



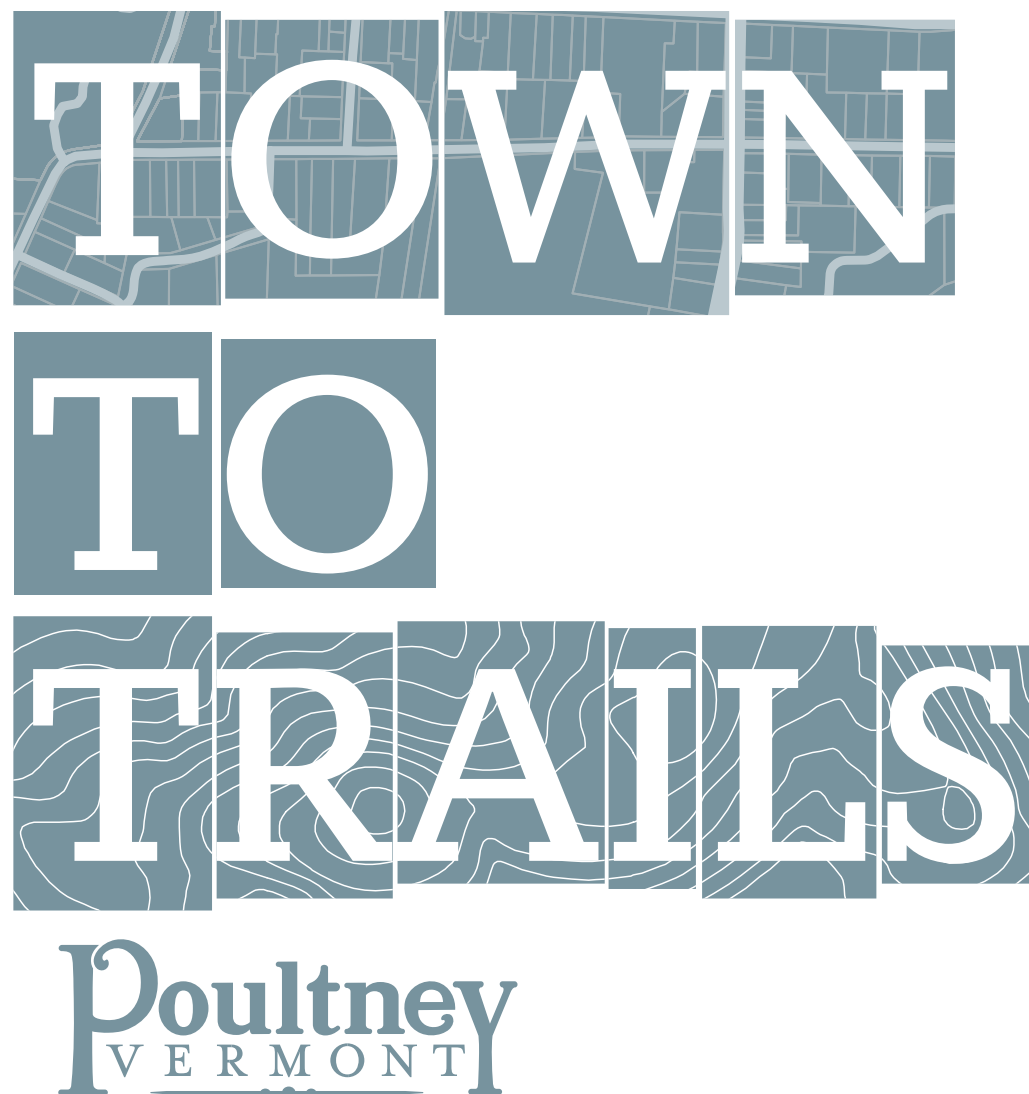
TOWN TO TRAILS

Poultney
VERMONT

September 2023

Book 1: What We Learned





Town to Trails Report Structure

Book 1 - What We Learned

The report you're reading tries to capture the conditions on the ground, and understand opportunities and constraints related to project goals. This book captures both technical details of the built environment and the results of ongoing community conversations. It is current as of December 2022. This document is divided into four chapters:

Introduction

Poultney's Context

Routes Downtown

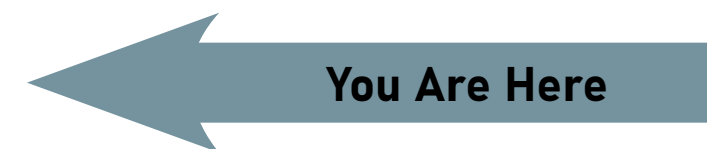
Downtown Poultney

Book 2 - Town to Trails

This book proposes the big ideas that can connect Town to Trails and realize Poultney's community visions. It will provide clear design concepts for key projects that can move the Town to Trails and RERC goals forward for Poultney.

Book 3 - Implementation

The final in the series, this book will act as a guide towards moving the big ideas out of the abstraction of reports like this, and into the hills, parks, and downtown streets of Poultney.



About the Project

Town to Trails is a community-driven planning process, making Poultney a more vibrant, connected and welcoming place for all. We're looking at how to create:

- Safe, connected linkages from trail networks to Downtown Poultney
- Gateways that create a sense of arrival to the Village
- Street improvements along Main Street and side streets to promote traffic calming, increase safety, and increase beautification
- An inclusive outdoor recreation hub

This grant-funded project has created a plan that will help Poultney secure funding and prioritize projects for the community. Town to Trails has been led by a volunteer Steering Committee with members from other Poultney boards, committees and organizations. The final report was issued in September 2023.



Table of Contents

About the Project	2
Town to Trails Report Structure	2
Introduction	4
Recreation Economy for Rural Communities	4
Town to Trail Goals	4
Community Conversations	4
Project Management Approach	5
Areas of Focus	6
Community Engagement	7
Poultney's Context	8
Trail Networks	8
Trail Data	10
Trail Access	11
Outdoor Recreation Events	12
Lodging	13
Land Ownership	14
Getting to Poultney	15
Routes Downtown	18
Route 30 Corridor	19
Route 30 to Lake St Catherine	19
Route 140	22
Downtown Poultney	25
Downtown Trails	26
Downtown Streets	27
Street Details	30
Downtown Gateways	32
Downtown Parking Supply	38
Downtown Parks and Open Space	39
Outdoor Rec Hub Opportunities	40

Acknowledgments

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 AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES
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Consultant Team



COMMUNITY WORKSHOP



Introduction

Poultney is a small community in southwest Vermont whose western border is the New York State Line.

Originally the land was home to Abenaki, Mohican, and Wabanaki Confederacy peoples. European settlement arrived in 1771, utilizing the Poultney River and surrounding land to grow crops.

In the early 1800s, Poultney underwent a period of growth, with slate and flour as major exports. It was during this same period that Green Mountain College (then known as The Troy Conference Academy), the Rutland to Albany Rail line, and Route 30 were developed. Located in the heart of a region known as Slate Valley, Poultney's slate business continues to this day, and evidence of that history is everywhere you look.

Currently, Poultney is a small community of approximately 3,020 residents. Its natural resource-based industries include slate and farming, but also outdoor recreation. In recent years, thanks to generous private landowner support, Slate Valley Trails has built and maintains over 50 miles of publicly accessible hiking and biking trails in Poultney and surrounding communities. Lake St. Catherine State Park, located just south of Poultney's downtown, draws numerous visitors to the area every summer for lakeside recreation. The former Delaware and Hudson Rail Road no longer carries freight, but hikers and bikers instead along its route between Castleton, Poultney, Pawlet, and the New York State Line.

Despite these historic, economic, and recreational assets, recent years have seen Poultney facing challenges. Green Mountain College, a major educational institution and local employer, closed its doors in 2019, and the COVID pandemic of 2020 created even more challenge and uncertainty for the community.

But these challenges have also offered unique opportunities. The growth of Slate Valley Trails and development of numerous miles of purpose-built recreational trails has begun to raise Poultney's profile in the region as a destination. With the COVID pandemic introducing more people to outdoor recreation than ever before, Poultney has begun to see opportunities to leverage their recreational resources to build a strong and resilient economy.

Recreation Economy for Rural Communities

In 2020, The Town of Poultney was one of only ten communities across the United States to be awarded planning assistance through the US Environmental Protection Agency's Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) program.

The resulting community action plan, referred to in this report as RERC, was developed through a series of public workshops, meetings, and led by a local steering committee. [This RERC report can be read in full online.](#)

The RERC culminates in a series of four goals for the Town of Poultney, and a series of potential actions that the Town and community can take to enhance Poultney's recreational assets and grow the local economy. Some recommendations, such as the development of an updated brand for the Town of Poultney, have already been realized, and are reflected in this document.

