

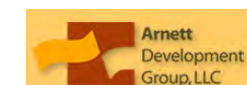
# RECREATION PLAN

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## LONDONDERRY CONSERVATION LAND

Prepared For:  
Londonderry Conservation Commission  
Londonderry, New Hampshire

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With assistance from the  
Londonderry Department of Planning and  
Economic Development

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## INTRODUCTION

Londonderry's conservation policies began to take root in 1969 when the Londonderry Conservation Commission (LCC) was founded. In the ensuing years, the Town has taken an aggressive stance in conserving its natural and cultural resources. Thoughtful purchases of land and conservation easements has enabled the Town to protect the quality of its waterways and aquifers; maintain important storm water control measures; influence air quality; and provide excellent outdoor recreational opportunities. The purchase of conservation easements has also protected prime agricultural land well into the future. All of these efforts are critical to the development of a healthy, rewarding and sustainable quality of life for Londonderry and its citizens.

**The purpose of this report is to reinforce the Town's ongoing conservation efforts by providing an informed overview of recreational opportunities on Londonderry's conservation land.** The Town of Londonderry manages approximately 1,693 acres of open space and is responsible for monitoring and enforcing conservation easements on 1,104 acres (2,797 acres total)<sup>1</sup>. The majority of this land can be used by the public for passive recreation such as hiking, snowshoeing and nature observation. However, wetlands, steep terrain, and a limited or lack of access from a public right-of-way limits the potential to enhance many areas for recreational purposes.

To determine if a tract of conservation land held potential for enhanced recreational use by the general public the following criteria was established:

- The site should be owned by the Town of Londonderry or, as in the case of the Ingersoll-Bockes land and Moose Hill Orchards, the general public is currently welcome to use existing trails and resources.
- The site needed to be large enough to accommodate recreational activities, including parking and at least one point of public access without threatening wildlife habitat or sensitive ecological areas. Five (5) acres was established as a minimum tract size.
- The site must be accessible from a public right-of-way.
- Active development of recreational use on the conservation land would not compromise the quality of life for adjacent neighbors.
- The physical character of the site should be conducive to passive recreational uses such as hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

It was determined that twenty-two (22) conservation areas met some or all of the above criteria and were selected for an initial assessment. Of the twenty-two (22), eleven (11) were eliminated for one or more reasons. The remaining eleven (11) areas were further investigated. This report provides a detailed assessment of the those areas.

In addition to assessing the conservation land noted above, the report also looked at opportunities to unify the Town's open space system via a network of connected trails and bikeways aimed at connecting disparate tracts. The combined analysis provides a solid foundation for making informed decisions regarding the long-term enhancement of recreational opportunities on Londonderry's conservation land.

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1 Final report of the 2010-11 Londonderry Open Space Task Force; adopted July 7, 2011

**Selected Conservation Land**

Adams Pond/Moose Hill Orchards

Beaver Brook

Kendall Pond Conservation Area

Musquash

Scobie Pond

West Road Athletic Fields





Adams Pond/Moose Hill Orchards

This conservation site is a privately owned, working orchard, thereby limiting the Conservation Commission's ability to implement recreation enhancements without the consent of the owner. However, visitors are welcome and the owners have enhanced the recreation experience by developing a series of themed trails. They have also placed several picnic tables throughout the site and have developed features such as the Hilltop Gazebo and the Peace Pole. During the winter, the owners maintain a cross-country ski trails and encourage snowshoeing.

#### Pedestrian Access

On-site parking is limited and visitors are requested to park either at the Morrison House, headquarters of the Londonderry Historical Society, or the orchard parking lot adjacent to Mack's Apples farm stand. Consequently, pedestrian access to the Adams Pond Conservation Area requires visitors to cross either Pillsbury or Mammoth roads. Both roads serve a high volume of traffic and the lack of marked pedestrian crossings places visitors at risk, especially children and those with mobility limitations. It is important that the Conservation Commission work with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to develop a safe crossing over Mammoth Road (in the vicinity of Mack's Apples) and with the Department of Public Works to develop a safe crossing over Pillsbury Road (in the vicinity of the Morrison House). Consideration should be given to the installation of a controlled pedestrian crossing consisting of a marked crosswalk and yellow flashing light that enables pedestrians to activate the system as needed.






#### Trailhead

In addition to developing crosswalks, the Conservation Commission should explore the development of a formal trailhead on Town owned land across from the Morrison House. A trailhead at this location could also serve the trails and activities within the Town Forest. Amenities might include two or three picnic tables and some interpretive signage highlighting the historical character of the forest and Town Common as well as the orchards.

In addition to developing a trailhead, it is recommended that the Conservation Commission work with the Town and adjacent neighbors to improve pedestrian connections to the Adams Pond and the neighborhood to the west. The Town owns a parcel of land at the head of Hampshire Lane and a series of undeveloped public right-of-ways along Wilshire Dr. have the potential to link the neighborhood to trails in the south orchard block.

#### Envisioned Enhancements

-  Controlled Crosswalks (3)
-  Improve Area Neighborhood Connections
-  New Trailhead

## Adams Pond/Moose Hill Orchards





## BEAVER BROOK



The Beaver Brook site offers excellent potential for recreational development. The site consists of two parcels totaling 31.3 acres and is located 500' east of the intersection of Gilcreast Road and Tokanel Drive. The land is mainly wooded, consisting of native conifers such as white pine and eastern hemlock, as well as a mix of native hardwoods: mainly oak, beech and maple. The under story consists of a mix of woody shrubs and native groundcovers. The majority of the site is upland and dry. Beaver Brook flows through the southeast portion of the site.

The terrain is variable and what slopes do exist are quite manageable. The area could easily accommodate the development of a central picnic area as well as a scattering of isolated picnic tables. A gravel road bisects the site and is wide enough to adequately handle two way traffic. The access is in excellent shape and would require minimal improvement. Small parking areas or "slots" could easily be developed to accommodate isolated picnic tables.

Beaver Brook runs adjacent to or through the entire two parcels. It is reasonably deep and appears to be navigable most of the year. There are several points along the brook that offer reasonable opportunity for the launching of canoes, kayaks and other small craft. Beaver Brook continues toward the southwest, passing through state owned land and the Kendall Conservation Area, eventually connecting to Kendall Pond located at the intersection of Kendall Pond Rd and South Rd.

The State of New Hampshire has recently constructed wetlands on an adjacent parcel of land to mitigate wetlands disturbed by the I-93 expansion project. The newly constructed wetlands offer an excellent environmental education opportunity.

### Envisioned Enhancements

- Develop a gated entrance on Gilcreast Road. Enhance the entrance with stone piers, signage, lighting, and landscape improvements.
- Designate a picnic area with a pavilion and small play area for group gatherings.
- Provide 15-20 picnic tables scattered throughout the area for individual and family picnics.
- Develop short loop trails with interpretive signage.
- Develop an area for safe launch of canoes and kayaks into Beaver Brook.
- Develop an Environmental Interpretive Station with seasonal exhibits.
- Enhance the public's understanding of the natural and built environment by collaborating with the State of New Hampshire to develop a self-guided interpretive trail of the newly created wetland mitigation site.



