Rail Trails and NHDOT Bureau of Rail & Transit's Role

2023 NHRTC Conference





10/26/2023

NHDOT – NHDNCR Coordination

Rail Trail Plan State Actions Updates

- Bi-monthly NHDOT NHDNCR leadership meetings
 - Redefining Existing State Staffing Resources for Rail Trail Ownership & Managemen
 - Segmentation of State ownership & management by predominant current & near-term use
 - DOT = Everyday transportation & active RR lines (rail with trail)
 - DNCR = Recreational
 - Dedicated State Rail Trail Funding (operating budget, capital funds for maintenance, etc.)
- Monthly NHDOT Bureau of Rail & Transit NHDNCR Trails Bureau meetings
 - More detailed, corridor and project specific
 - Upcoming work, schedules, projects, etc.







Conversion from Rail to a Rail Trail

- NHDOT Bureau of Rail & Transit Guidance
- If approved, sponsoring entity (Municipality or DCNR) responsible • for:
 - Entering into a Rail Trail Agreement with NHDOT (rare, but ٠ possible ownership transfer)
 - Surface Transportation Board actions & fees (for State & RR) •
 - Survey (before any construction work) •
 - Trail design & engineering plans submitted to & approved by ٠ Rail & Transit (adherence to Engineering Typicals)
 - Construction coordination (requires Temporary Use ٠ Agreement)
 - Rail removal salvage reusable rail & OTM back to • NHDOT
 - Tie removal & disposal in accordance with rules/laws





NH Department of Transportation Bureau of Rail & Transit

REQUESTING A RAIL TRAIL AGREEMENT WITHE TATE-OWNED RAILROAD RIGHTS-OF-WAY: ABANDONED RAILROAD CORRIDO

The following requirements must be met prior to approval and construction of a recreational rail trail, for nor notorized recreational use only, on portions, or the entirety of, an abandoned state-owned railroad corridor

- Railroad corridors, or portions of them, are considered abandoned whe · The NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) Bureau of Rail & Transit (Bureau) has determined that
- there will be no rail service in the near-term on specific sections of railroad corridors; and NHDOT has obtained formal abandonment approval from the Surface Transportation Board (S

ific section of a railroad corridor is formally abandoned, it can be co levelopment into a rail trail at the discretion of the Bureau and would require that each municipality in which the corridor is located, and on which the rail trail would be constructed, to enter into a Rail Trail Agreement with the Bureau. The issuance of a Rail Trail Agreement would be predicated on several requirements bein met, a summary of which is provided below

- 1. The party requesting the Rail Trail Agreement must be the local municipality in which the railroad a. Note: This may require multiple municipalities to enter into separate Rail Trail Agreements to
- create a contiguous corridor. The terrain and available railroad right-of-way must be suitable for this type of proje
- There must not be legal or statutory prohibitions against joint use of this section of rail line; The municipality must obtain proper property liability insurance as required by the State;
- The municipality must agree to be responsible for:
- Hiring and paying for a licensed surveyor to pro other track materials are removed
 - All costs and improvements to the railroad corridor necessary for its use as a rail tra i. This will include the municipality, or its contractor, submitting trail construct
 - (that are stamped, signed & dated by a licensed Professional Engineer) ii. All entities that need to access or work in the railroad right-of-way, whether for planning trail design, or trail construction must enter into a Temporary Use Agreement (TUA) with
 - utine rail trail maintenance throughout the terms of the Agreemen
- Daily management, operation, and oversight of the use of the rail trail, including enforcing appropriate uses by means of police or security personnel to properly patrol and control use of the proposed rail-trail: and
- The municipality must agree that in the event the State or Department determines that the railroad rridor is needed for a railroad or other transportation purposes and the incorporation of the trail is not feasible, the Department retains the right to require the closure or removal of the rail trail.

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(Active) Rail with Trail

- NHDOT Bureau of Rail & Transit Guidance
- If approved, sponsoring entity (Municipality or DCNR) responsible for:
 - Entering into Rail Trail Agreement with NHDOT
 - Trail design & engineering plans submitted to & approved by Rail & Transit
 - Adherence to Engineering Typicals
 - Address ROW constraints
 - May need to construct separate trail infrastructure (bridges) within corridor or trail may need to go off corridor based on constraints
 - Construction coordination with NHDOT and Operating Railroad (requires Temporary Use Agreement)
 - Maintenance, enforcement, property management assistance

