

Andover Complete Streets Master Plan

Andover Planning and Zoning Commission

Adopted on August 20th, 2016

Definition:

Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. Source: Smartgrowthamerica.org

Abstract:

The 2016 Plan of Conservation and Development highlighted issues of alternative transportation and sketched the outlines of a plan to make Andover more pedestrian and bike friendly. Andover, like many rural towns in Connecticut has been developed around the automobile as the primary method of transportation. This document will serve as a master plan to changing the infrastructure to accommodate other forms of transportation and increase safety for all residents. The long term objective of this plan is to enable residents of all ages to better access Andover resources and increase quality of life for all. There is no single approach that will work throughout town but the plan includes sidewalks, Sharrows (Shared Use lanes), bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), access to public transportation, including senior transportation, and safe crossing opportunities across Rt 6, rt 316 and Rt 87, Accessible pedestrian signals, and dedicated bike and pedestrian connections to town facilities and Andover businesses. This plan will outline both short term and long term goals to further these objectives:

Why does the Town of Andover need a Complete Streets Master Plan?

What we have now, are streets designed with only cars in mind. This limits opportunity's for residents by making walking, and bicycling as transportation or recreation inconvenient, unattractive and dangerous.

Changing policy to routinely include the needs of people on foot, public transportation, and bicycles would make walking, riding bikes, and riding buses safer and easier. People of all ages and abilities would have more options when traveling throughout town to work, to school, to worship and to shop. Using complete streets thinking is a low cost way to increase quality of life for Andover residents. By focusing initially on low cost high impact projects, Andover residents can see the value in future changes. By having a plan, the town can more easily interact with other stakeholders as well as apply for state and federal funding to adopt the recommendations. It also allows the town guidance on future road improvement projects.

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Section 1 Current Conditions

Chapter 1: Andover Today

Current conditions. The town of Andover is lucky to have the Hop River Trail, which is part of the East Coast Greenway, pass through town roughly east to west near Rt 6. The surface is gravel/ stone dust and suitable for walking, bicycle riding and horseback riding. The trail connects to the Airline trail in Willimantic and allows travel to Colombia and Willimantic to the east, Bolton, Manchester, and Vernon to the west. The Hop River Rail Trail is a linear state park. There is parking for the trail at the old town hall off of Rt 316, limited parking near Burnap Brook Rd, and at the end of Center street. Eventually the east coast greenway will connect and be part of a trail from Maine to Florida. It will soon connect to a paved commuter path along Rt 384 in Bolton allowing good commuting to the Capital region.

Route 6 bisects the town of Andover into a northern and southern half. It acts as a barrier to pedestrian and bicycle crossings. There are 2 signalized crosswalks across Rt 6 in Andover. One is located at Lake Rd and one is located at Long Hill Rd. Neither one has convenient sidewalks on both sides.

Rt 316 and Rt 87 both have high traffic flows and narrow shoulders making them unsafe for walking and cycling.

There is a commuter parking lot on Rt 6 that is serviced by a bus, but that bus does not have the capability to take a bicycle

There is no share the road signage on Rt 6 for bicycle commuting

There are no bike racks at any town facility.

There is no signage from the rail trail pointing out locations of town facilities and amenities.

There is currently no safe connection from the rail trail to the AES, town hall and Lake district. Walkers and cyclists need to use Rt 316 which has very narrow shoulders and high traffic flows.

While the Library and congregational church are near a signalized pedestrian crossing of Rt 6 there is no sidewalk connector.

There are no safe walking or cycling connections to any of the businesses in town, including the 2 mini marts located in the gas stations, and the Andover plaza.

Middle School and High school age children frequently use the bridge on Long hill Rd as a gathering place in summer months when school is not in session and travel there by walking or riding bicycles.

The roads in Andover are generally in good condition and have low enough traffic volumes and speeds to be used for walking and bicycling. The Feeder roads and state roads are more problematic due to higher Average Daily Traffic (ADT)

Section 2 Focus Areas:

Chapter 2: Pedestrian/Bicycle Crossing of Route 6

Long Hill Rd Crossing The intersection of Long Hill Rd and Rt 6 has a Traffic Light with a signalized pedestrian Crosswalk. This provides a series of connections, including the Center street section of town, public library, Congregational Church, Andover Recreational fields, and Rail trail. This crossing has a high priority for improvement since it is likely to get the highest daily usage highest traffic crossing in the town. This is currently a dangerous and underutilized crossing that can be improved considerably. The goal is to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle traffic across rt 6. To do this the following needs to take place.