# Kendall Pond Conservation Area

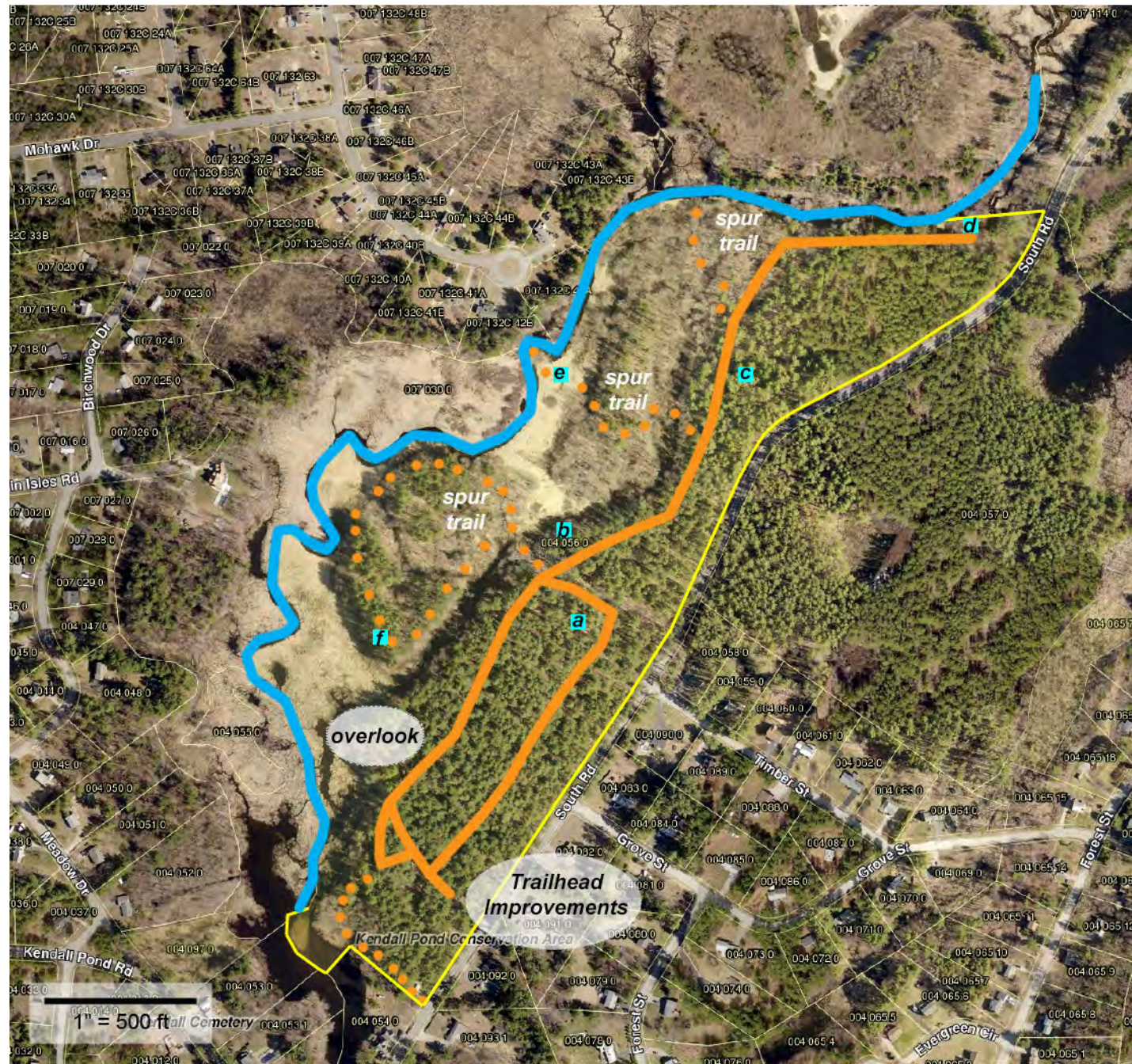
## Envisioned Enhancements

### Enhance existing trailhead and parking area

- Erect decorative fencing along South Road and improve signage along South Road to better announce the entrance to parking area
- Improve visibility into parking area from South Road; clear under-story of shrubs, small trees and debris to allow for better visibility into parking area.
- Install lighting within the parking area
- Improve existing signage and kiosk for enhanced presentation of recreational opportunities within the conservation area as well as for posting Rules and Regulations.
- Increase monitoring and visible presence of local police at trailhead

### Recreational Enhancements

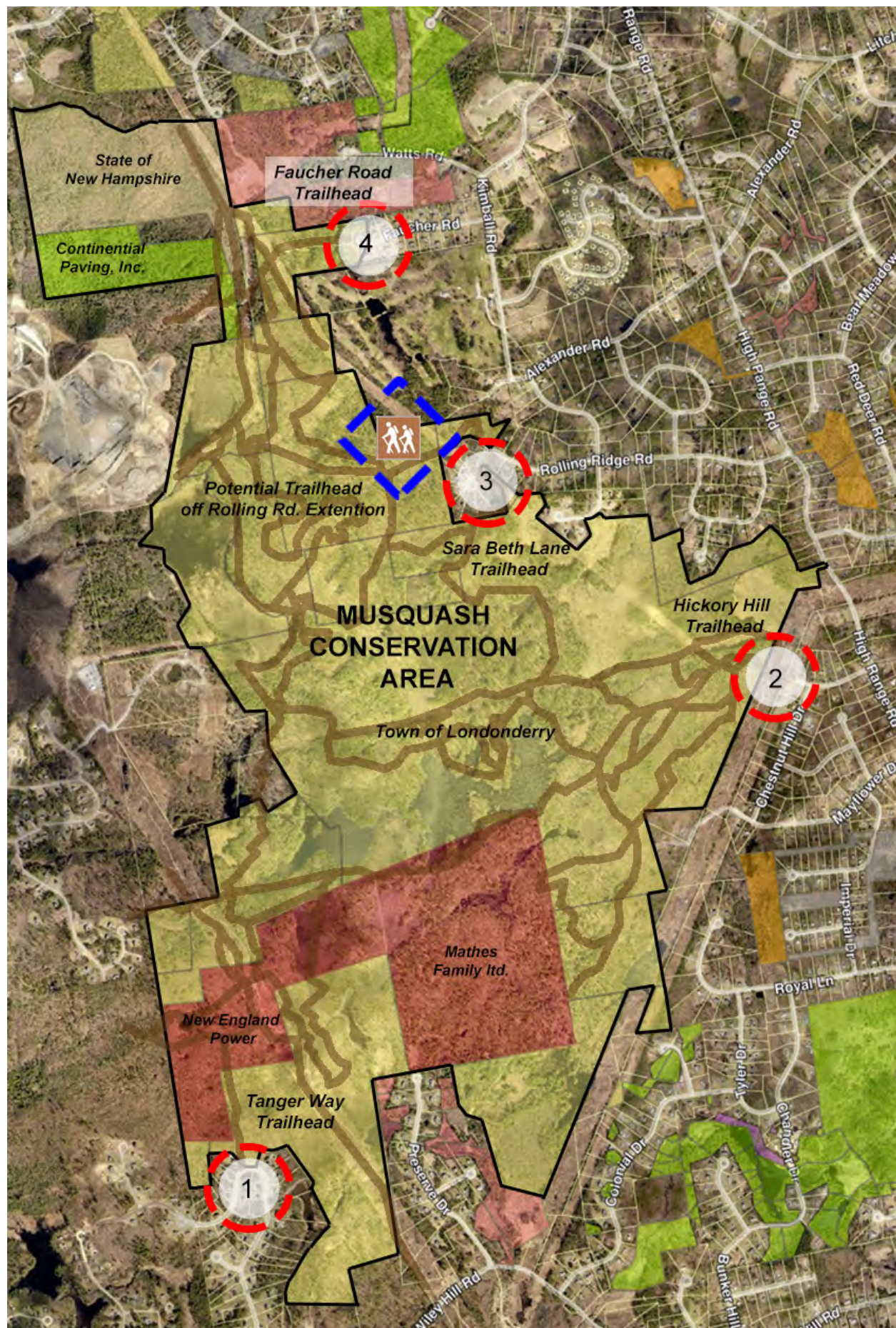
- Create a series of designated spur trails to facilitate better access to northwest region of the site
- Where necessary, develop foot bridges and boardwalks to allow for year around access into wetter areas of the site
- Construct wooden observation platforms at various locations within the park to allow for better opportunities for wildlife observation or scenic enjoyment of the wetter areas.
- Improve the interpretive signage within the conservation area; consider a joint educational opportunity with schools or local organizations; consider seasonal exhibits depicting the conservation area; host an annual art show exhibiting the work of local painters and photographers
- Provide more seating opportunities along the trail either through the addition of more benches or the strategic placement of suitable boulders or natural elements such as tree stumps
- Consider the addition of 3-4 more picnic tables and the enhancement of the picnic area adjacent to the parking lot and trail head



## Kendall Pond Conservation Area

The landscape within the Kendall Pond Conservation Area is spectacular. The site is large, fifty-seven acres (57) but its configuration and extensive amount of wet areas limit recreational opportunities. There is an existing trail system in place, consisting of two main loops: the Yellow Loop and the Blue Loop trails. The trails are well maintained and are accessible throughout the year. A trailhead and parking area is located on South Road. Visibility into the trailhead area needs to be improved to allow for better monitoring of the parking area by police and passers by.