This plan is intended to take the RERC goals and move them to the next step - illustrating potential designs, identifying major constraints, and highlighting

key opportunities that can turn the good ideas of the RERC into functional proposals that can move forward into real-world change and implementation.

Town to Trail Goals

The goals of the RERC are utilized in this plan while continuing community conversations to better identify priorities and visions that are truly representative of the Poultney community. The four goals of this plan are:

Goal 1: Link Town To Trails Continue to expand year-round sustainable recreational assets in Poultney, and connect them to the downtown and East Poultney village.

Goal 2: Build Pride in Poultney Develop the Town's and Village's sense of place and amenities to augment recreational assets.

Goal 3: Create Community Outdoors: Increase community engagement in outdoor recreation and community and natural resource stewardship.

Goal 4: Make Poultney Known: Position Poultney as a center for the recreation economy for the region, recognizing that recreation is a multi-generational lifestyle AND an economic driver that can support business development and entrepreneurship.

When reading or scanning this plan, look for green call outs that identify links between this document and the RERC to understand how this plan is moving those recommendations forward and highlighting opportunities and constraints for each.

Community Conversations

This report describes and illustrates Poultney's trails, road corridors, and historic Downtown environment as they relate to RERC goals and proposed actions.

What we hear from community members at each phase of the planning process has directly informed the "big ideas" and priorities in the final Town to Trails plan. It will also help spark actions and ideas among many businesses, community groups and leaders.

While this report was being written, the project team has been connecting with the community through online surveys, a public website, and direct engagement at community events.

These ongoing conversations are conducted to gain a better understanding of community aspirations, visions, and priorities for future change.

Each of the three geographic Areas of Focus in this report-- Poultney's Context, Routes Downtown (Trails & Corridors), and Downtown Poultney include summaries of corresponding public engagement work and community member feedback.

Look for these green callouts throughout this document to learn about goals from the RERC directly addressed by this plan.

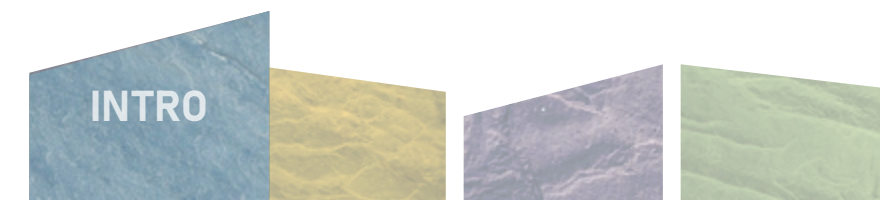
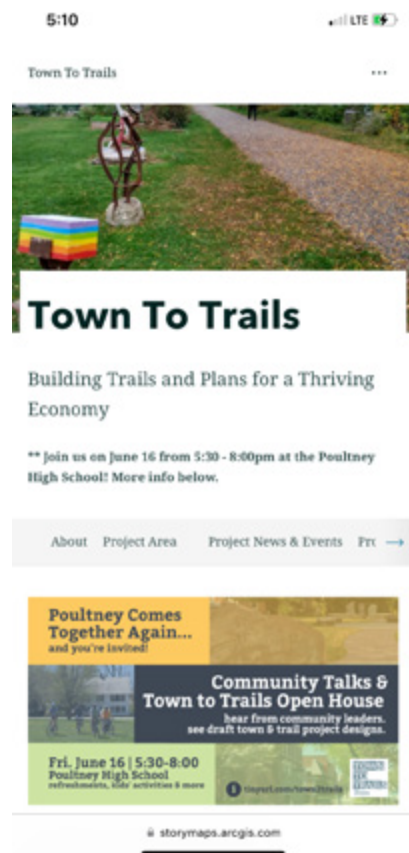
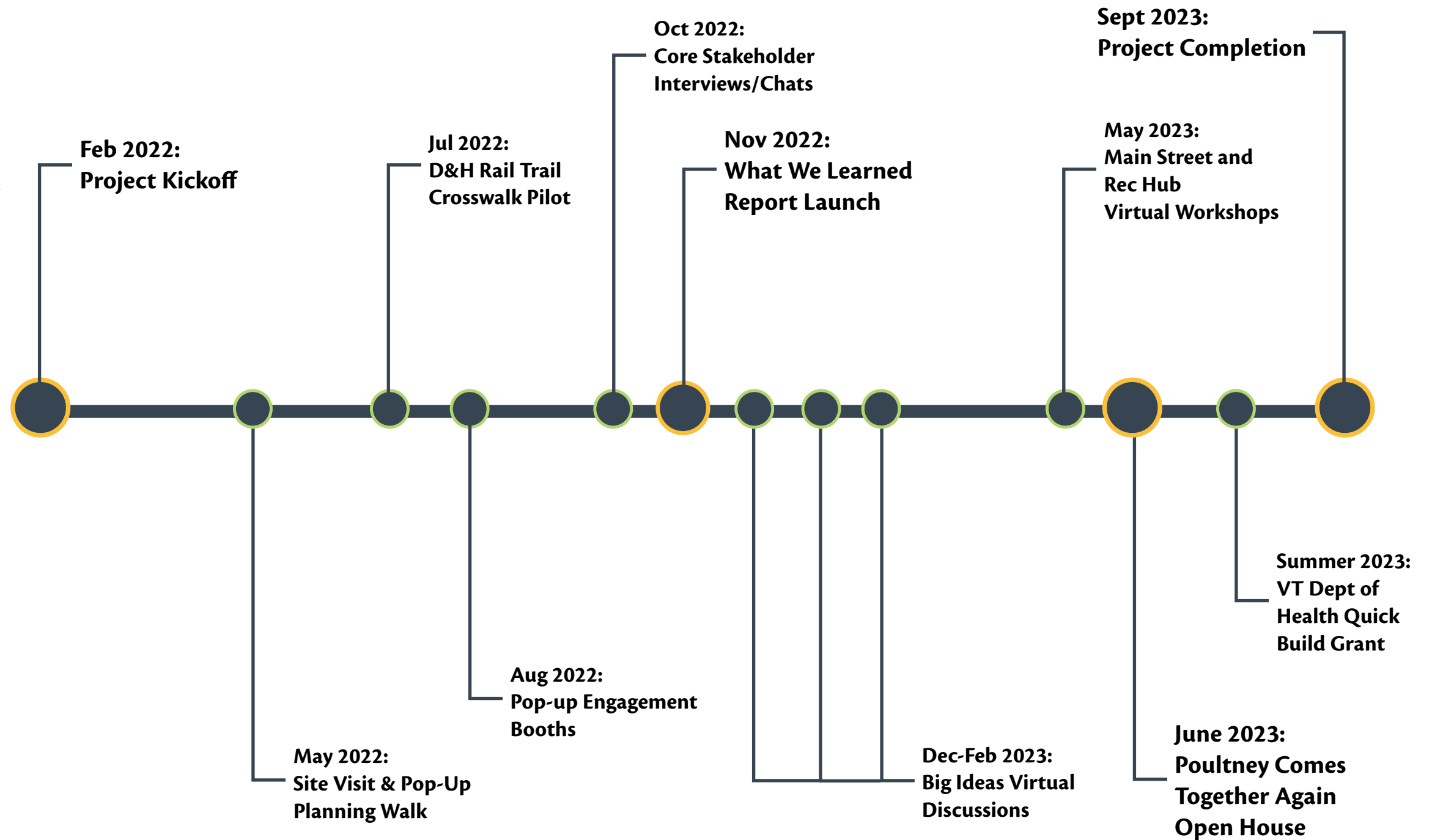
Project Management Approach

This project would not have been possible without the engagement of Project Partners and the community.

Local Project Partners joined the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC), VTrans, and DuBois & King (Consultant) for monthly Steering Committee check-in meetings throughout the life of the project.

A project website was maintained for the duration with basic project information as well as dates and time for key events.

Several workshops, demonstration projects, and community outreach also occurred throughout the project life.



Areas of Focus

This report is divided into three major geographic areas of focus.

