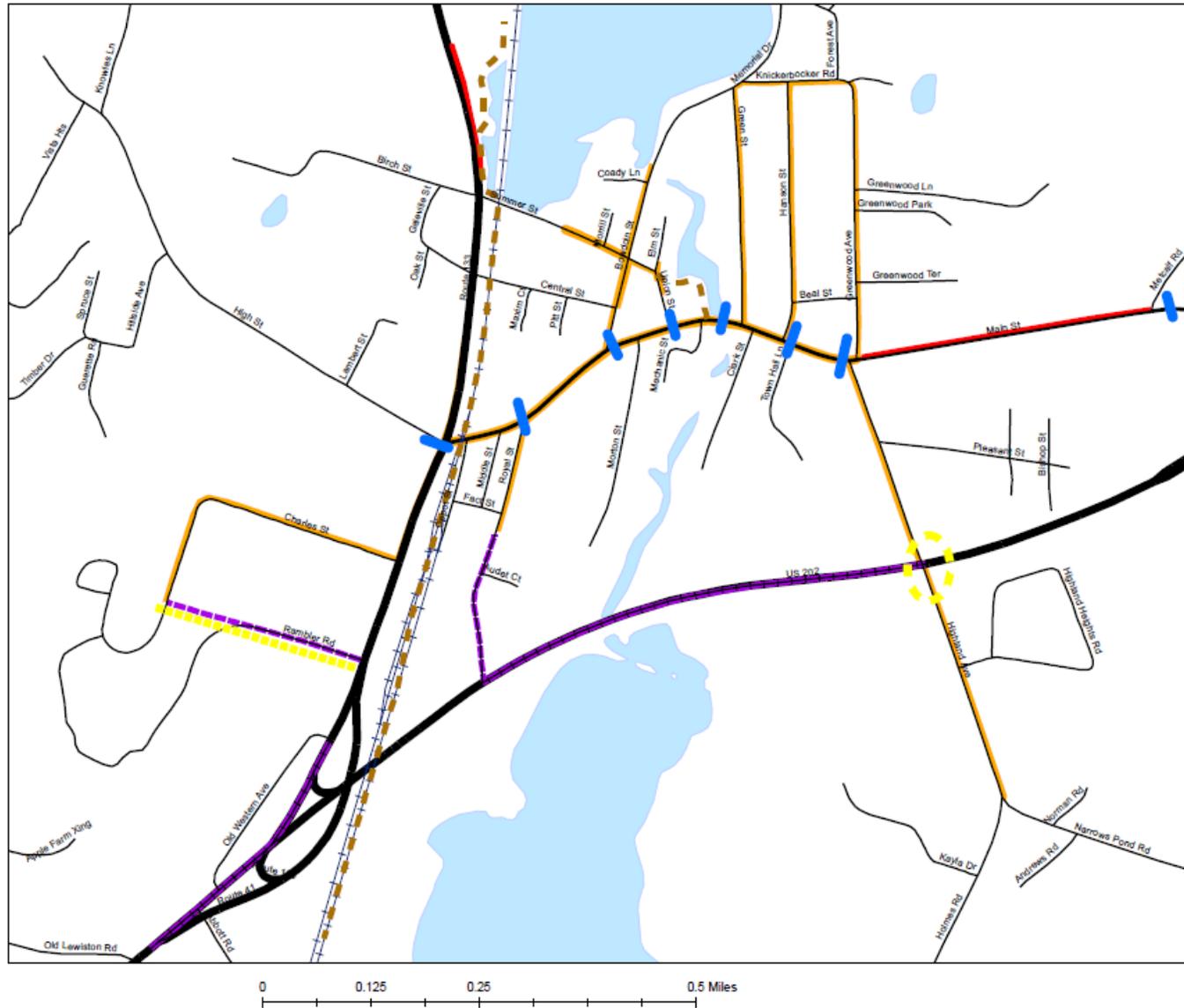
- Desired Future Trail Routes
- Existing Recreation Trail
- Identified Hazardous Areas
- Walkable Routes with NO Sidewalks
- Frequent Bicycle Routes



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June 2011



Winthrop Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning



Legend

-  Desired Recreation Trail
-  Sidewalks in Poor Condition
-  Current Walking Route No Sidewalk
-  Sidewalks in Fair Condition
-  Known Hazard Areas
-  Crosswalks


 Prepared by the
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 June 2011



Priority Issue - Speed:

The overwhelming feeling of the Committee was that in order to solve many of the problems and issues identified during the planning process there needs to be a strategy to reduce the speed of motorized vehicles in Winthrop.