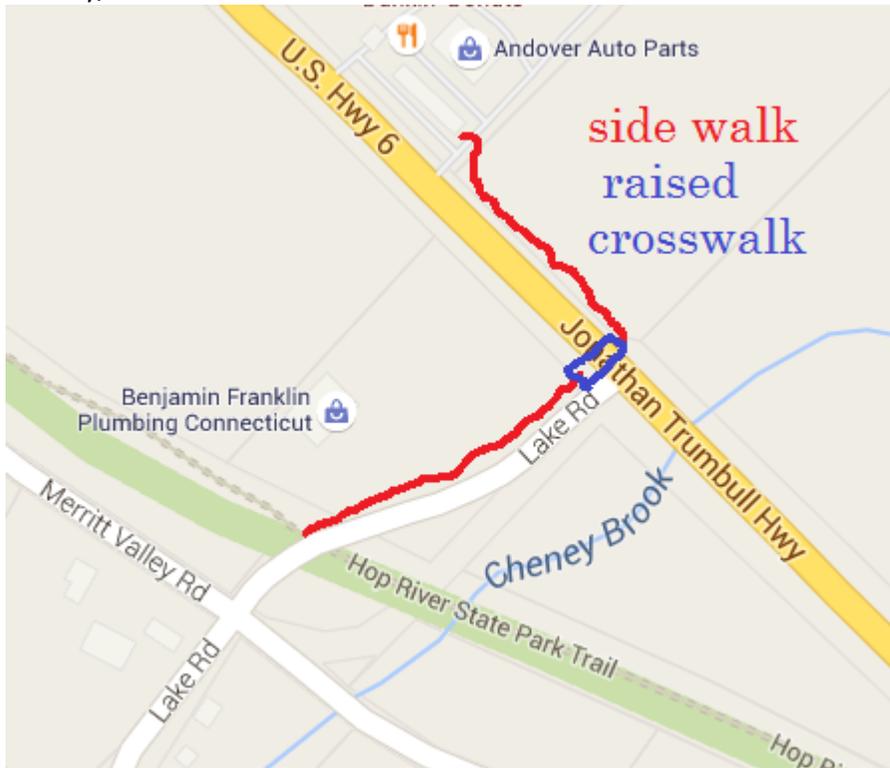
1. On Rt 6 approaching from both directions there should be signs denoting the crossings.
2. The crosswalk itself should be raised up to make it distinguishable. This has the considerable added benefit of acting as a traffic calming device reducing the overall speed on Rt 6 through this area which is considerably in excess of the posted limit.



3. On the long hill Rd side a side walk wide enough to function as a bicycle and pedestrian access should go from Rt 6 to the parking lot for the Congregational church. There should also be a cross walk on long Hill Rd connecting the Sidewalk to the Library with a pedestrian walkway.
4. A wooden guardrail should be placed between the access ramp and Rt 6 roadway to maintain separation between the path and highway



Lake Street Crossing: The intersection of Lake Street and Rt 6 has a traffic light with a Pedestrian walk signal. It is oddly placed and has no sidewalk anchoring it on either end. The town should construct a sidewalk that connects the Rail trail to the Intersection with Rt 6, and then on the other side of Rt 6, a short connector to the Extramart/ Subway/Dunkin Donuts



Hendy Rd If at some point in the future, a signalized traffic light is placed at the Rt6- Hendy Rd interchange, it should include a Crosswalk and pedestrian signal. This would allow for future sidewalk connections to the Andover Plaza and Scott Electrocraft and continuing to Baily Rd

Chapter 3: Long Hill Rd from Route 6 to the Andover Recreational area

Long Hill Rd to the Andover Recreation Field

The Section of Long Hill Rd from Rt 6 to Riverside Drive should be marked with Sharrows (Shared Use markings) This area has significance for many reasons. First it is the connection between the rail trail and the recreation fields, library, church, Farmers Market and Hop River Homes. Second, there are often gatherings of youth during the summer in the vicinity of the bridge. Since Andover Lake is private, this is one of the better swimming holes in town that is publically accessible. The area is also used for fishing on the Hop River. This area should have a reduced speed limit and lots of signage. If the roadway is wide enough to accommodate it, it should be striped for bike lanes.