Poultney's Context

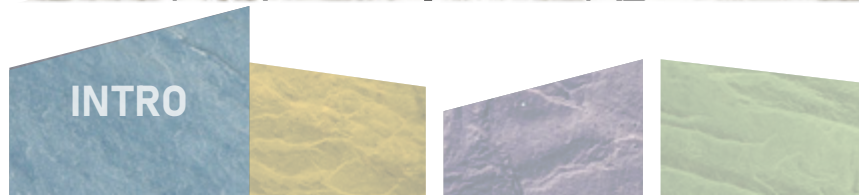
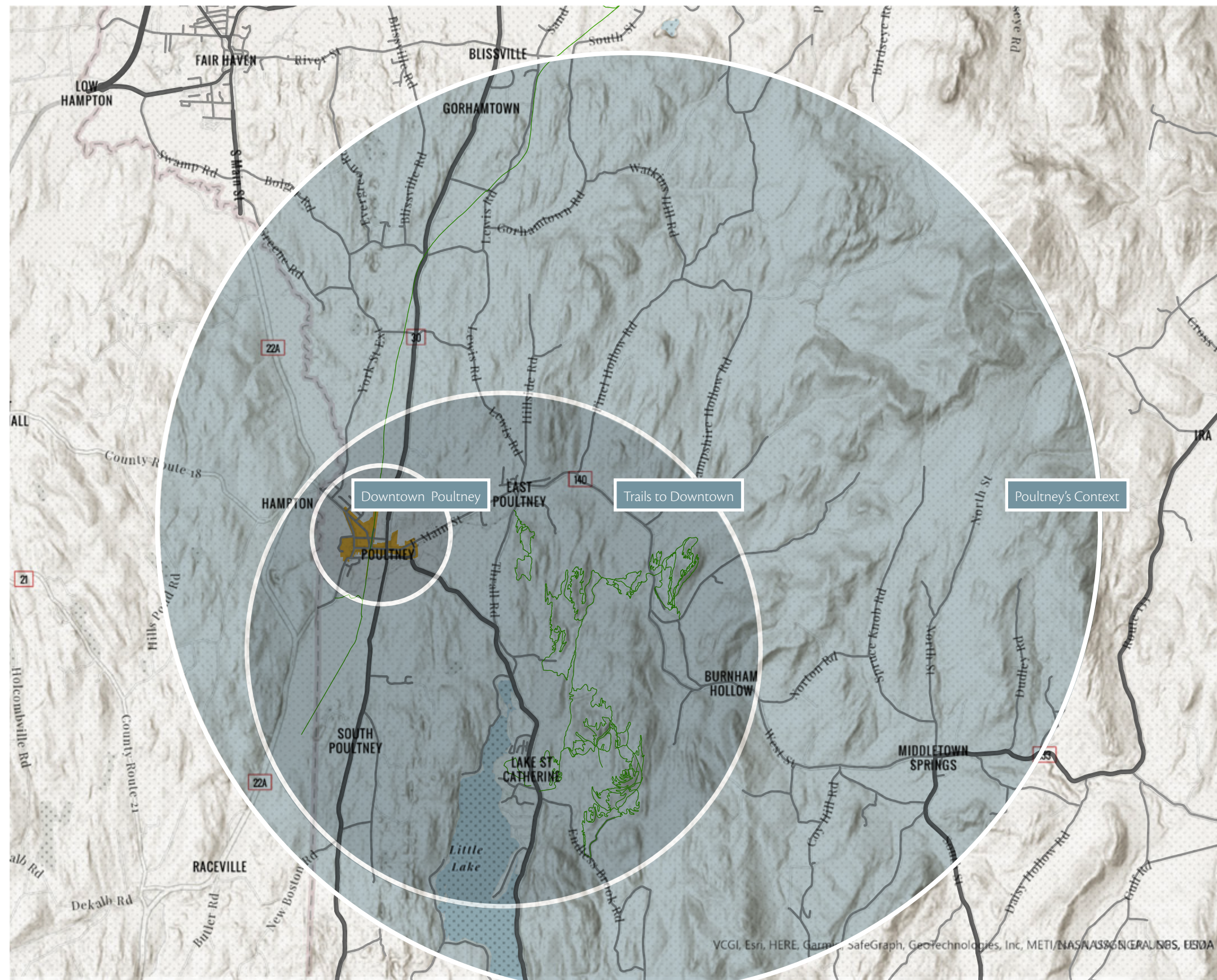
Trails, rivers, lakes, parks, hunting grounds, swimming holes, scenic roadways and historic sites are all part of Poultney's context. This report looks at the range of recreational resources available, access to them, and key conflict areas throughout.

Trails and Corridors to Downtown

Driving, biking, running or skiing - linking Poultney's recreational landscape to the economic hub of activity downtown is a key goal of this plan. This portion of the report reviews key on and off road corridors for how they might accommodate improved connections between Poultney's recreational assets and the downtown.

Downtown Poultney

Downtown Poultney could be an ideal base-camp for a day among the roads, trails and forests of Poultney. This study looks at the downtown's public streetscape, traffic flows, parking, gateways, trail connections, and opportunities for economic revitalization in the heart of Poultney.



Community Engagement

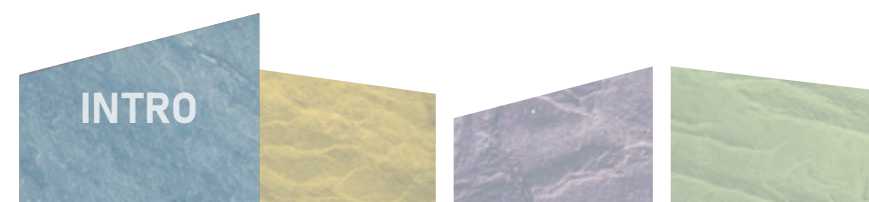
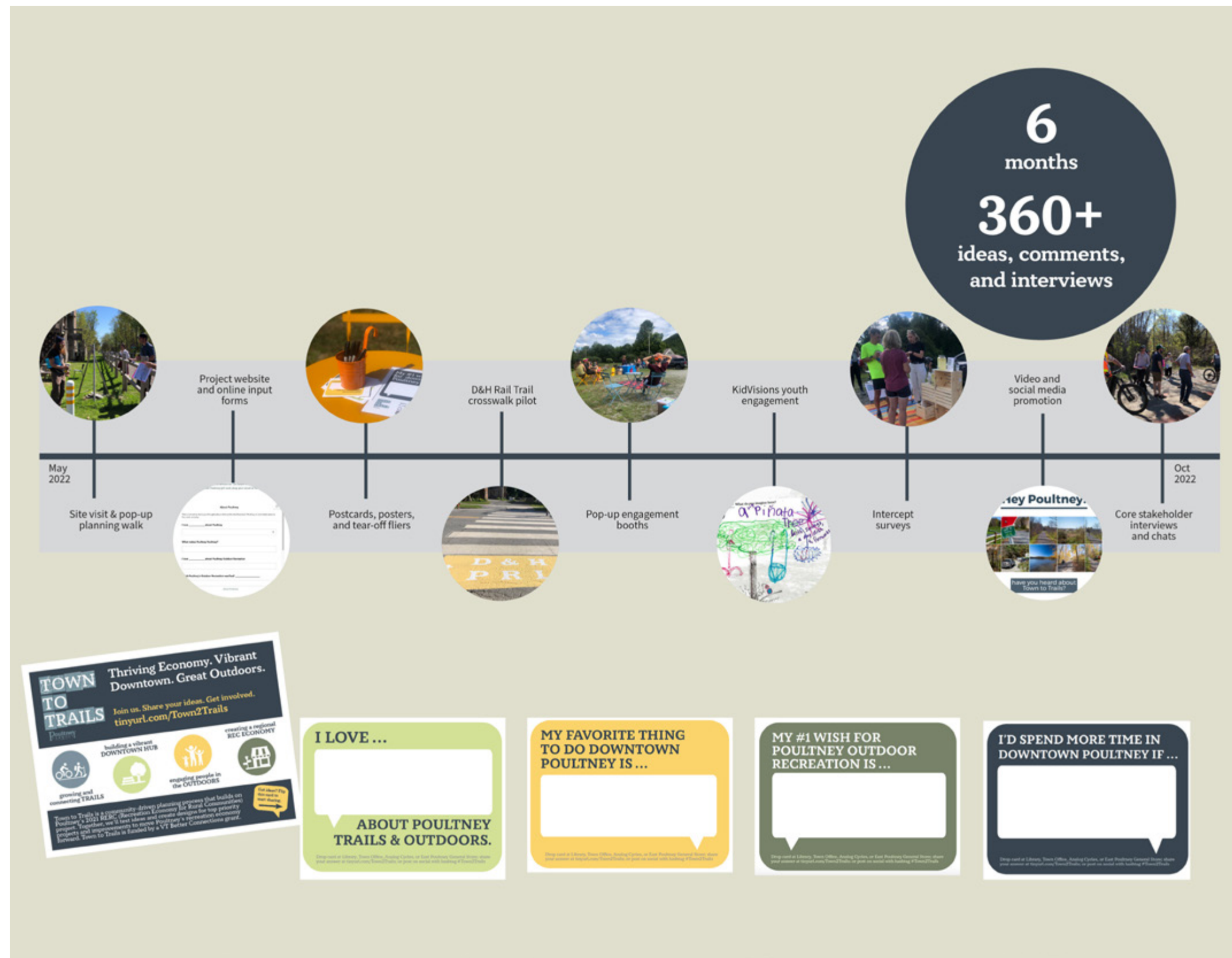
In 2022, Poultney Town to Trails focused on both gathering big picture input and on identifying potential pop-up projects, quick actions, and details to shape the emerging plan priorities. In order to reach diverse stakeholders who have different interests and busy lives, we focused on going to people where they already were and giving people a variety of ways to share ideas.