By reducing the speed of vehicles in all areas of town it would make it much safer and pleasant to walk and cycle in town and as a result more people would feel comfortable to do so.

Other identified issues:

Other general issues that were identified throughout the process include:

- Dogs running loose on Memorial Drive.

It has been noted that there are several residents with dogs who routinely roam and dart into the street. It is thought that it may be just a matter of time before a dog darts out when a car is present and the driver could potentially swerve and hit a bicyclist or pedestrian or dog.

- Snow and Ice Removal on Sidewalks and Shoulders in Winter

If snow is not removed promptly on all sidewalks and popular pedestrian / cyclist routes then it makes it a lot more difficult and unpleasant to walk and bicycle in town during the winter months.

- Cutting back of vegetation on roadsides

Keeping visibility to a maximum by removing overhanging vegetation, especially on curves would help to keep pedestrians and cyclists safe.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Vision for Winthrop

From information received at the public meetings and from the public surveys, a set of broad desired outcomes or visions was identified. These visions were then broken down into missions which includes more specific approaches that can be taken to address achieve the visions. These visions and missions were seen as a simple way to determine methods of improving bicycle and pedestrian safety and facilities in Winthrop.

They can be summarized as follows:

Vision: Make the roads in Winthrop safer for walking and cycling.

Missions:

Speed: Reduce the speed of traffic in areas of town using methods including signs, enforcement and traffic calming measures.

Space: Where possible create more space for cyclists and pedestrians by including dedicated lanes or wide shoulders.

Education: Work to change the attitude of all road users to create a mindset of roads being used by all in harmony with the motto that “Winthrop Plays Outside!” This could include MDOT / Bicycle Coalition of Maine School Road Safety Classes, Walk and Bike to School Days, Poster competitions to promote the idea town and region wide.

Vision: Make the crosswalks and intersections in Winthrop safer for walking and cycling.

Missions:

Intersection of Rt 202 and Highland Avenue: Create a safe crossing point of Rt 202 in collaboration with Maine DOT. This may be problematic due to MDOT restrictions on crosswalks (see methods section).

East Main Street: Create safer crossing points and pedestrian routes between the Hannaford and Rite Aid shopping malls. Look into the possibility of a dedicated traffic light for pedestrians.

Intersection of Main Street and Route 133: Create a safe crossing point of Route 133. This is a very achievable project according to MDOT staff.

Vision: Create a well used, accessible off-road trail network within Winthrop.

Missions:

Education: Promote and publicize the existing trail routes within town including the Mount Pisgah and Roger Guerette Trails. Promote collaboration with local snowmobile / ATV clubs for multi-use trails.

Create connections: Look at options to connect existing trails and popular destinations so that they may be reached by foot. Specifically look at connecting the Mount Pisgah trail to the high school and a Mill Stream Trail to connect Main Street to the public beach area on the lake.

Regional Trails: As a long term project, work toward connecting Winthrop to Augusta, Hallowell and the Kennebec Rail Trail. The route along old trolley track should be considered as part of a regional plan with Maine DOT as well as looking into a route along snow mobile trails, CMP easements or along Route 202. A separate study would be required as there are numerous issues regarding land owners / rights of way etc. Connecting to the Kennebec Rail Trail also creates a connection to the East Coast Greenway that runs right across Maine and beyond.

Vision: Make Winthrop Downtown accessible to all.

Missions:

Widen Sidewalks: Work to widen sidewalks and remove obstructions on existing downtown sidewalks where many users would have difficulty if in a wheelchair / scooter or if pushing a stroller etc.

Leveling routes: Examine parts of downtown sidewalk routes that have raised curbs and other changes of surface level which create problems for users with wheelchairs / scooters or use strollers etc. Look into creating wheelchair access to the Beach at Norcross Point.