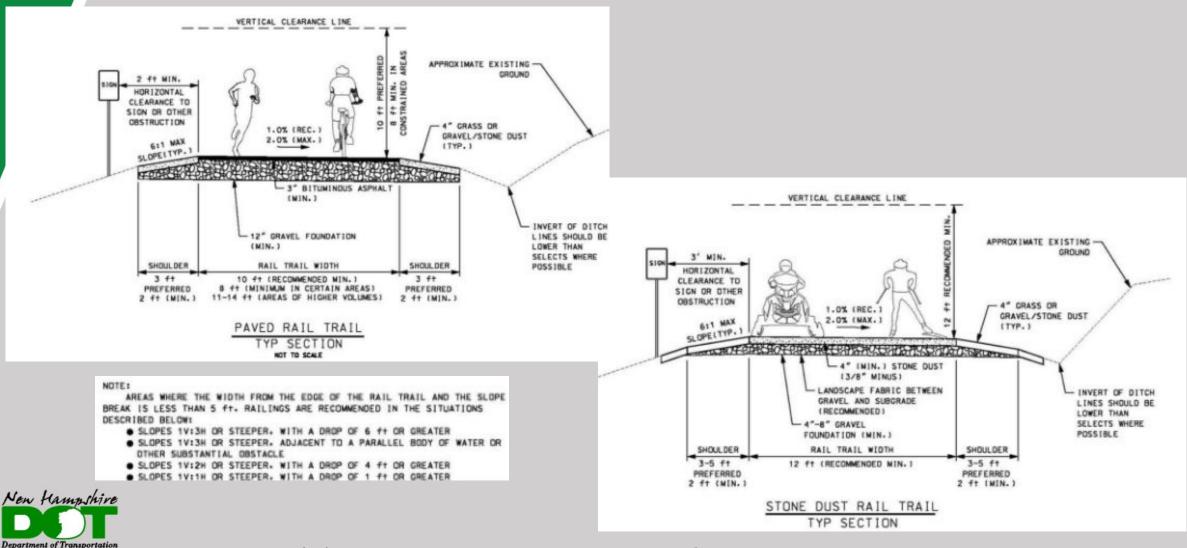






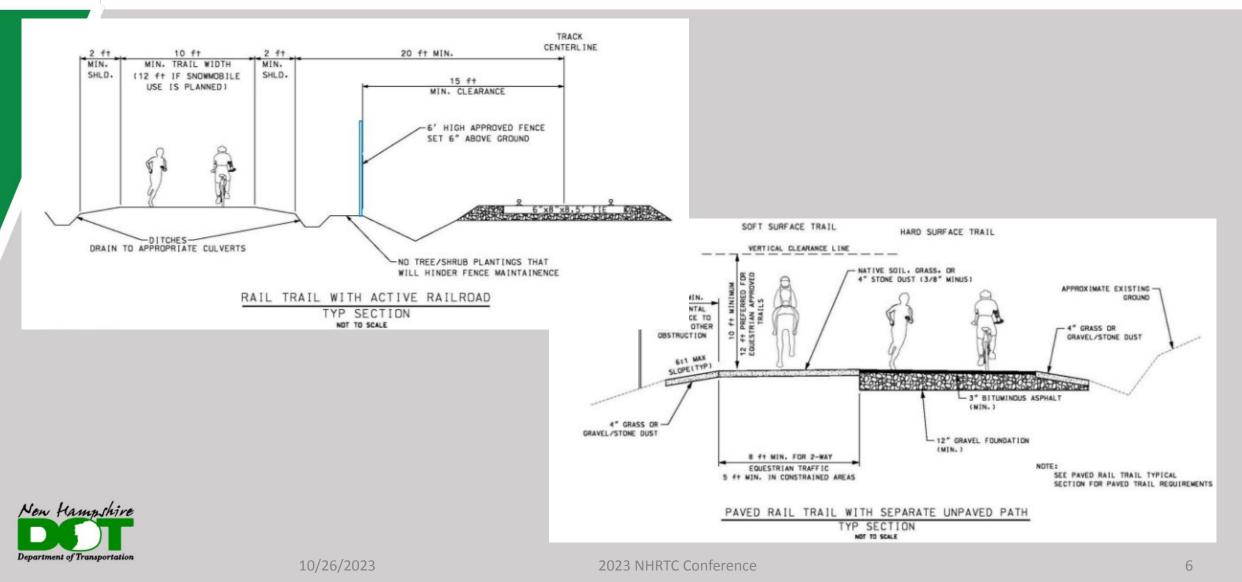


2022 NH Rail Trails Plan



10/26/2023

2022 NH Rail Trails Plan



Design Criteria

"For abandoned corridors owned by NHDOT, interim trail use and improvement must not unreasonably limit the ability to restore rail service over the right-of-way, at minimum cost, if such service were to be restored in the future."