What a Sharrow looks like:



Recommended signage for this area



Chapter 4: Access to the Rail Trail

The Hop River Rail Trail is a huge asset to the town of Andover. It is a well maintained, level path that supports many none motorized uses from commuting to riding horses. The trail is very popular for running, cycling and walking and dog walking. A number of cycling clubs host weekly group rides on the rail trail.



Thread City Cycling group ride picture on the covered bridge

The rail trail runs the length of Andover from east to west roughly paralleling Rt 6. Starting from the West it crosses Bailey Rd Burnap Brook Rd, Wales Rd, Shoddy Mill Rd, Merrit Valley Rd and Lake Rd before crossing under Rt 6 At a tunnel It then finally crosses Parker Bridge Rd before entering Coventry. There are also entry points to the Rail trail at Center Street and at Long Hill Rd.

Currently there is a parking Lot at the Old town Hall, some parking at Burnap Brook on private property and a small lot on Center Street. There are additional parking options at the library and Recreation fields.

The Old town hall has adequate parking but there is very poor signage directing people there.

This could be improved with signage from Rt 316 directing people where to park. Several residents have complained that this location is too secluded for Safety.

It is recommended that the space at center street be utilized for rail trail access. The Cement blocks should be replaced with either large landscape boulders or a timber fence. Signage should designate it as parking for the rail trail. The area should be regraded and stone dust or millings used to level the parking area.

A removable bollard should be used to keep vehicles from entering the space but be removable in case the Emergency services needs access. Signage should be erected showing directions to town features. Distances should be marked along the trail and a 3K and 5K course distance should be shown. The entrance to the ramp leading to the Rt 6 crossing should be indicated.

A bike rack should be installed at this location.

A second objective to rail trail access is change the hours of operation for the rail trail. The trail is a linear state park and as such is ti closed from dusk to dawn. Since this trail is used for commuting, as well as commonly used by local cycling clubs for training rides after dark, these hours are not consistent with the current and future utilization of the Hop River Rail trail It is recommended that a coalition of town PZC's along with Thread City Cycling, Hop river Speed Demon's, and Pedal power rides lobby the state legislature to change the hours of operation. It would be prudent to require everyone on the trail after dark to have a light source and reflective clothing.

Chapter 5: Utilizing the Rail Trail to Access Andover Businesses

Because the rail trail borders Route 6, it is also near most of the businesses that would benefit from being accessible by bike and walking. The following is a listing of businesses that should be made accessible: Andover Plaza, Andover Post Office, Both Gas Stations/ mini marts

To connect Andover Plaza, 2 things must happen. First, the town should install a sidewalk from Aspinall Drive to the Plaza entrance. This sidewalk would be approximately 400 ft long. Secondly would be to negotiate a usage easement from one of the 2 property owners at the end of the Aspinall Dr cul-de-sac. For the purposes of access the easement would only need to be 15-20 ft wide. This is a commonly used shortcut now anyway. The town could negotiate for it and make it official and attractive. Signage on the trail would point out the businesses and the distance to them.



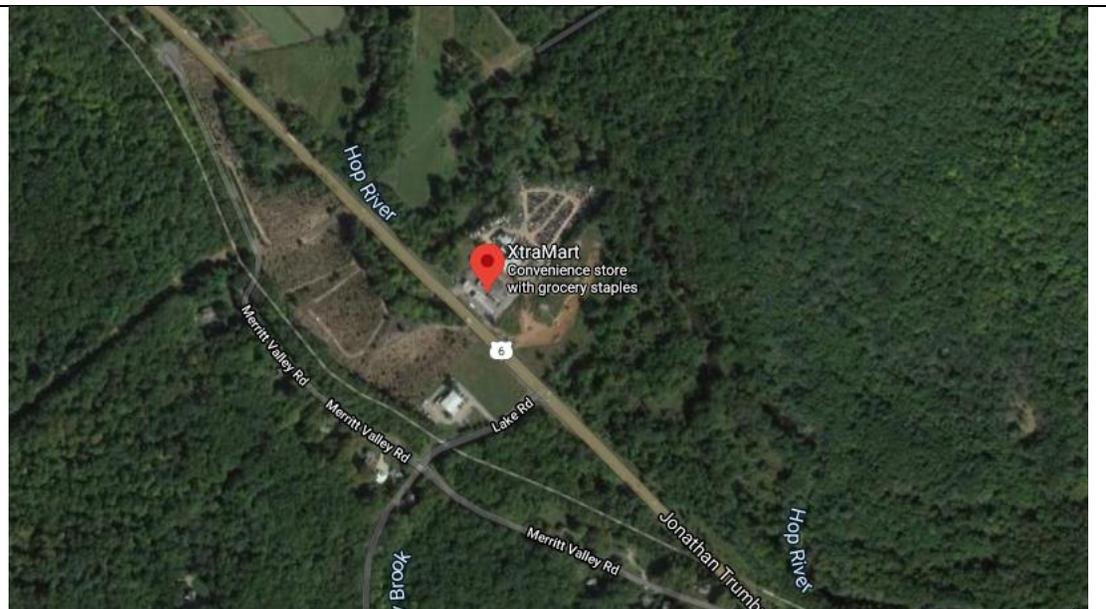
Accessing the Post office: The post office would need to be accessed from RT 6. Because this area has fairly wide shoulders, a designated bike lane could be striped from Long Hill. While this is not ideal, without a long sidewalk there are few options. This also creates access to public transportation, adjacent to the commuter parking lot and bus terminal. Alternatively, to avoid the Long hill interchange, a bike path marking could be striped across the Andover Library parking lot, exiting onto Rt 6 and then continuing to the post office and commuter lot.