Poultney Town to Trails popped up all over town from May - October 2022, with many ways for people to share input and get involved:

- Site Visit and Pop-Up Planning Walk
- D&H Rail Trail Pop-Up Crosswalk
- Project Website and Digital Input
- Postcards, Posters, and Tear-Off Fliers
- Chats, Interviews and Intercept Surveys

These efforts build on the planning and engagement efforts in Poultney's RERC process, and focused on hearing from people whose voices were underrepresented in those conversations: young people and seniors, outdoor recreation visitors, business owners and downtown workers, Across all events and channels, we focused on asking big questions about downtown and outdoor recreation.

Each of the Areas of Focus in this book-- Poultney's Context, Routes Downtown (Trails & Corridors), and Downtown Poultney include summaries of corresponding public engagement work.



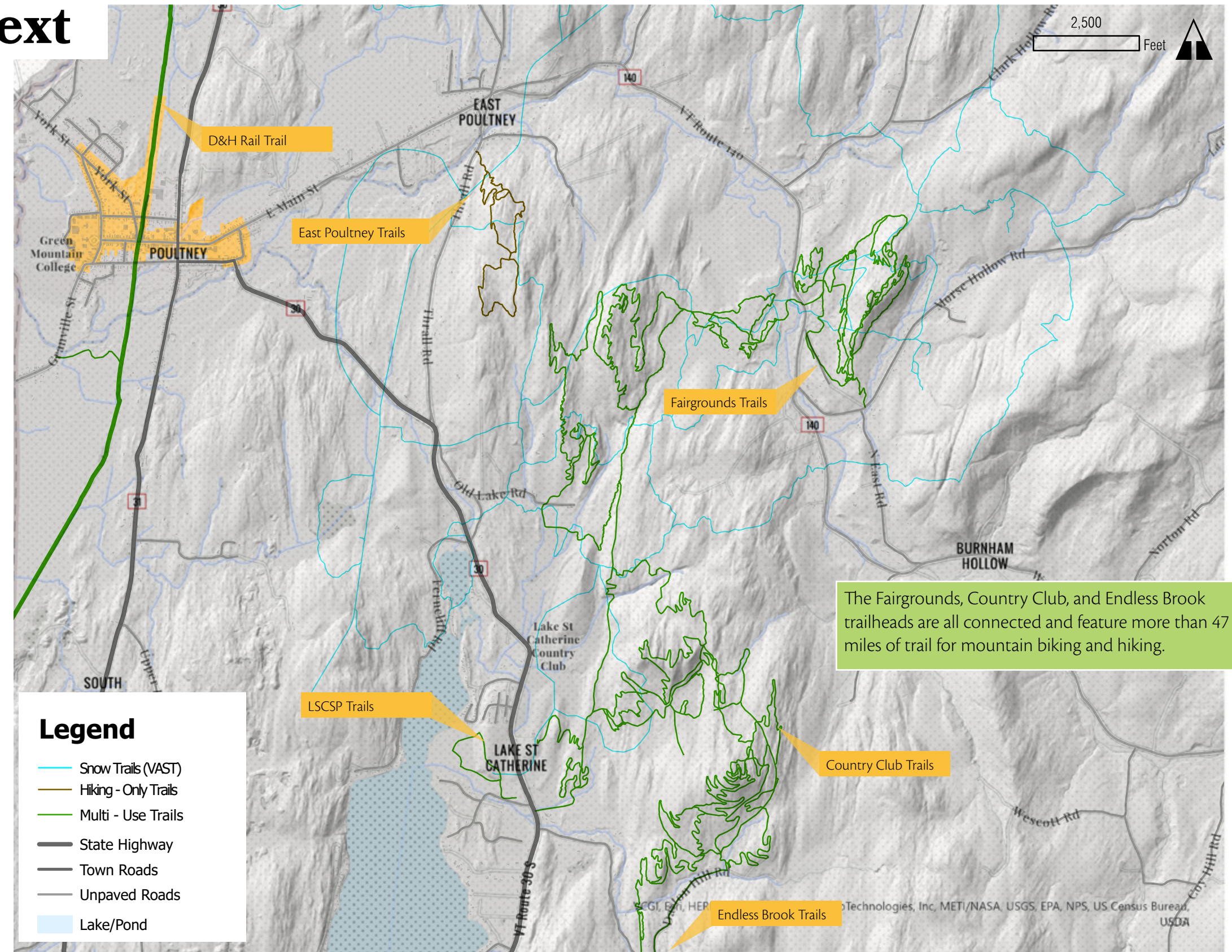
Poultney's Context

Trail Networks

More than 50 miles of hiking, running, and riding adventures lie within 6 miles of Poultney's Main Street. A majority of these trails are natural surface trails built and maintained on public and private land by Slate Valley Trails, a non-profit volunteer community group whose mission is to build, maintain, and promote foot and bicycling trails in the Slate Valley Region.

Key networks near Downtown Poultney include:

- **East Poultney Trails** - 2.5 miles of hiking-only trails accessed from Thrall Road south of the East Poultney Village. There is no formal trailhead parking for these trails but visitors are permitted to park at the nearby United Baptist Church during all times except for Sunday mornings.
- **Fairgrounds Trail Network** - Over 20 miles of trails which reaches from east of Route 30 to west of Route 140.
- **Country Club Trail Network** - Directly adjacent to Lake St. Catherine Park and above Lake St. Catherine Country Club, these trails can be accessed from Country Club Trailhead or Endless Brook Trailhead to the south.
- **Endless Brook Trails** - this trail access point provides access to the hiking-only trails to the south, or 20+ miles of multi use trails that connect to Country Club Trails.
- **DH Rail Trail & Offshoots** - Downtown centric trails include the DH Rail Trail Corridor, Poultney River Loop, and Veteran's Trails.
- **Lake St. Catherine State Park Trails** - about 1.5 miles of beginner friendly multi-use and mountain bike trails have been constructed within this state park. A fee is required for access.



The Fairgrounds, Country Club, and Endless Brook trailheads are all connected and feature more than 47 miles of trail for mountain biking and hiking.



Snowmobile Trail Networks

The Poultney Snowmobile Devils are the Vermont Area Snow Travelers (VAST) chapter who maintain a broad network of snow trails on private land across Poultney.

Trail Resource Distribution

The RERC calls for expansion of recreational assets that are inclusive of all levels of ability and interest (Goal 1, Action 1.3). The current network accommodates both mountain biking and hiking with about 5% of the trail miles being designated for hiking only.

Over half of the trail network miles are beginner friendly. About 30% of trail miles are designated as intermediate-level mountain bike routes and about 10% are designated advanced only. The majority of the intermediate and advanced trails are accessed from the Endless Brook, Country Club, and Fairgrounds trailheads. Based on these figures, the trail system appears to offer a balanced mix of trail experiences, but many are located quite far from Downtown.

Trail Resource Distribution Chart

Trail Network	Land Ownership	Formal Trailhead	Hiking Only Trails	Biking Only Trails	Expert Trail Miles	Intermediate Trail Miles	Beginner Trail Miles	Hiking Only	Total Miles
East Poultney Trails	Private	No	Yes	No	0	0	0	2.5	2.5
Fairgrounds Trails	Private	Yes	No	No	3.3	4.9	9.3	0	17.5
Country Club Trails	Private	Yes	No	No	0.4	4.9	5	0	10.3
Endless Brook Trails	Private	Yes	Yes	No	1.8	6.6	2	1.9	12.3
Poultney River Loop / Spartan Trails	Private	Yes	No	No	0	0	5.4	0	5.4
DH Rail Trail	Private	Yes	No	No	0	0	9.1	0	9.1
Total SVT Network					5.5	16.4	30.8	4.4	57.1
% Share of Network					9.63%	28.72%	53.94%	7.71%	



RERC: Increase Access for cross country skiing with a ski map and trail grooming
 Goal 1 - Link Town to Trails

RERC: Extend the hiking and biking trail network by combining it with the snowmobile trail network
 Goal 1 - Link Town to Trails



Trail Data

Slate Valley Trails maintains a network of trail use counters around the Poultney network. This data was reviewed and appears to tell two stories.