## The Musquash Conservation Area

The Musquash Conservation Area is a beloved and well maintained community open space, but lacks a memorable sense of arrival at any of its four main entrances. This belies the quality of the area and the recreational experience it offers.

There are four (4) principal entrances to the Musquash Conservation Area, all located on dead-end residential streets. Signage and other amenities vary with each location. The Hickory Hill (2) and Tanager (1) entrances have semi-designated off-road parking areas but much of the parking occurs along the edges of the road.

Hickory Hill seems to be the most popular entrance, especially with those arriving by automobile. However, the parking and arrival area are separated from the conservation area by a power line right-of-way. This limits the development of a more formal entrance and trailhead at this location.

Sara Beth Lane (3) entrance seems to be the least memorable of the four. Parking is limited to the edge of the road. This location lacks a distinct trailhead and the connector trail is somewhat long and circuitous. However in this same area, a right of way exists at the end of Rolling Ridge Road that would allow direct access into the recreation area. The entrance road would cross the power line right-of-way and terminate at a level area within the Musquash where a series of existing trails are currently located. The terrain and soils are suitable and would easily accommodate a small parking area (10-15 cars), a small pavilion, a kiosk and other amenities. The development of a defined trailhead would greatly enhance the sense of procession and arrival to the Musquash.



1. TANAGER WAY TRAILHEAD



2. HICKORY HILL TRAILHEAD



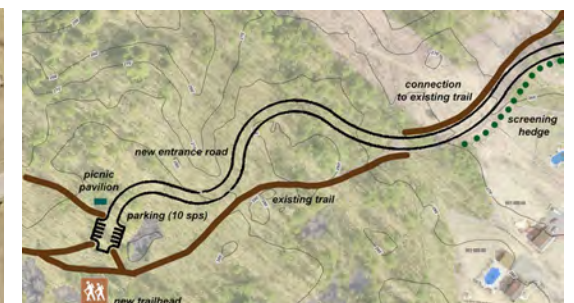
An existing Right-of-Way at the end of Rolling Ridge Road may allow for the development of a formal trailhead and entrance to the Musquash.



3. SARA BETH TRAILHEAD

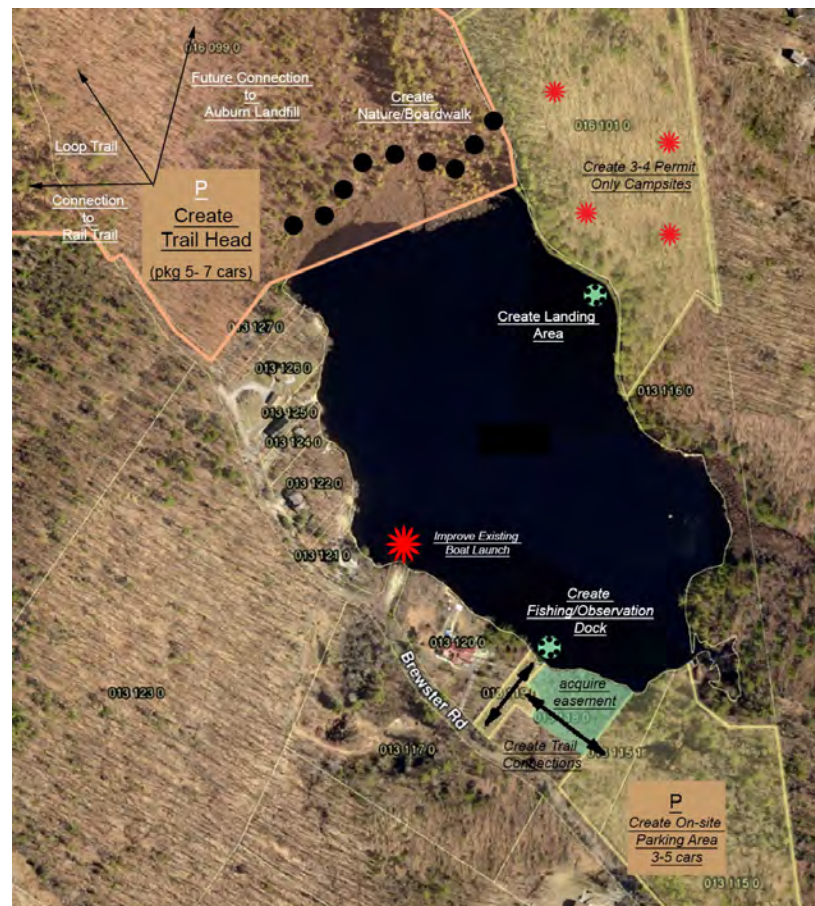
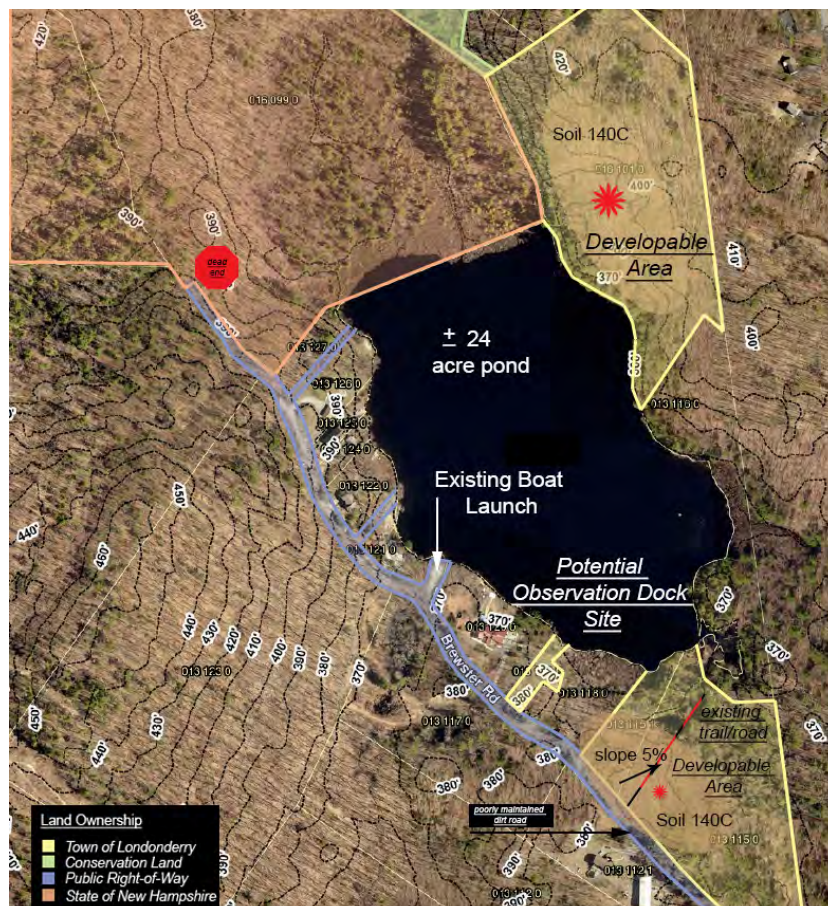


4. FAUCHER TRAILHEAD



The terrain allows for the development of a short entrance road and future development of a trailhead within the Musquash.