Vision: Create a Winthrop Lakes Regional Bike Route

Missions:

Share the road: Using combination of signs, speed limits and where possible designated lanes, to create a safe bicycle route around Maranacook Lake and to other Lakes in the town and region (Annabessacook, Cobbosseecontee,

Narrows Ponds). Maps and descriptions of routes should be created and distributed.

Vision: Winthrop having local regulations and ordinances that support and facilitate a Bicycle and pedestrian friendly Town.

Missions:

Zoning Ordinance: Look at the possibility of including performance standards that encourage Bicycle and pedestrian friendly development. E.g. any new roads must contain sidewalks / bike lanes etc.

Traffic Ordinance: Ensure that the traffic ordinance is updated in line with any changes to crosswalks, intersections and speed limits etc.

Budgeting: Keep Bicycle and pedestrian issues in mind when setting budgets especially relating to maintenance and enforcement of existing facilities and future improvements.

Snow Removal: Snow removal on current and future sidewalks and shoulders should be considered including the appropriation of funds for the Public Works Department to cover the cost of labor and equipment to do this.

Methods for Achieving Missions

After discussions with Maine DOT Staff and Engineers as well as the Chief of Police several methods were identified to help succeed in the stated missions of this Plan:

Road Design

The best way to reduce the speed of traffic and increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists is through design of the roadway. There are numerous methods to do this:

Sidewalks – By far the most effective way to provide safe areas on the roadside is to install new sidewalks; this can be relatively cheap or expensive depending on the drainage requirements of the location.

Narrow Lanes – By marking narrower lanes on problem road areas motorists are generally more likely to slow down when space is tight. Lanes can also be narrowed at specific “pinch points” to create slower traffic. When creating shoulders for cyclists and pedestrian use they must be at least 4ft wide when there is no curb, 5ft wide when a curb is present and at least 6ft wide when there is a barrier.

“Bump Outs” – A dual purpose concept that created a pinch point described above and a safer way to negotiate a crosswalk uses areas of sidewalk that extend into the roadway from both sides, narrowing the road for traffic while allowing pedestrians to be more visible and have a shorter distance to cross the road. (Note that the spaces created can also be used for civic improvements such as benches or planting areas.)



Examples of Bump Out Crosswalks

Speed Bumps – Tradition speed bumps could be used in selected areas to slow traffic. There are problems during winter for snow plow trucks so removable bumps could be an option.

Pavement Markers – Reflective road/pavement markers are a cheap way of reminding motorists of the road lanes, shoulders and sidewalks especially at night.

They can also help increase the visibility of crosswalks and contribute towards the feeling of a “pedestrian environment” where they should be more vigilant.

Pedestrian Refuge Islands – At crosswalks these act to both narrow the roadways and separate lanes of traffic so that crossing is easier and safer.

Pedestrian Activated Rapid Flashing Beacons – For crosswalks across more than two lanes of traffic a light system to stop traffic is required. These act to alert and stop traffic specifically when a pedestrian need to cross the roadway (a button is pressed).

Sidewalk Studies – Specific studies can be undertaken to identify gaps in the sidewalk routes around town as well as an ADA study to determine impediments to those with limited mobility.

Note regarding Crosswalks: Maine DOT has a policy concerning crosswalks that effect possible methods in Winthrop.

- Roads must be designated as 35mph or less
- There must be a safe landing area for pedestrians (e.g. a sidewalk)
- There must be sufficient sight distance in both directions
- There must be only two lanes of traffic

For this reason a crosswalk is not a possibility over Route 202 seeing as the speed limit is too high.

Signs

Signs can be effective if utilized correctly. There can be a propensity for motorists to become immune to signs especially if seen on a regular basis and become familiar. There are some options however:

Flashing Light Speed Limit signs – This is a basic way to highlight the speed limit at problem locations and remind motorists. Lights can be solar powered in most instances to make installation easier and cost lower.

Road Surface signs / Artwork – Painting symbols such as bicycles, footprints, even dog paws etc within Bicycle and pedestrian areas (mainly designated lanes / shoulders) can help motorists to recognize that they are likely to encounter people walking or cycling and they can slow down and give space accordingly. Also painting MDOT approved signs in the center of roads such as large bicycle symbols, will help to alert drivers to the presence of cyclists even where there are no dedicated lanes available.