Access to the Minimart/ gas station located between Long Hill Rd and Rt 316 can be accomplished by creating an access trail from the rail trail. This would simply make official what is there already. Currently there are 2 ways to access the mini mart one is steep and causes erosion, the other is gradual and bikable, with little issues with erosion. A 5 ft wide gravel path would be sufficient for access. Ideally a small bicycle rack at the minimart would help.

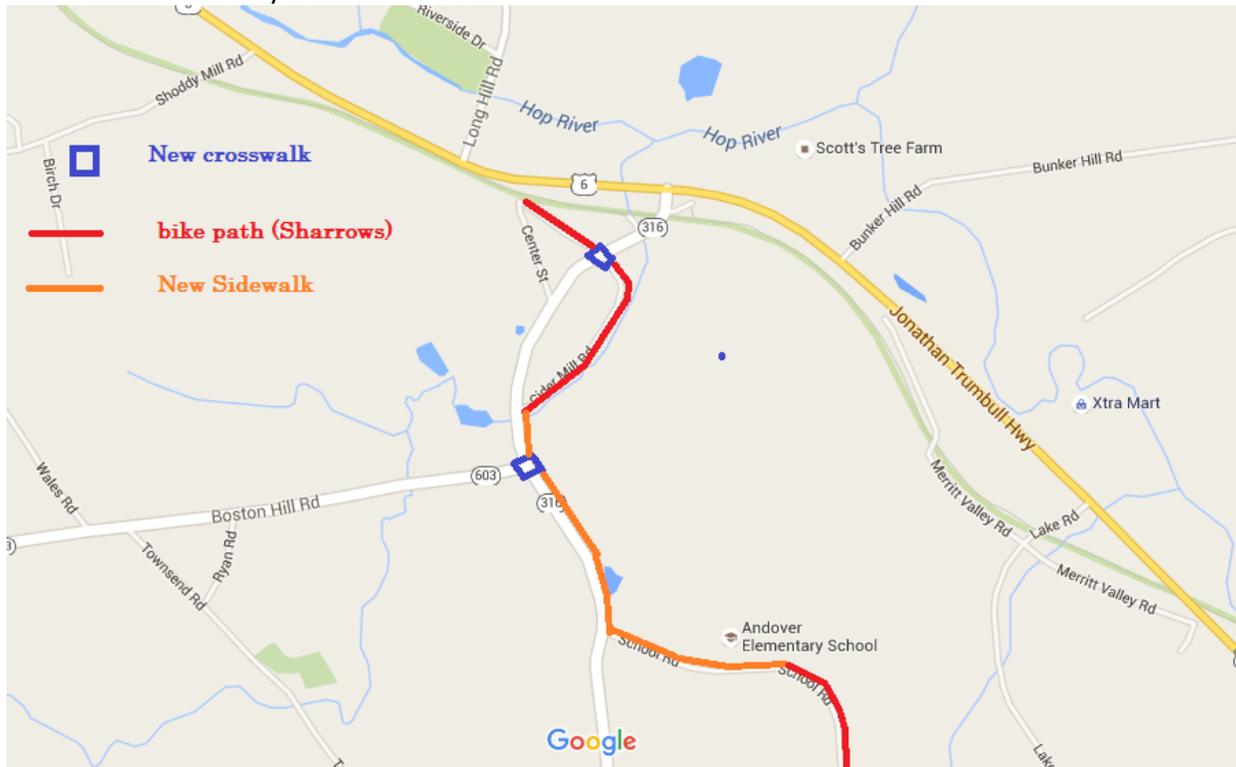


Access to the Minimart located near Lake Rd Intersection is outlined in Chapter 2, Lake Street Crossing Section. Taken collectively, these access points mean that Andover residents would have walking and bike access to, 3 small markets, a post office, a Pizza restaurant, a bar and a Chinese restaurant, subway and Dunkin Donuts.



Chapter 6: Connecting Center Street to the Town Hall, Elementary School, Town Hall, Fire Station and Lake District

Because the Center Street- Rt 6-Long Hill Rd crossing ties in the Library, recreation fields elderly housing post office and commuter lot, it makes sense to create a connection the AES, town hall and ultimately to the Lake district. This is addressed in the Current Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The Proposed path would travel from Center Street, to Cider Mill Rd, to Rt 316. A sidewalk would need to be created along Rt 316 to School Rd, and then to AES. Center St and Cider Mill Rd are both capable of handling the bike and walking traffic, but rt 316 is not due to heavy traffic volume and very narrow shoulders.



In 2017 Rt 316 is scheduled to be repaved by DOT. At a minimum this should include widening of the roadway and decreasing the lane widths to the new DOT standard to create a safer bike and walking access. A better approach would be to add a multiuse path from the intersection of Cider mill Rd to School road as part of the repaving effort. It is anticipated that the town of Andover would request a State of Connecticut Main St grant to create the sidewalk.

Chapter 7: Pedestrian and Bike Access to the Lake District

The Andover lake district is a higher density residential neighborhood that is characterized by lower speed roads and a lot of pedestrian and bicycle traffic as well as lots of children. Due to the shallow building lots in this area, adding sidewalks is impractical, but the area should have share the road signage as well as Sharrows. Adding Speedbumps in strategic areas would help control roadway speed also.



Chapter 8: Secure Bike Racks

In order to facilitate bicycle usage the town shall install bike racks at the following areas according to this schedule and priority