## Scobie Pond



View of the northeast shoreline

### Site Investigation

Scobie Pond is very picturesque and peaceful. Covering approximately 24 acres, Scobie Pond is the largest body of open water within the Town of Londonderry. It is located in the northeast section of the town and can be accessed from Brewster Road. The pond is surrounded on three sides by undeveloped land, the majority of which is owned by the Town of Londonderry and the State of New Hampshire. A portion of the northeast shoreline is owned privately. Several homes are located along the southwest shoreline. The town owns approximately 12 acres of woodland at the pond's southern tip. Direct access to the pond is somewhat limited in this area due to the limited amount of shoreline and wetland constraints. The town also owns another 13 acres of woodland on the northeast shore of the property. A small boat launch is located off Brewster Road and provides accommodation for launching small craft such as canoes and kayaks. However, the boat launch area is small, which limits the maneuvering of vehicles with boat trailers.

In the early twentieth century the pond was three times its existing size and noted to be a very popular fishing spot. The pond has an average depth of 12' and a maximum depth of 26'. Fishing is still reported to be good with the pond containing Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Bluegill, Pumpkinseed, Brown Bullhead, Black Crappie, Chain Pickerel, and Yellow Perch.

The pond is ideal for canoeing, kayaking, and fishing. Swimming is limited because there is not a designated beach, nor are there any life guards or safety personnel stationed at the pond..

### Envisioned Enhancements

- Improve boat ramp and launch area. Provide better signage and site amenities including a picnic table and bench.
- Develop a trailhead on the Town owned land at southern tip of pond. Provide an area for limited parking (3-5 cars with boat trailers)
- Acquire easement to connect town owned parcels along southwest shoreline to provide additional shore frontage adjacent to the proposed trailhead and parking area
- Develop a series 3-4 permit-only wilderness camp sites on town owned land along the northeast shore.
- Coordinate with the State of New Hampshire to develop a trail system connecting State owned land and Town owned land.





## West Road Athletic Fields



### Envisioned Enhancements

- Improve the existing loop trail connecting the northern and southern recreational areas. Develop an improved accessible walking surface suitable for strollers, wheelchairs and individuals with mobility issues.
- Create a scenic overlook on the high ground bordering the northeast athletic fields.
- Improve recreational opportunities associated with the existing pond and adjacent land owned by the Town of Londonderry. Consider the development of a series of interpretive stations describing the wetland habitat.
- Explore opportunities to connect the West Road Fields to the Musquash Conservation Area by extending a trail across the pond, eventually connecting to Wiley Hill Rd.



### Site Investigation

The West Road Fields consists of several athletic fields that serve the needs of the community's youth soccer program and other athletic events. Located in the southwest corner of the town, the park is a significant outdoor open space. The area is a reclaimed "borrow pit", and is comprised of two sections informally connected by a well-worn path. The park is surrounded by undeveloped land, owned primarily by the Elwood family and the Public Service Company of New Hampshire. A residential neighborhood is located to the south and southwest of the park across West Road. Within the park there is approximately 18 acres of conservation land buffering a stream and wetland.

Aside from the athletic fields, there are few amenities within the park. However, opportunity exists to enhance the area with the development of a series of trails circulating throughout the park connecting with the trails on adjacent open land, i.e. the right-of-way under the power line and a parcel of undeveloped town owned land to the northwest. Another opportunity to enhance a user's experience would be to provide better access to existing pond. While the pond offers limited opportunities for boating, it can be improved for canoes and kayaks. The quality of fishing the pond is undetermined, but it does offer opportunity for casual fishing and open water for those interested in improving their casting abilities. Other opportunities may exist for model boating (remote control toy units) or other passive, water related recreational activities.

The athletic fields in the northeast section of the park are bordered by a large, steep bank. While the bank is difficult to negotiate there is opportunity to create a trail to the high ground overlooking the ballfields. The development of an overlook would not only provide spectacular views of the games below but also an opportunity to capture scenic off-site views to the northwest.