Off Road Signs – General signs that are not on/in the road way (they may be located on roadside land etc) can promote the ethos of “Winthrop – We Play Outside!” and help to create the overall attitude for motorist that they need to slow down and be expecting to see cyclist and pedestrians in town. Residents can opt to place signs on their own property (similar to political signs etc) with the message and the town can purchase several movable signs that can be placed at appropriate locations and move on occasion in order to prevent signs becoming invisible to drivers.

Note on Signs – All signs on or within the roadway must be official and approved by the Maine DOT.

Speed Limits / Enforcement

Attempting to improve Bicycle and pedestrian safety by adjusting speed limits would be problematic as any changes would have to go through the Maine DOT and require studies that last a long time and not necessarily guarantee a lowering of the limit. Research has shown that the speed limit itself does not directly affect safety but any differential in the speed of vehicles does. Enforcement of speed limits would have some benefit however. Creating a reputation of strict enforcement within the town would be a great deterrent to speeders (Water Street in Hallowell is noted by many as an area where you know to obey the speed limit dues to strict enforcement by local police.)

Speed Monitoring System for Police – Equipment can be purchased that helps the local Police identify certain areas and times in town where the speed limit is being broken frequently so they can target areas for more efficient use of their time and resources.

Education

An important focus of this plan is the town wide education of residents about using bicycle and pedestrian routes safely as well as motorists respecting them and making them safer. Working with schoolchildren is the most effective way of creating a long lasting change in knowledge and attitudes. The Safe Routes to School Program exemplifies this by utilizing education as part of the “5 Es” – Education, Encouragement, Evaluation, Enforcement, and Engineering. Individually and collectively, these strategies can greatly increase the number of people safely walking and biking within the town and specifically to and from school. Some specific educational ideas for within the towns schools include but are not limited to the following:

- Organize a Pedestrian and Bike Safety Rodeo and/or In-Class Pedestrian & Bike Safety Instruction through the Bicycle Coalition of
- Include Pedestrian and Bike Riding Practice and Education Within the Physical Education Curriculum

- Start a Youth Bike Club
- Include Alternate Transportation Education as Part of Place-Based/Expeditionary Learning Curricula
- Organize Walking School Buses and Bike Trains
- Hold a Multi-Week or Year-Long Contest for Walking and Biking
- Encourage Walking Field Trips.
- Offer Incentives for Walkers and Bike Drivers Who Are Following the Rules and Driving Safely

Possible Funding Sources for Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

The following MDOT can provide funding for bike and pedestrian improvements.

Quality Communities Program

Transportation Enhancement Program

- 80/20 funding
- safety and education programs
- bike and pedestrian facilities
 - paved sidewalks and shoulders on minor collectors or local roads
 - new sidewalks on arterials and major collectors with closed drainage
 - bike lane stripping
 - bike parking facilities and bike racks

Safe Routes to School

- up to 100% funding
- infrastructure within 2 miles of schools to substantially improve safety of students to walk or bike to school
 - sidewalks
 - traffic calming
 - crossings
 - on-street bike facilities
 - off-street bike and pedestrian facilities
 - traffic diversion near K-8 schools

Safe Routes to School Resources - www.MaineSafeRoutes.org

- Darcy Whittemore, Central, Western, Northern, and Mid-Coast Regions, *Maine Safe Routes to School Program*; saferoutes@bikemaine.org, 623-4511

Go Maine

- 80/20 funding
- bike racks with capacities of 2, 6 or 8 bikes

General MDOT road improvements

Route 41 from its intersection with Route 133 is scheduled for improvement work in the 2012-13 work plans.

Other Possible Funding:

Community Development Block Grant Program
(Community Enterprise, Public Infrastructure)
Contact Gail Chase, KVCOG

Department of Conservation
Recreational Trails Program – Up to \$30K grants available
<http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks/programs/community/trailsfund.html>

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

Bikes Belong Coalition
<http://www.bikesbelong.org/grants>

Local bond funding