Trail use is growing.

The chart at right illustrates trail use in the summer months, roughly May through November of 2019, 2020, and 2021. When comparing 2019 numbers to 2021, the pattern of growth is clear, with events such as the Slate Valley Epic and other events driving the highest peaks. This upward trend points to both opportunities and challenges. More trail use can bring more economic opportunity catering to the outdoor recreation economy. But the community should be prepared that more trail users will also increase demands and impacts to local trail networks and trailheads.

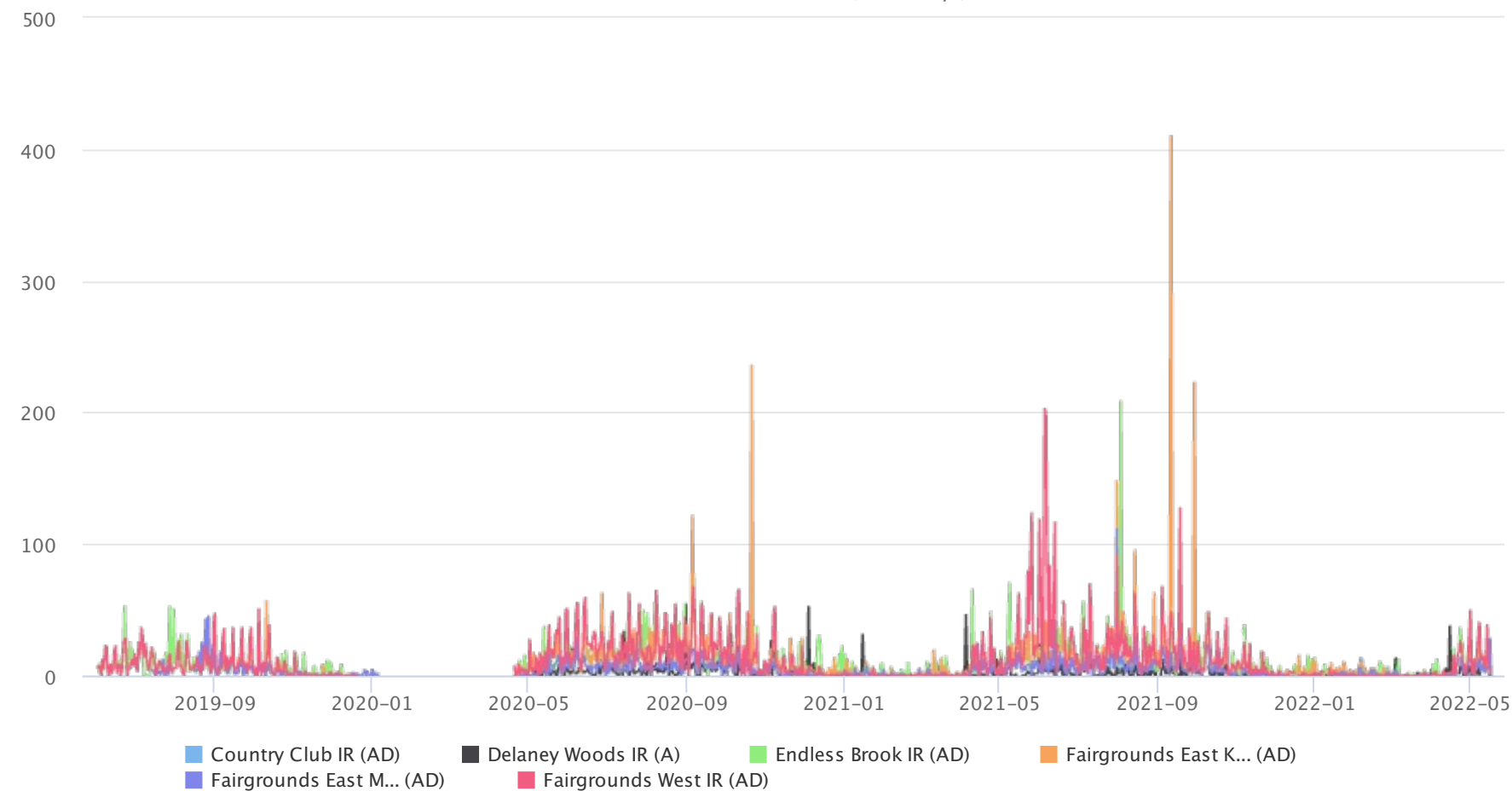
Where are the winter trails?

The low points of this data illustrate how colder winter months in Poultney severely decrease trail use. Though a dip in trail use should be seen as natural due to cold weather, the significant drop-off in user rates points to opportunities to improve Poultney's winter offerings to create a four season recreation economy.

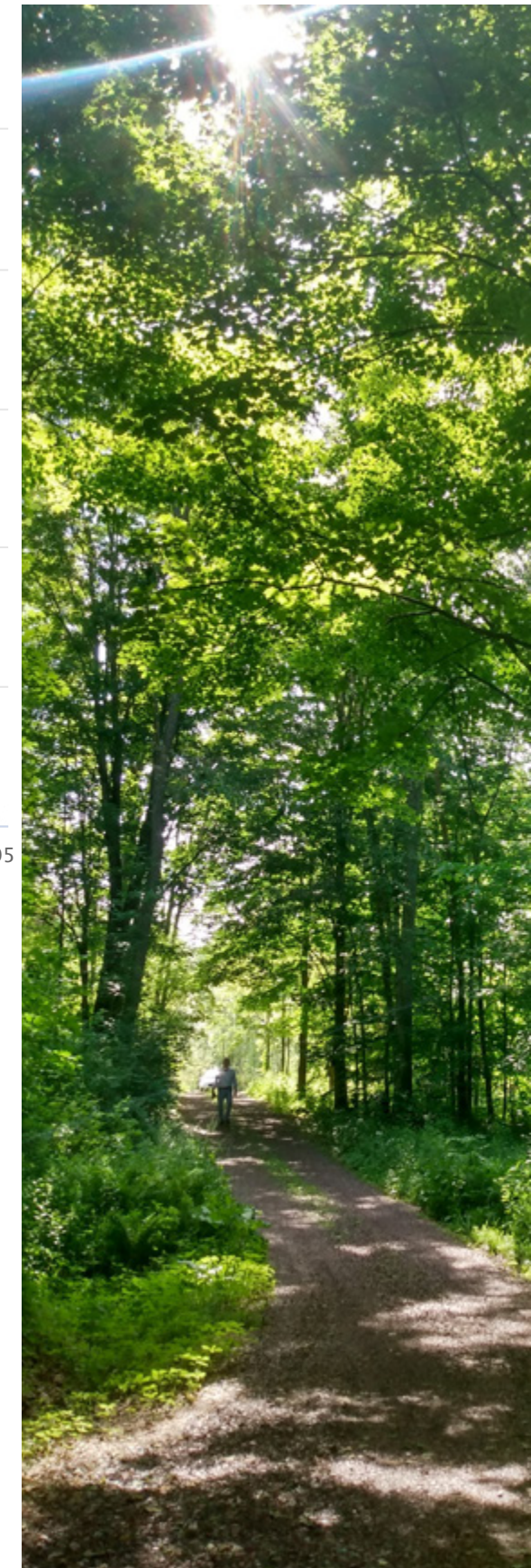
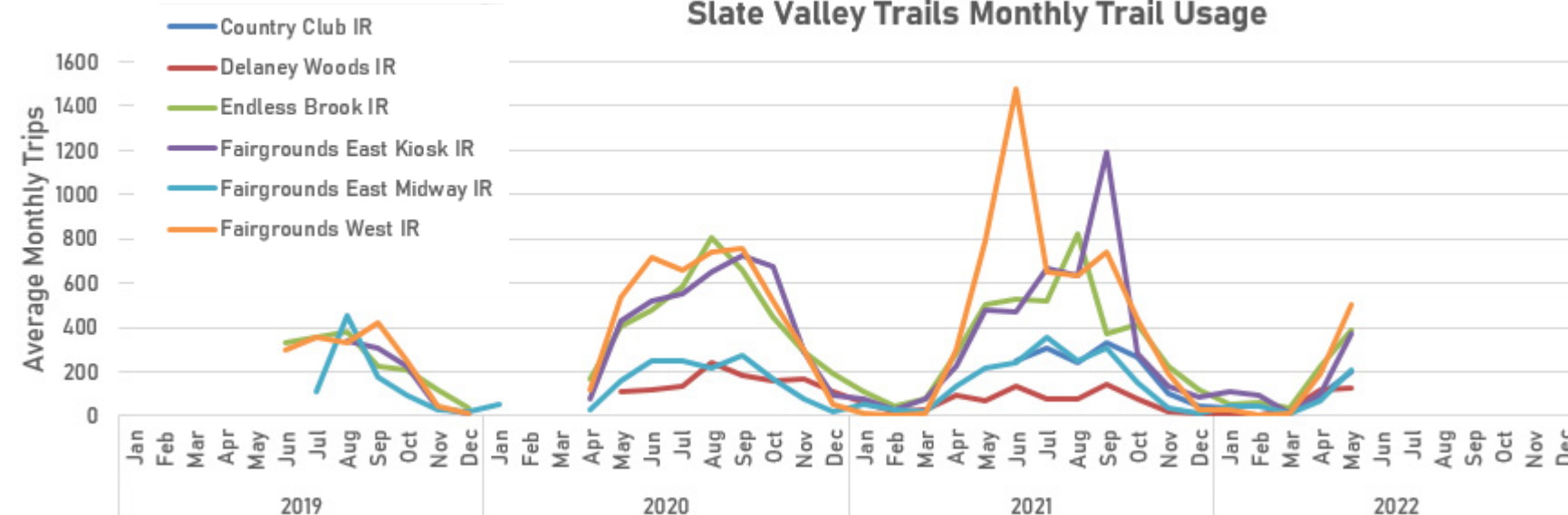
Currently, winter use of cross country skiing and snowshoeing is allowed on all of the Slate Valley Trail system, but dedicated grooming is limited only to the Poultney Snow Devils snowmobile trails. Although Slate Valley Trails is exploring the potential of grooming for fatbike usage and more winter use, no winter trails are officially maintained and groomed as of this report's writing.