## **Londonderry Open Space Networks**

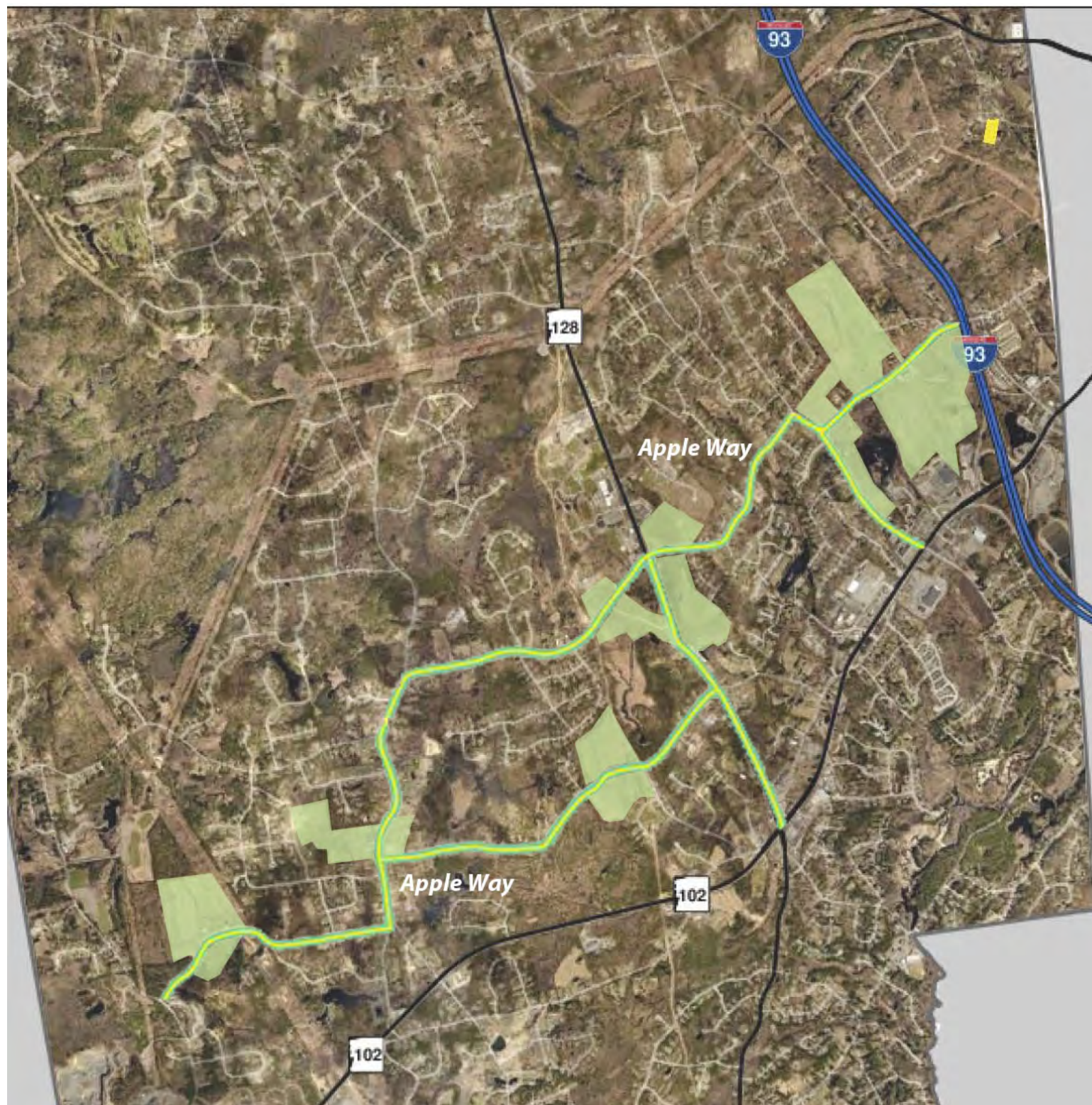
Rail Trail

Apple Way

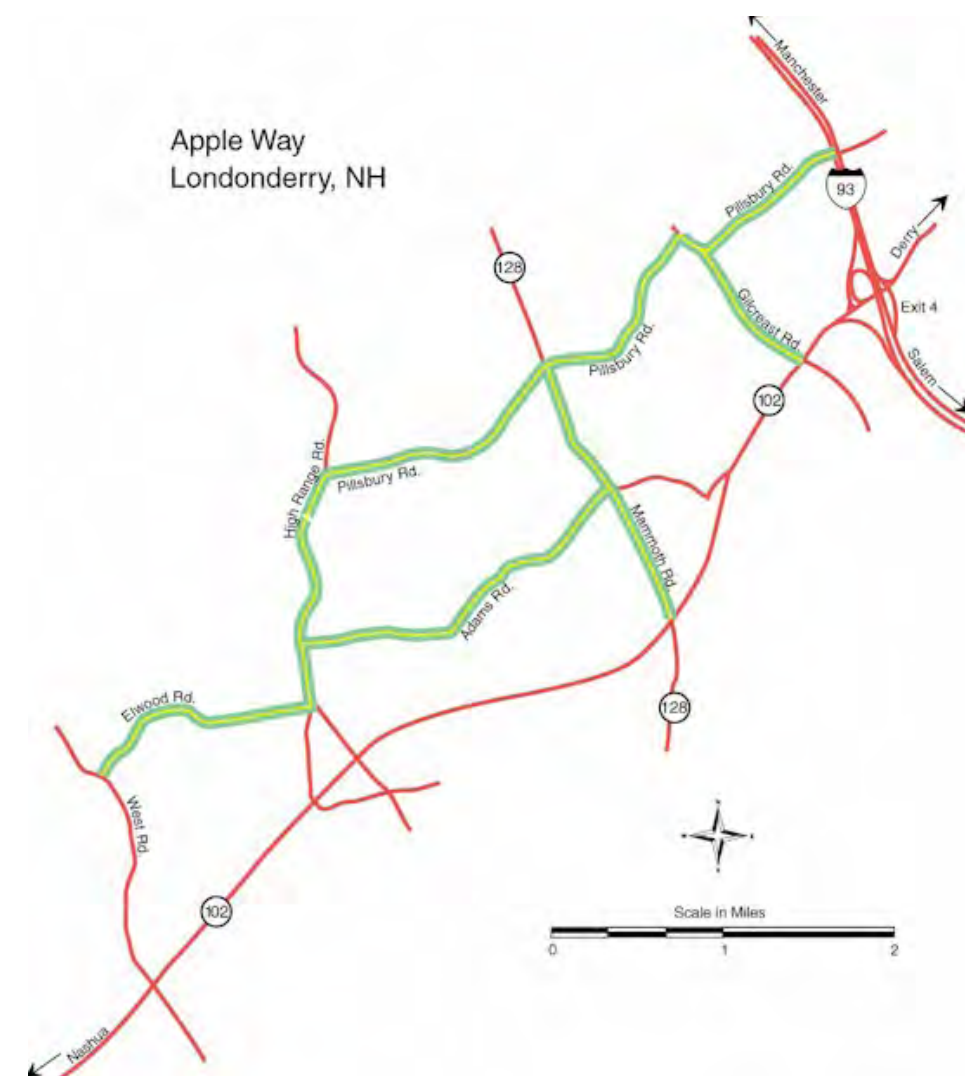
Dragonfly Way

Public Rights-of-Ways





## Apple Way



### APPLE WAY

Apple Way is an important cultural resource and a part of the statewide Scenic Byways program. In Londonderry, it connects several of the Town's remaining apple orchards and community open spaces. While the byway affords an enjoyable motoring experience, it is not conducive to pedestrian or bicycle activities. The road is relatively narrow and in some areas, the shoulder is non-existent.

An effort should be made to develop a comprehensive bike-way or shared use path along the Apple Way. This will provide locals with an enjoyable and safe cycling route and possibly attract more tourists to the community. The future enhancement of Apple Way can contribute to the preservation of Londonderry's rich agricultural heritage.





The above diagram illustrates the potential development of Dragonfly Way. The green line represents Dragonfly Way. Also depicted is the future development at Woodmont, the Pillsbury and Pinkerton Cemeteries and conservation land adjacent to the Old Trolley Line (a proposed trail system, see Section 4).

## Dragonfly Way

A Class Six road runs between Trolley Car Lane and Kitt Lane. The road has not been maintained in many years, but the right-of-way is still in force. Local residents named the road “Dragonfly Way” when the town was developing the emergency response system. The route provides an excellent opportunity to connect several neighborhoods while at the same time offering a pleasant walking and biking experience. Due to its proximity to the future Woodmont development, Dragonfly Way will play an important role in keeping pedestrian and bicyclists off of Pillsbury Road, which can be hazardous to pedestrian passage.

Dragonfly Way can also serve an important role in developing a comprehensive hiking/biking loop system throughout the Town of Londonderry. Originating at the intersection of Trolley Car Lane and the proposed Trolley Car Line byway (see section below), Dragonfly Way will help connect several neighborhoods while also proving area residents a safe and direct connection to the schools and open spaces in the Town Center.

The comprehensive development of Dragonfly Way illustrates the effectiveness of revitalizing class six roads, as well as, unbuilt dedicated right-of-ways. These unused resources could provide vital links between existing neighborhoods and community open spaces. If enhanced creatively, right-of-ways can also serve as linear, neighborhood “pocket parks” offering a pleasant pedestrian/bicycle passage while also providing opportunity for the integration of benches, public artwork and other amenities that would enhance and enrich the lives of local residents.

## Dragonfly Way



The above diagram illustrates the critical role Dragonfly Way (green) can serve in linking existing neighborhoods (gray tone) and the future development at Woodmont (maroon) to the open spaces at the Town Center. The red dots represent the development of existing right-of-ways into linear pocket parks and shared use pathways.