Location	Number of bikes	Max distance to entrance	Long or short term?	Public/ Private	Priority 1 is highest
Andover Elementary School	20	100 ft	Long	Public	1
Andover Library	5	25 ft	Short	Public	1
Town Hall	5	25 ft	Both	Public	2
Rail trail Center Street	5	25 ft	Short	Public	2
Andover Historical Ctr	5	25 ft	Short	Public	3
Post office	2	25 ft	Short	Public	3
Commuter lot rt 6	10	50 ft	Long	Public	3
Andover MiniMarts	5	25 ft	Short	Private	2
Andover Plaza	5	50 ft (central)	Short	Private	3
Andover Congregational Church	10	50 ft	Short	Private	4

In order to have uniformity between the locations all bike racks will be powder coated steel in this basic style. All racks will be set in concrete.

Racks will be located near the entrances as close as is practical.

The racks installed at the commuter lot should be covered if possible



Chapter 9: Connections to Public Transportation

Andover is a small town and has limited public transportation, but residents need to be able to access this transportation without a car as a link in the chain.

Senior services. There are several busses for transporting elderly residents to appointments, shopping and other services. It is anticipated that these uses will grow in priority as the population ages. The Current senior center, where the buses depart from is on Center street and ties in well with the proposed walking and biking corridors. Any proposed location for a new senior center/ community center should be located close to the rail trail and other town services. The community center should consider having bike lockers, or even a bike share program so seniors can borrow a bike for exercise or transportation. Although this seems like a bit of a far-fetched scenario, the Thread City Cycling Club, which as a number of members who live in Andover, has a high fraction of retired members and the oldest rider in the club is 86 years old. Older residents may not be able to afford a car and a bicycle becomes a vital link to thriving in the community.

Bus service to Hartford Manchester and Willimantic. There is currently one commuter bus stop in Andover located on Rt 6 Next to the Andover Post office. Access to this facility is detailed in chapter 5 section dealing with the post office and Chapter 8 specifies the bike rack needs at that facility.

It would be beneficial if all the busses that service the corridor carried bike racks so commuters could use their bicycles at both ends of their journey if desired.

Chapter 10: Signage Plan

One of the least expensive way to effect change is road signs and paint.