Daily totals

2019-06-01 to 2022-05-17 (1082 days)



Slate Valley Trails Monthly Trail Usage



Trail Access

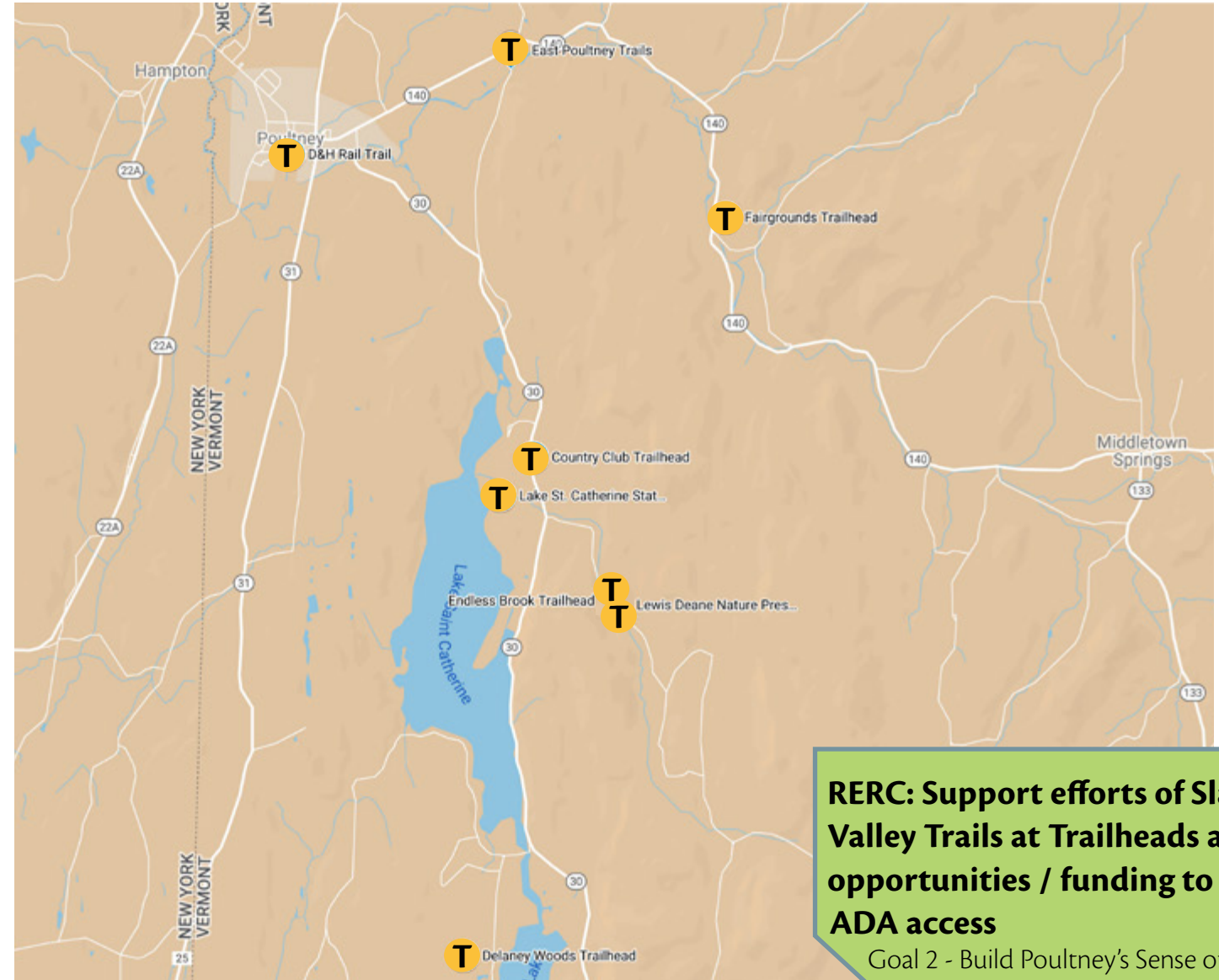
The past two years of trail counts illustrate that demand for trail access is growing. Growing demand for trail access equates to more heavily utilized trailheads.

Few trailheads are near Downtown. Only the D&H Rail Trail is within a mile of downtown, and the next closest trailhead is the winter-only snow trail parking at the corner of Route 30 and Kerber Lane. All other trailheads lie three to five miles from downtown.

Total capacity at public trailheads in the summer is approximately 50+ individual vehicles. That limit is significantly increased if parking at Lake St. Catherine State Park is considered, as that facility adds hundreds of available spaces. These spaces are available, but a fee is required.

As of this writing, there is not a reported overcrowding of trailheads in Poultney, but there is a concern that their existence is unintentionally hidden. Only the Fairgrounds Trailhead and Lake St. Catherine State Park have trailhead signage clearly visible from the road. Other trailheads in the system are clearly mapped on the SVT website, but do not have entry / welcome signage that can be seen by passing travelers.

Trail count data associated with trails nearby each trailhead illustrate an opportunity for increased use at the Country Club Trailhead. This well established trailhead has the lowest average annual use at nearby trails, and increased use at this location can support economic activity at the Country Club's Fairways Restaurant & Tavern.