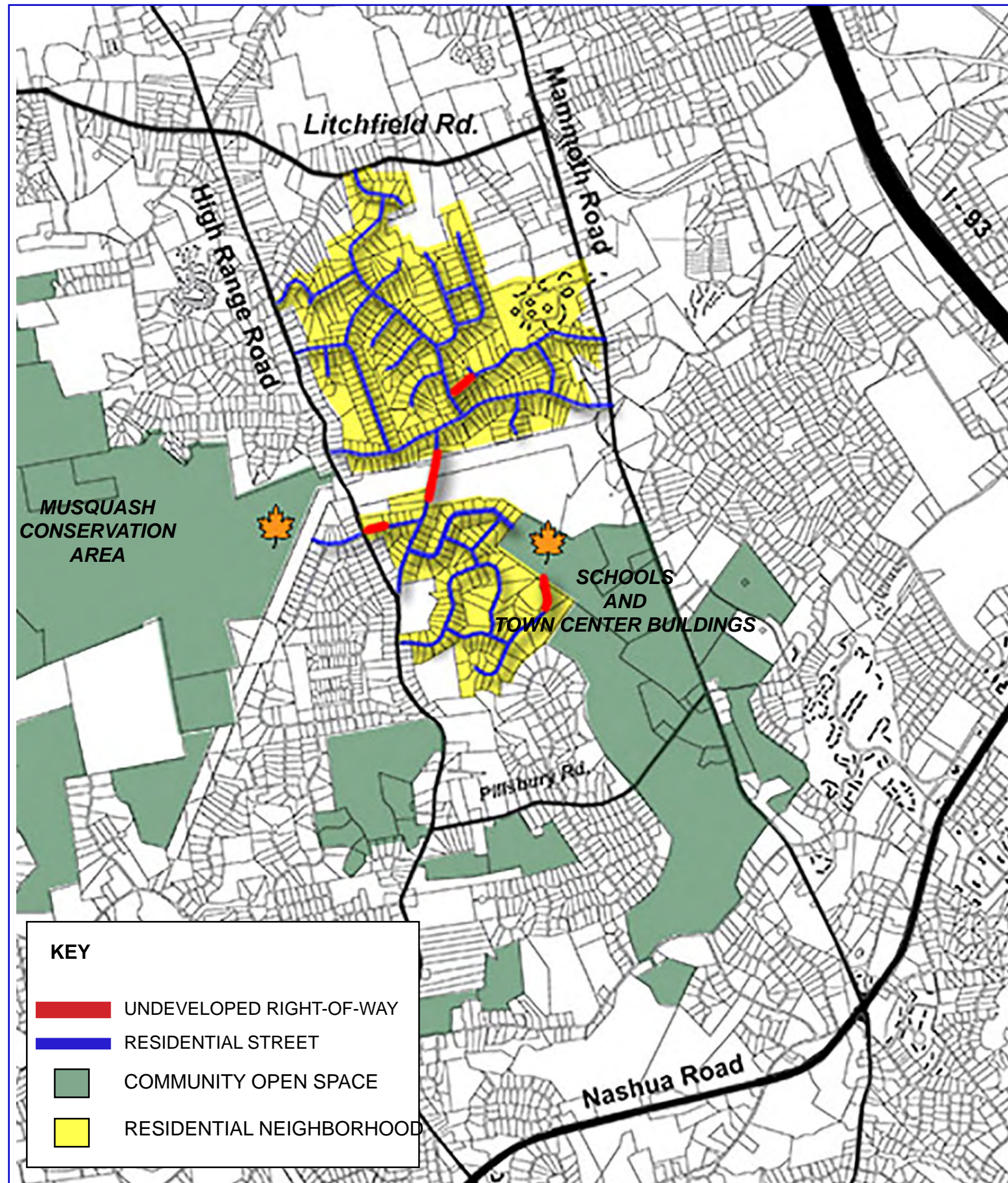




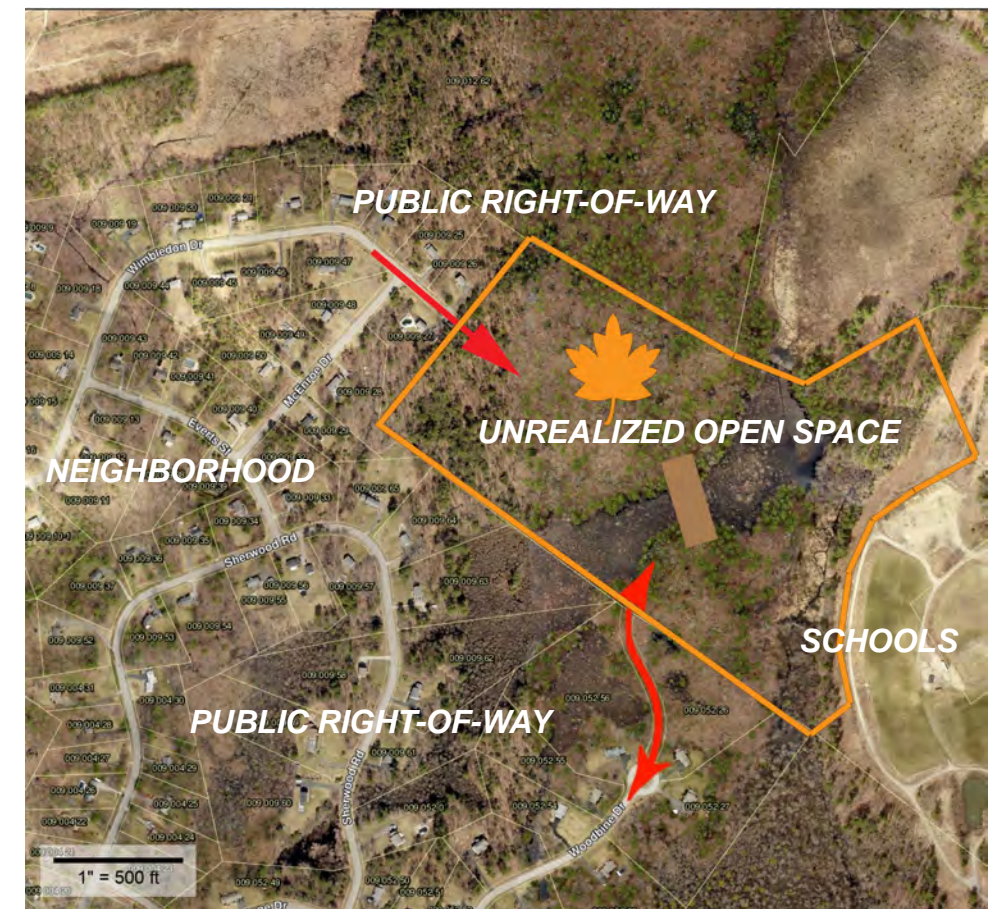
The Rail Trail being developed in Londonderry is part a of a statewide development effort aimed at bringing communities together with an uninterrupted bike-way/pedestrian way. The Rail Trail will eventually stretch from the shores of the Connecticut River in Lebanon, NH to the Rail Trail system at the Massachusetts border. The Rail Trail will serve as an important recreational and commuting resource that will also serve as an important cultural/economic resource linking rural communities and major urban areas.

Locally, the Rail Trail will also create opportunities to link several of Londonderry's open spaces. The image above depicts the eventual route of the Rail Trail through Londonderry. By the end of the year, the trail will extend from its current terminus near the transit station, under the highway to the commercial area to the southeast. Once the trail is completed however, you will note that it will also serve to tie the open space at Little Cohas and conceivably link to the proposed recreation area at Scobie Pond through a proposed trail system on land currently owned by the State of New Hampshire.





## Public Rights-of-Ways



Throughout the Town of Londonderry there are a number of undeveloped right-of-ways that have potential to connect scattered neighborhoods with community open spaces and facilities in the center of town.

The development of a comprehensive pedestrian/bicycle system throughout the community would ensure that joggers, pedestrians and bicyclists could safely navigate throughout the community while avoiding high risk roads such as High Range, Mammoth and Pillsbury. These roads are high traffic corridors with high volume of truck traffic.

The diagram above and to the left illustrates potential connections (red lines & arrows) between existing neighborhoods, an underutilized open space and the school grounds in the center of town. As with the development of the right-of-ways in the Kings neighborhood the development of linear parks and shared use travel ways would significantly enhance the existing neighborhoods and afford safer circulation between community open spaces.