-2022 Rail Trails Plan (p. 81)

Highlights the importance of establishing, obtaining concurrence on and documenting design criteria, such as.....

<u>Vertical Clearance</u>

RSA 373:39 – "No overhead bridge or other structure shall hereafter be constructed across a railroad track in this state with less than 22 feet between the top of the rails and the lowest point of the overhead structure, except with written consent of the Department of Transportation..."

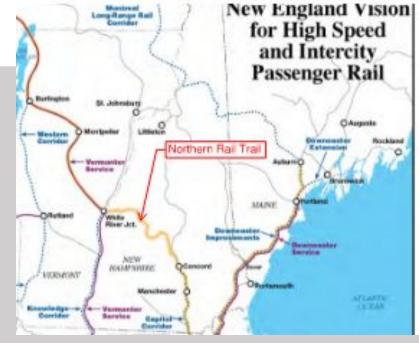
Horizontal Clearance (centerline of track to face of abutment)

NH DOT Bridge Manual 12/21 feet, the later of which to include a 10' access and maintenance road

Profile (vertical alignment)



Perpetuate the existing grades of the railroad corridor to avoid substantial future earthwork



Other Considerations

- Bureau may have granted easements or agreements that allow a segment of trail to be used for access, which may require particular design features, such as a deeper foundation or wider path.
- Improvements need to consider Railroad Impacted Soils (required as part of most Temporary Use Agreement issued by the Department). All railroad corridors have the high potential for soil contamination in the ballast and



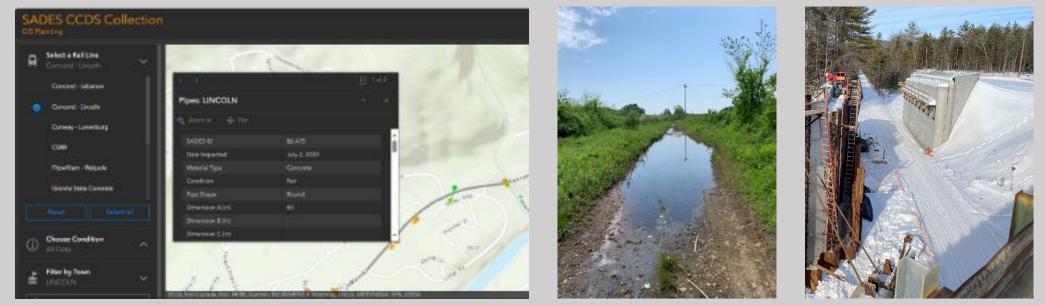
slope materials, referred to as impacted soils. The NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) requires specific handling of this material. There are typically two options to address these potentially contaminated soils, when excavation is required:

- Reuse within the existing NHDOT Railroad ROW in an approved location that must be above the water table, not on a steep slope, doesn't overlay/contaminate the existing railroad stone ballast and doesn't interfere with drainage ditchlines, or
- Test and dispose of properly offsite per all NH Department of Environmental Services rules (solid waste)



Other Considerations

- Evaluate existing infrastructure conditions and needs to consider long term performance and ensure the investments (both railroad and trail improvements) are preserved.
- Consider the approach to constructing improvements, such as how trail use/access might be impacted by construction, if any diversions or alternative routes are available, or if the trail will be required to remain open during construction.



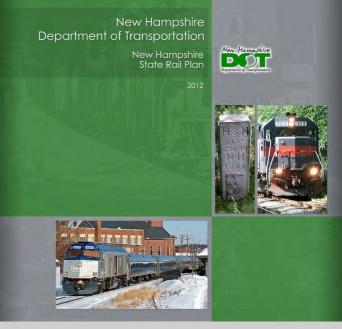


NH State Rail Plan Update

"The purpose of the NH State Rail Plan is to identify and evaluate issues and opportunities related to rail transportation in the State." -2012 NH State Rail Plan (p. 1)

- The update will target the same general purpose while considering changes in the industry and State needs.
- Includes a comprehensive outreach and coordination program, soliciting information and input from various public and private sector stakeholders, including:
 - Four (4) Advocacy Groups (including NHRTC)
 - Seven (7) Federal, State and Regional Partners
 - Ten (10) Railroad Operators (including passenger and freight)
 - Five (5) Shippers
- Through this process, we will work to set the vision, goals and objectives of the Rail Plan, and subsequently identify system needs and opportunities.
- Target completion is Fall 2024





Thank You!

Contacts

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