RERC: Support efforts of Slate Valley Trails at Trailheads and find opportunities / funding to improve ADA access
 Goal 2 - Build Poultney's Sense of Place

Trailhead	Road Miles from Downtown	Approx Parking Capacity	Roadside Signage	Gathering Spaces / Seating	Trail Maps / Info	Average Daily Trail Usage
D&H Rail Trail (Bentley Ave)	0.4	8	No	No	No	not available
Fairgrounds Trails	4.1	70	Yes	Yes	Yes	26.4
Country Club Trails	3.2	30	Yes	No	Yes	7.2
Endless Brook Trails	4.5	9	Yes	No	Yes	11.1
Lake St. Catherine State Park	3.7	100+	Yes	Yes	Yes	not available
VAST Parking (Quality Cooling)	1.3					not available
Delaney Woods	7.4	7				5



Outdoor Recreation Events

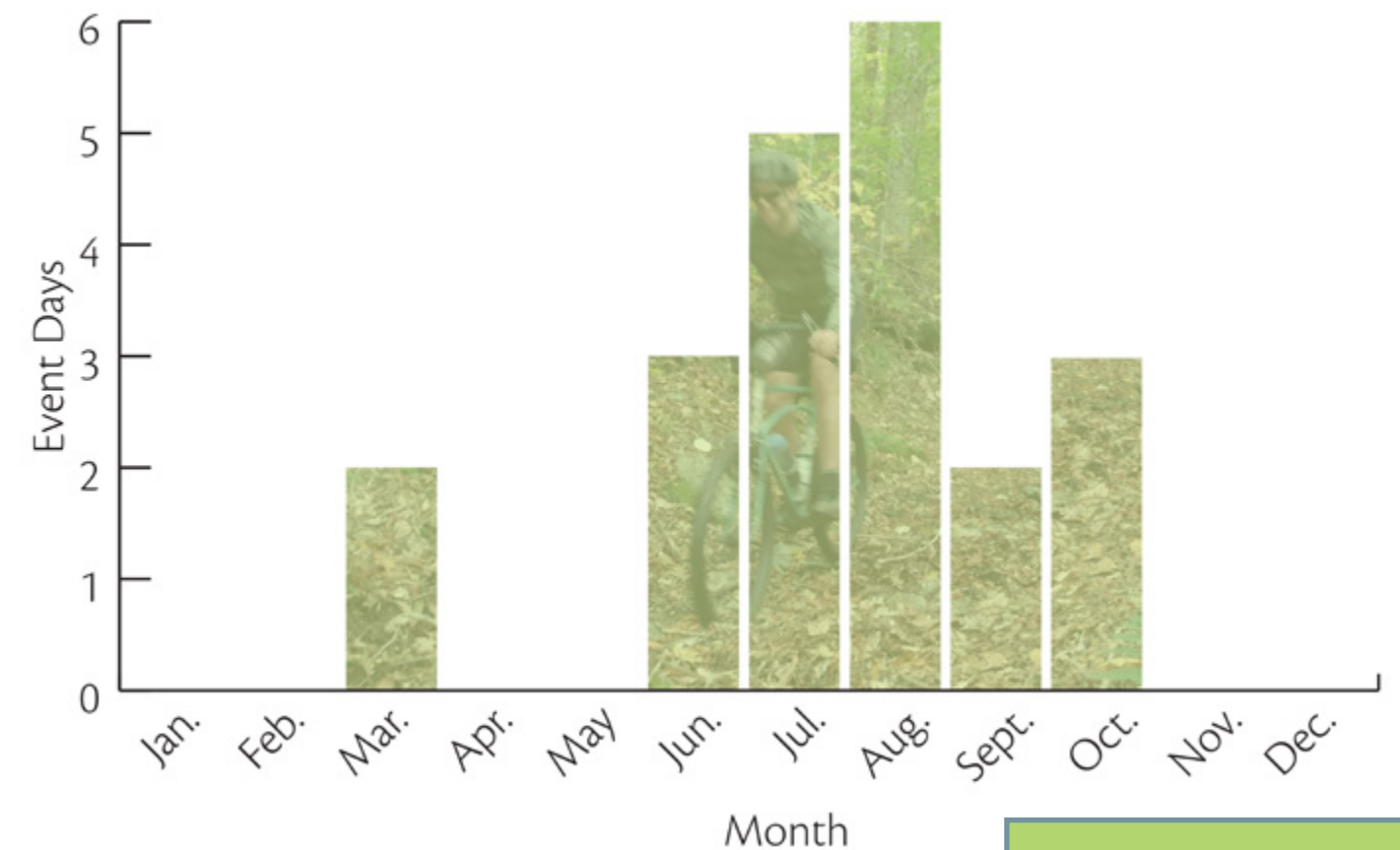
Outdoor recreation can bolster a local economy by drawing crowds to annual events, from beyond the geography of a typical weekend trip.

To illustrate the range and timing of events offered in Poultney, the 2022 event calendars for [Lake St. Catherine Country Club](#), [Analog Cycles](#), [Poultney Recreation](#), [Poultney Area Chamber of Commerce](#), and [Slate Valley Trails](#), were compiled.

This compilation of major events only captures some of what is currently offered. It doesn't capture more locally-focused events such as weekly rides and runs, and concerts in town parks. It does, however, illustrate a pattern of many summer events, and a far more open calendar in the cool and cold months.



Poultney Events			
Month	Events	# of days	Attendees
January	-	-	
February	-	-	
March	Maplefest	2	
	Fifth Season	2	100-120/ride
April	-	-	
May	-	-	
June	Analog 4x4	1	100-120/ride
	Lake St. Catherine Country Club (LSCCC) Match Play Classic	2	
July	Slate Valley Epic	2	
	4th of July Parade	1	
	LSCCC Club Championship	2	
August	Slate Valley Scramble	1	100-120/ride
	Retro Jamble & Swip Swap	1	40/ride
	LSCCC Open	3	
	East Poultney Day	1	
September	Leaf Peeker (LSCCC)	2	
	Poultney Chili Cookoff	1	
October	Gorey Hollows	1	
	Balls of Fire Tournament (LSCCC)	1	
	End of Year Blow Out (LSCCC)	1	
November	-	-	
December	-	-	



RERC: Identify current outdoor programming
 Goal 3 - Create Community Outdoors



Lodging

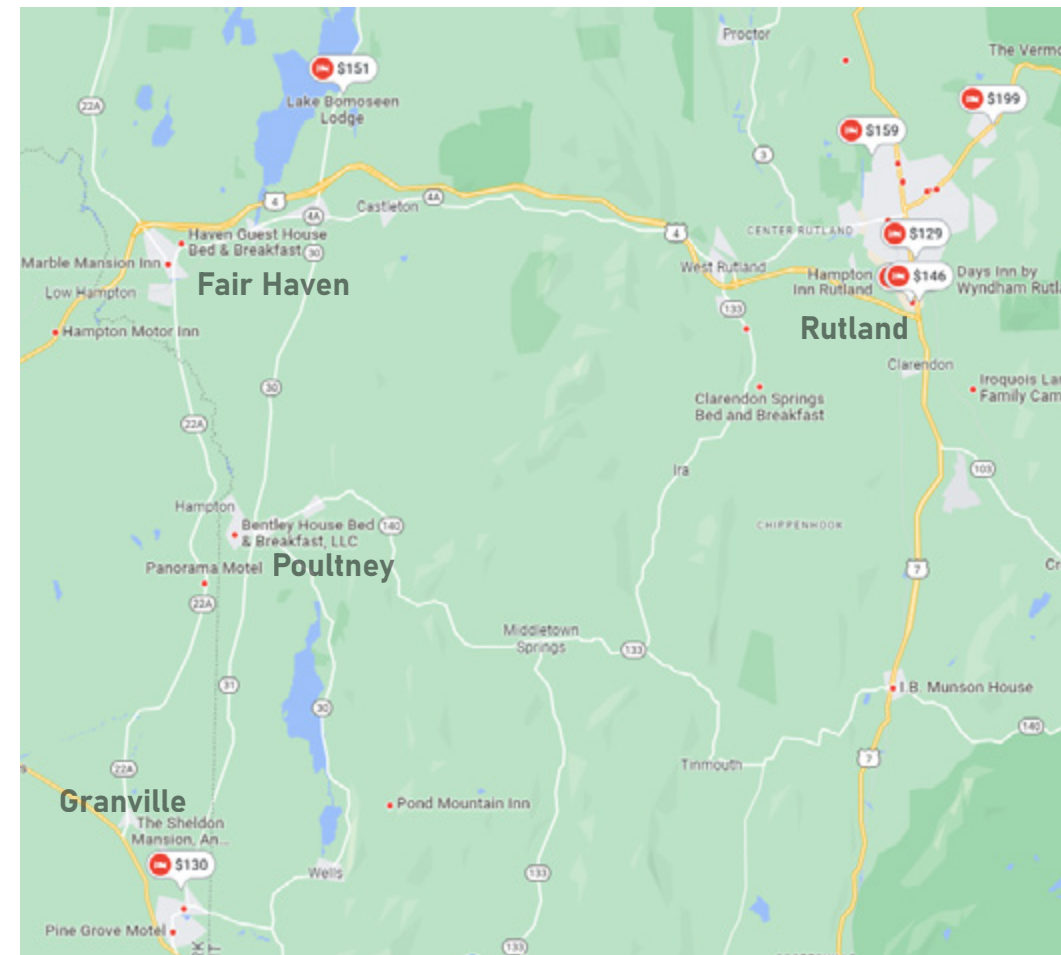
A diversity of lodging options can help establish Poultney as base camp for events and recreation in Vermont and New York. As of summer 2023, multiple lodging options are available in the Poultney area:

- **Hotels and B&Bs** - There is one bed and breakfast located in downtown Poultney. No other Hotels or B&Bs are available in the rest of the town. There are multiple locally owned hotels, inns, lodges, and B&Bs in nearby towns such as Fair Haven, Hampton, and Granville, NY as well as chain hotels to the east in Rutland and Killington.
- **Peer-to-Peer Rentals** - A search of Airbnb yields at least 17 locations between downtown and the trails. These are available at various price points.
- **Camping** - Sanctioned campsites and lean-to rentals are available from late May to mid October at Lake St. Catherine State Park. Yet the State Park does not currently show up in a Google Maps search for "camping." Collaborative marketing efforts by the Town and State could encourage more overnight stays by visitors who may not be familiar with options in the area.