## **Long-Term Considerations**

Auburn Landfill

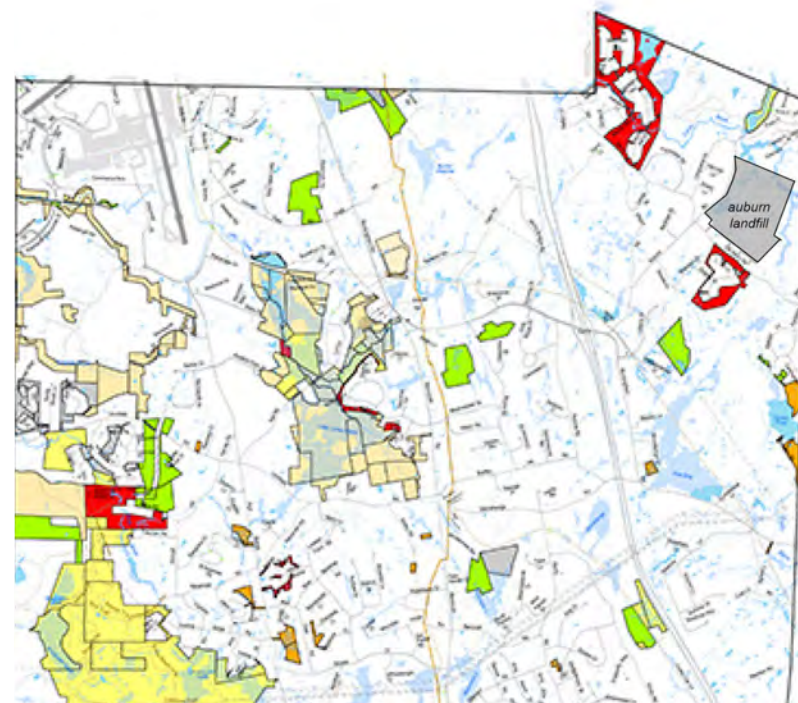
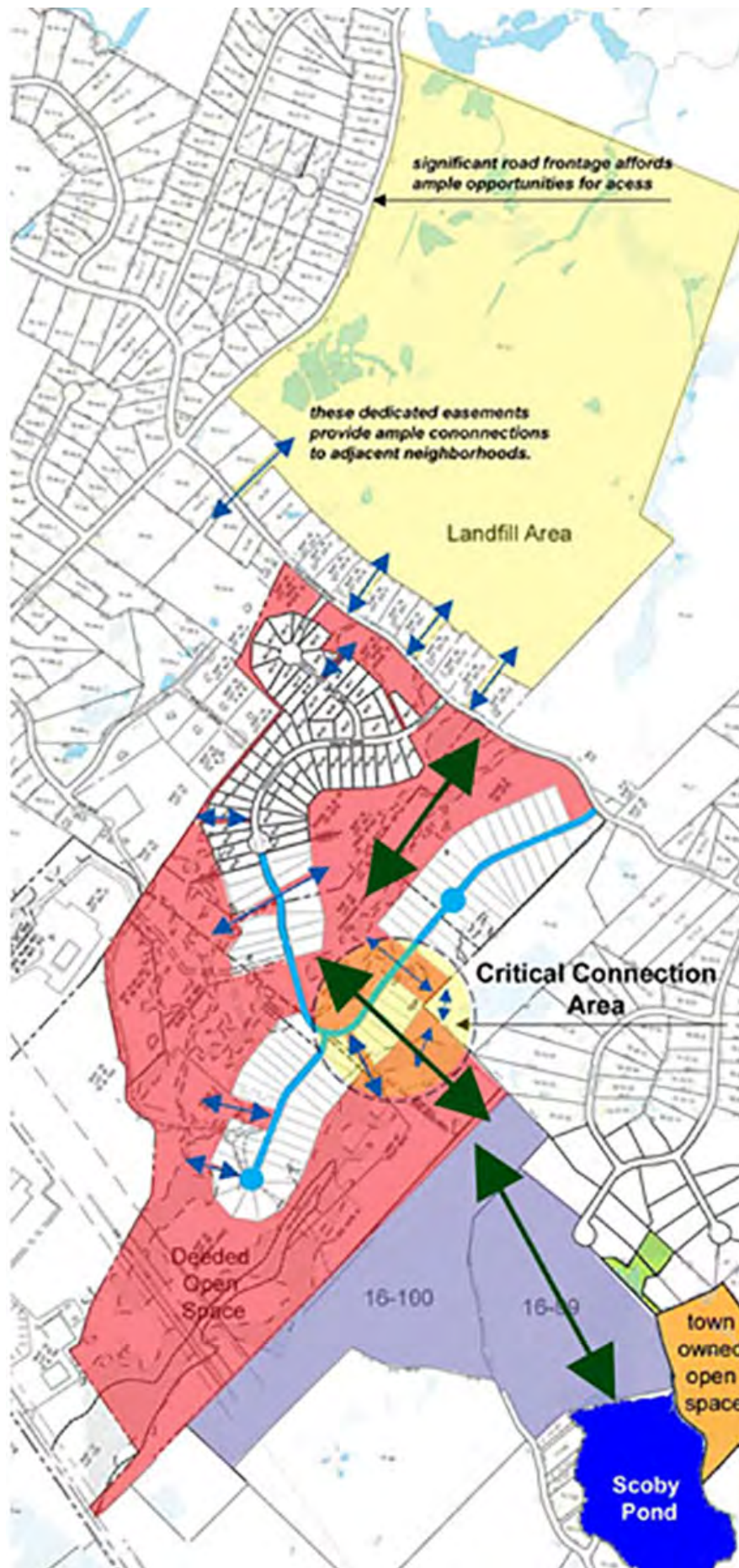
Beaver Brook - Kendall Pond Connection

Little Cohas

The Old Trolley Line



## Auburn Landfill



The above diagram illustrates the lack of public open space in the northeast corner of the town. The enhancement of the Auburn Landfill would provide a much needed resource for area neighborhoods.

The northeast section of Londonderry is under served when it comes to recreational opportunities. However, a long-term opportunity exists with the reclamation of the Auburn landfill. Comprised of approximately 100 acres the area is vast and the terrain is varied offering potential for a range of recreational opportunities including the development of additional ballfields, picnic areas, hiking trails. The Auburn Landfill site may also be the best opportunity Londonderry has to develop a recreation area geared to motorized vehicles such as motorcross bikes and ATVs.

There is also opportunity to connect the northeast section of town with other open space facilities, including the State owned woodlands, Scobie Pond and the Rail Trail. Ideally, the Auburn landfill site would serve as the northeast anchor of Londonderry's open space system. The diagram to the left depicts a possible scenarios for the connection of the Auburn landfill site with the surrounding neighborhoods and eventually to Scobie pond and the Rail Trail. Negotiations should be initiated with the State of New Hampshire concerning there land adjacent to Scobie pond as well as with the developer and landowners in the Lordon Subdivision since access through their property will be critical.

This area may also hold promise for economic redevelopment, especially for a mixed use development that offers commercial and residential uses. However, it will be important to ensure that if the area is developed in such a manner that recreational and public open space plays a key role in the overall development of the site plan to ensure that sufficient recreational opportunities are created in this section of the town.

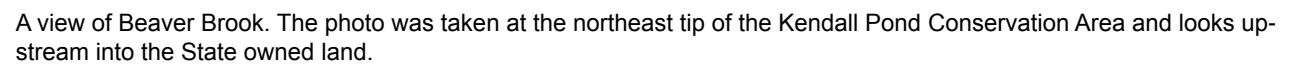


The above diagram provides a general overview of the development potential for the Auburn Landfill. The olive green areas depict the capped land. These areas may be suitable for the development of ballfields whereas the majority of the site offers significant opportunity for unrestricted development of recreational resources.