Safety signs: By using share the road signs, public awareness is raised of other means of transportation.

- Areas with crosswalks on busy roads should have warning approach signage.
- Areas that are designated as walking and biking corridors should have share the road signage.
- Areas with high concentrations of children should have caution signs for bicycles pedestrians and skateboarders.
- Sharrows should be painted on roads too narrow for sidewalks.
- Rt 6 should have Bicycle commuting signage. The wide shoulders should have bike symbols.
- All the Hop River Rail Trail crossings should be marked with crosswalks and warning signs this is partially done now.

Route Guidance signs:

The rail trail should have signage to help direct people. The signs should note direction, the distance in Miles, walking time in minutes to the location

An example would be a sign at center street:

Post office 0.4 Mi (Picture of a person walking) 6 min (Picture of a person bicycling) 3 Min

There should be signs at the Andover town lines.



Is one example close to what we could use. The Center street area should have signs to Andover lines in both directions, Library, Post Office, AES, Town hall, Library, recreation fields, covered bridge. The Mini marts and markets and major roads. All signs should show the direction, distance and time to walk and time to ride.

Additionally, since the trail is used by runners, a 3 KM out and back and a 5 K out and back should be marked.

Section 3: Implementation Plan

Chapter 11: Implementation Chart

This plan is envisioned to be implemented over a 10-year period. It requires the cooperation of the Town of Andover, the Department of energy and Environmental Protection and The Department of Transportation, as well as private landowners. The following implementation chart, identifies the priorities, timeline, who the stakeholders are and potential funding source.

This plan also recommends that the Town of Andover Devote 1.5% of the Road improvement funds to implement the complete Streets master plan.

Implementation Matrix

Categories:

1 High Priority Safety Improvements	2 High Priority Low Cost Impact	3 Medium Priority Medium Impact	4	5 Long Range pending grant funding
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Chapter Plan	Location	Task	Timeline	Stakeholders	Funding	Priority
4	Center St- Rail trail	Improve Parking area	2016-17	TOA, DEEP	DEEP/open space fund	2
4		Provide benches	2016-17	DEEP, TOA	DEEP/open space fund	2
4		Install Gazebo	2017-19	DEEP, TOA	DEEP	3
10		signage		DEEP, TOA	DEEP	3
4	Long Hill-RT6- Rail Trail	Guard rail along access	2017-19	DOT, TOA	DOT	1
2	Crossing	Raised Crosswalk		DOT, TOA	DOT	1
2		Improved signage		DOT, TOA	DOT	1
2		Multiuse path from Pedestrian crossing light to long hill RD	2017-18	TOA, congregational church	TOA Road Fund	1
5		Path connection to gas station	2018-19	TOA DEEP gas station		3
3	Long Hill rd rt6- Rec fields	Restripe 11 ft lanes	2016-17	TOA	TOA Road Fund	2
3		signage between library and Recreational fields	2016-17	TOA	TOA Road Fund	1
3		mark shoulder bike lanes	2016-17	TOA	TOA Road Fund	1
6	RT 316 from Rt6- School rd	Widen shoulders during repaving	2017	DOT, TOA	DOT	1
6		Restripe to 11 ft travel lane during repaving	2017	DOT, TOA	DOT	1
6		Create multiuse path from Cider Mill to School Rd	2020-25	TOA, DOT	Main St Grant	2
6	Lake district	Signage for all road approaches to the lake district	2018-19	TOA	Road Budget	2
6		Road Sharrows in lake district	2017	TOA	Road Budget* can be done with volunteer labor	1
9	RT 6	Designate as cycling commuting access	2019	DOT, TOA, Bolton Coventry	DOT/ Legislature	3
9		Signage	2019			3
9		Bicycle+ pedestrian path from Long Hill to Commuter lot	2020-2025	DOT TOA private Landowners	State Grant	4
5		Improve crossing at Lake Rd	2020-2025	DOT, TOA,	Main St grant	5
5		Pedestrian Crossing at Hendy Rd	2020-2025			5
5		Multiuse path Aspinal drive to Andover Plaza	2020-2025			5
8	Varied locations Town of Andover	Bike Rack installation	2017-2020	TOA/ Private Landowners DEEP		3
4	Rail Trail	Legislation regarding use after dusk for commuting and active recreation	1016-2020	Andover, Bolton Coventry DEEP State Legislature local cycling and running clubs		3