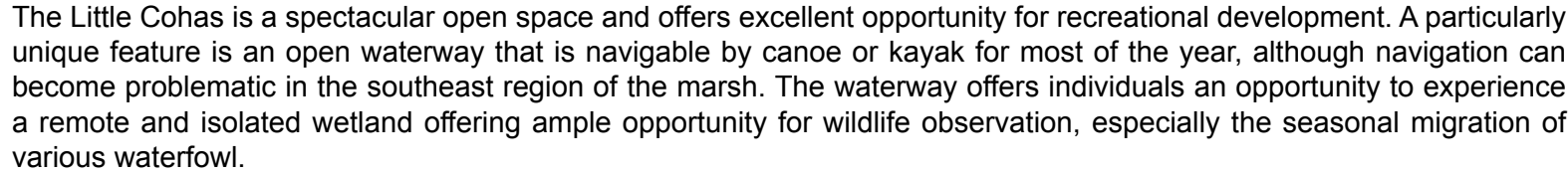
The map displays a complex network of land parcels, many of which are numbered. Key features include:

- Kendall Pond Conservation Area:** A large yellow-shaded area in the lower-left quadrant.
- Mitigation Area:** A green-shaded area in the center-right.
- State of New Hampshire:** A blue-shaded area in the lower-right.
- Beaver Brook Picnic Area:** A yellow-shaded area in the upper-right.
- Kendall Pond:** A blue-shaded area at the bottom left.
- Other Labels:** 'The Narrows', 'Woodland Village', 'Holy Cross Cemetery', and various parcel numbers (e.g., 7-124-1, 7-124-2, 7-124-3, etc.).



Acquiring an easement over this land facilitates the development of a canoe/kayaking course between the proposed picnic area at Beaver Brook and Kendall Pond. Acquiring an easement would also facilitate the development of hiking trail that would link the two areas. Increasing the length of the trail system would greatly enhance the hiking experience in the Kendall Pond Conservation Area.





## ENVISIONED ENHANCEMENTS

- Develop a linear trail system along the west edge of the North Cohas linking the Rail Trail with Delta Dr. & Aviation Park Dr.
- Enhance the navigable way that runs through the center of the Cohas marsh to improve canoe/kayacking opportunities.
- Create canoe or kayak launch sites at the Rail Trail and Hall Rd
- Develop trail-heads connecting trails within the Cohas to the Rail Trail
- Develop a trailhead and small parking area in the southern Cohas on land off Litchfield Rd. Develop an associated picnic area (2-3 tables) and a looped trail system connecting to the Little Cohas Marsh.
- Develop a parking areas and trail-heads at the end of Delta Dr and/or Aviation Park Dr.



## The Old Trolley Line

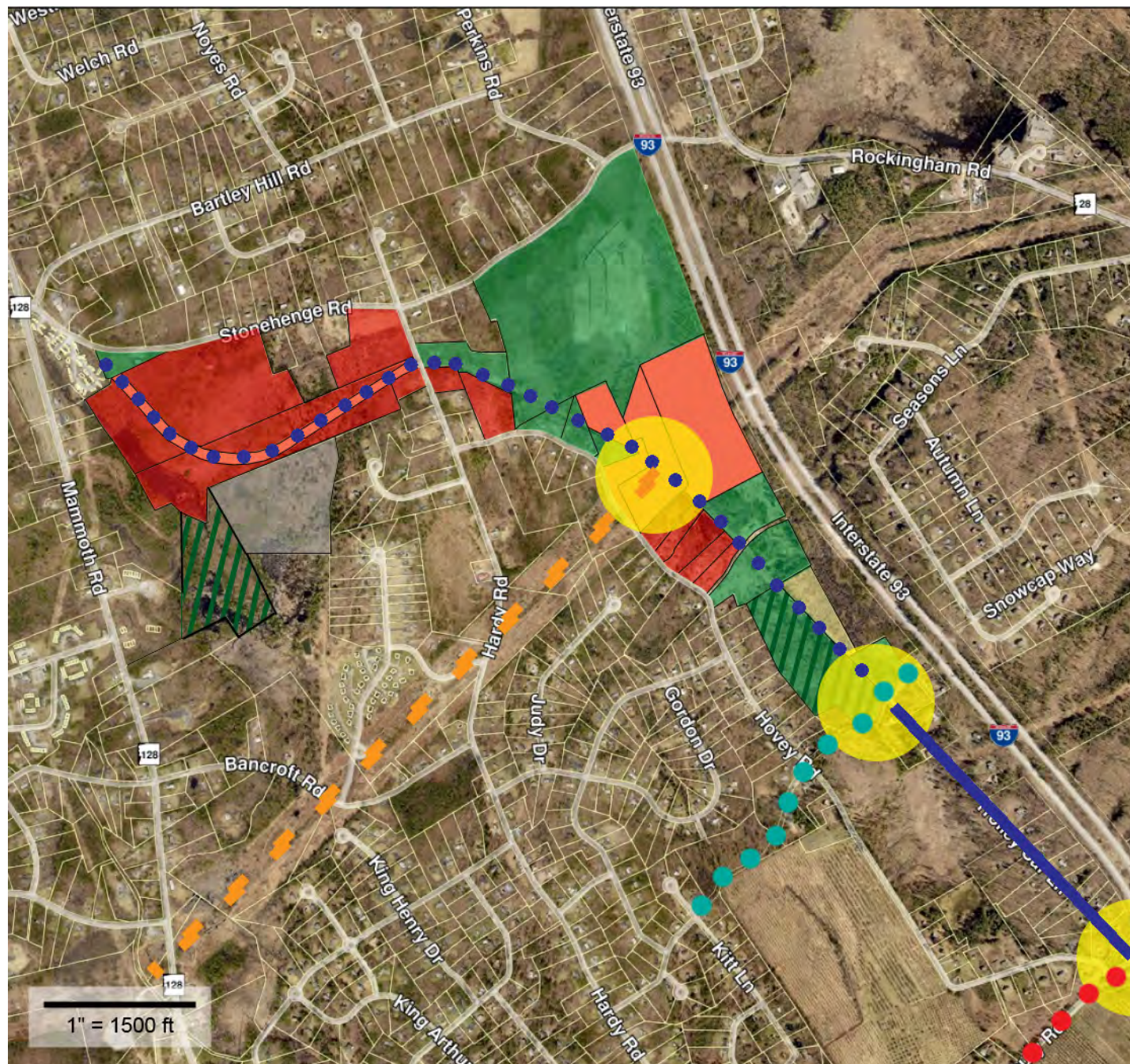
The right-of-way associated with the old trolley line offers a wonderful opportunity to enhance the pedestrian/bicycle connections throughout the town while also helping to link open spaces and community recreation areas. It is also an opportunity to recognize a special and very important component in the town and region's transportation system.

At one time the trolley ran from the center of Manchester and connected to Londonderry and several communities to the southeast. It was a vital link and provided regional residents a means of commuting between communities and in some cases from the urban centers to recreational areas in the surrounding rural communities.

A portion of that corridor is still evident in town today and runs from the intersection of Stonehenge and Mammoth roads in a southeasterly directions for almost two miles. It eventually connects with Trolley Car Lane. In total, the corridor traverses ten separate parcels and runs adjacent to another dozen.

As it exists today, the line is walkable and well used by hikers and mountain bikers. The roadbed is in good condition and would require only minor improvements to make it serve as a bike path or shared use facility.

As the community builds out, the old trolley line can become an important pedestrian corridor with the potential to complete a extensive loop trail originating at the town center, connecting the neighborhood to the east, onto Dragonfly Way, past the Woodmont community and eventually connecting with the Cohas and Rail Trail to the northwest.



### KEY:

#### Property Owners

- Public Service Company of New Hampshire
- Private Property the Trolley Line Right-of-Way Passes Across
- Private Property Adjacent to the Trolley Line Right-of-Way
- Conservation Land
- Town Owned Land

#### Corridors

- ● ● Trolley Line Right-of-Way
- — — Power Line Right-of-Way
- ● ● Dragonfly Way
- — — Trolley Car Lane
- ● ● Apple Way
- Trail Intersections