Opportunities for Downtown Lodging

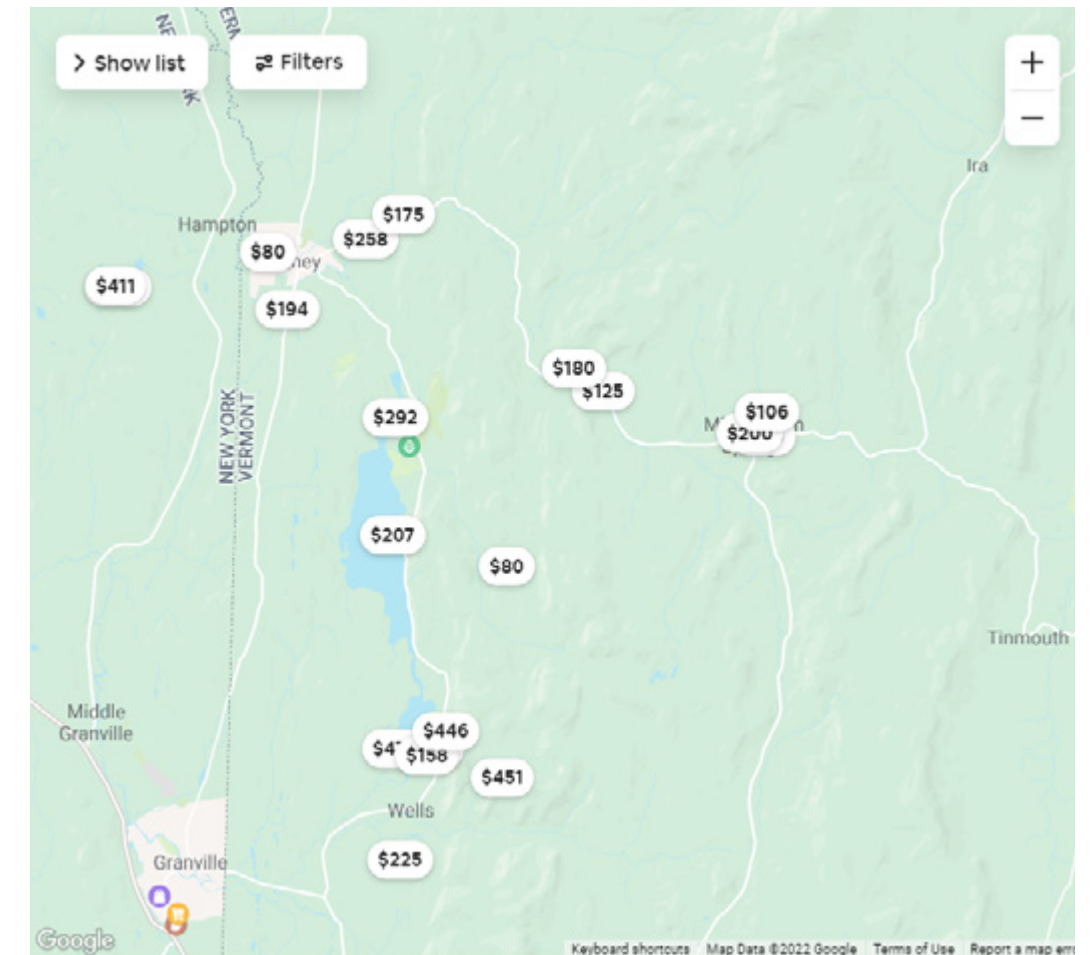
There are currently a modest offerings for lodging in the Poultney region. Most are on Airbnb and are located in rural portions of the community. This presents potential opportunity for downtown lodging, where there are few competitors, and proximity to restaurants and other businesses would benefit local spending.

Google search results for Hotels and B&B's



Most hotels and B&Bs are clustered around Rutland and areas to the east. In this Google Maps search, each red dot represents one hotel or B&B location. Prices are listed for a typical weekend in September where available.

Airbnb search results



There are multiple Airbnb listings throughout the Poultney. Only a small share of these are within walking distance of downtown Poultney.



Campground map at Lake St. Catherine State Park.

RERC: Review available accommodations and assess gaps

Goal 2 - Build Poultney's Sense of Place

CONTEXT

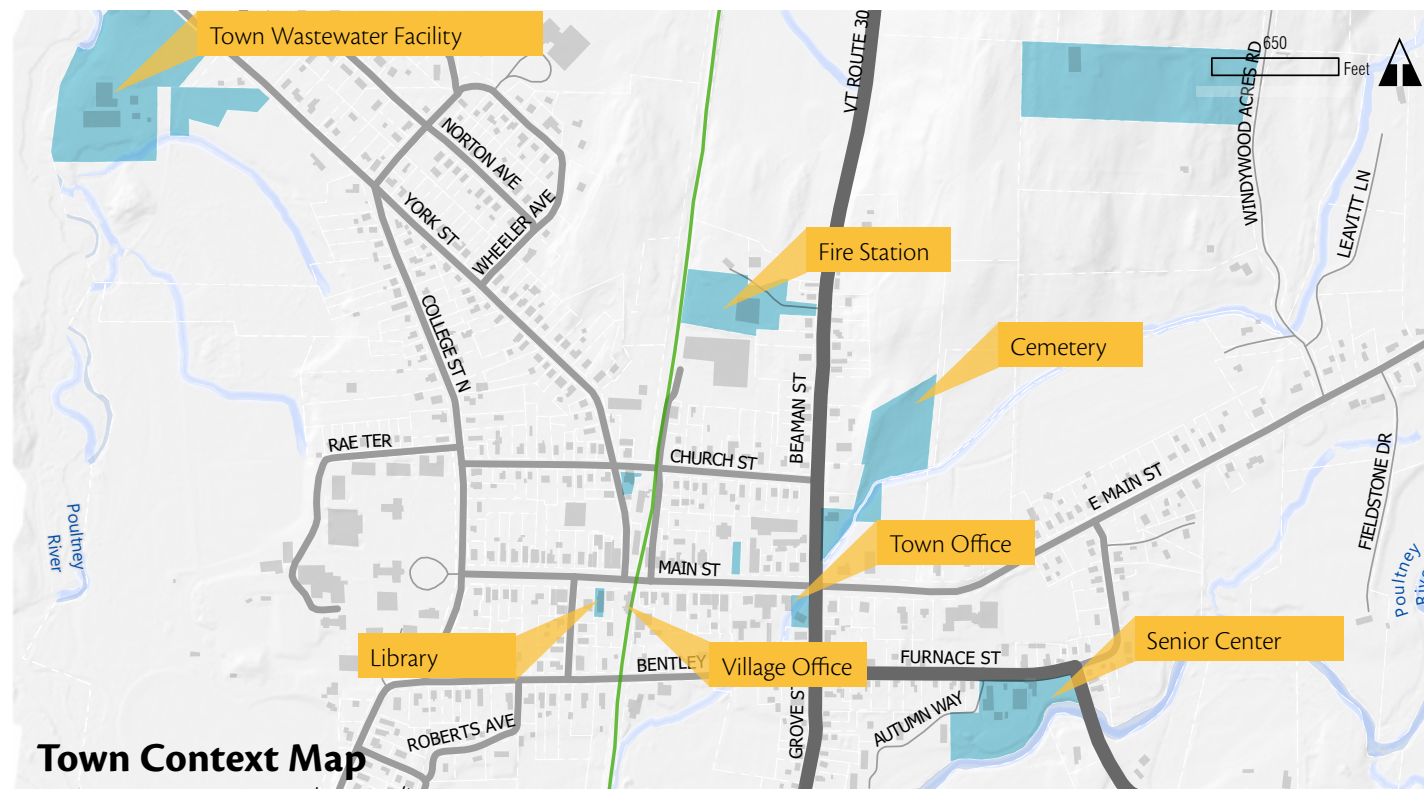
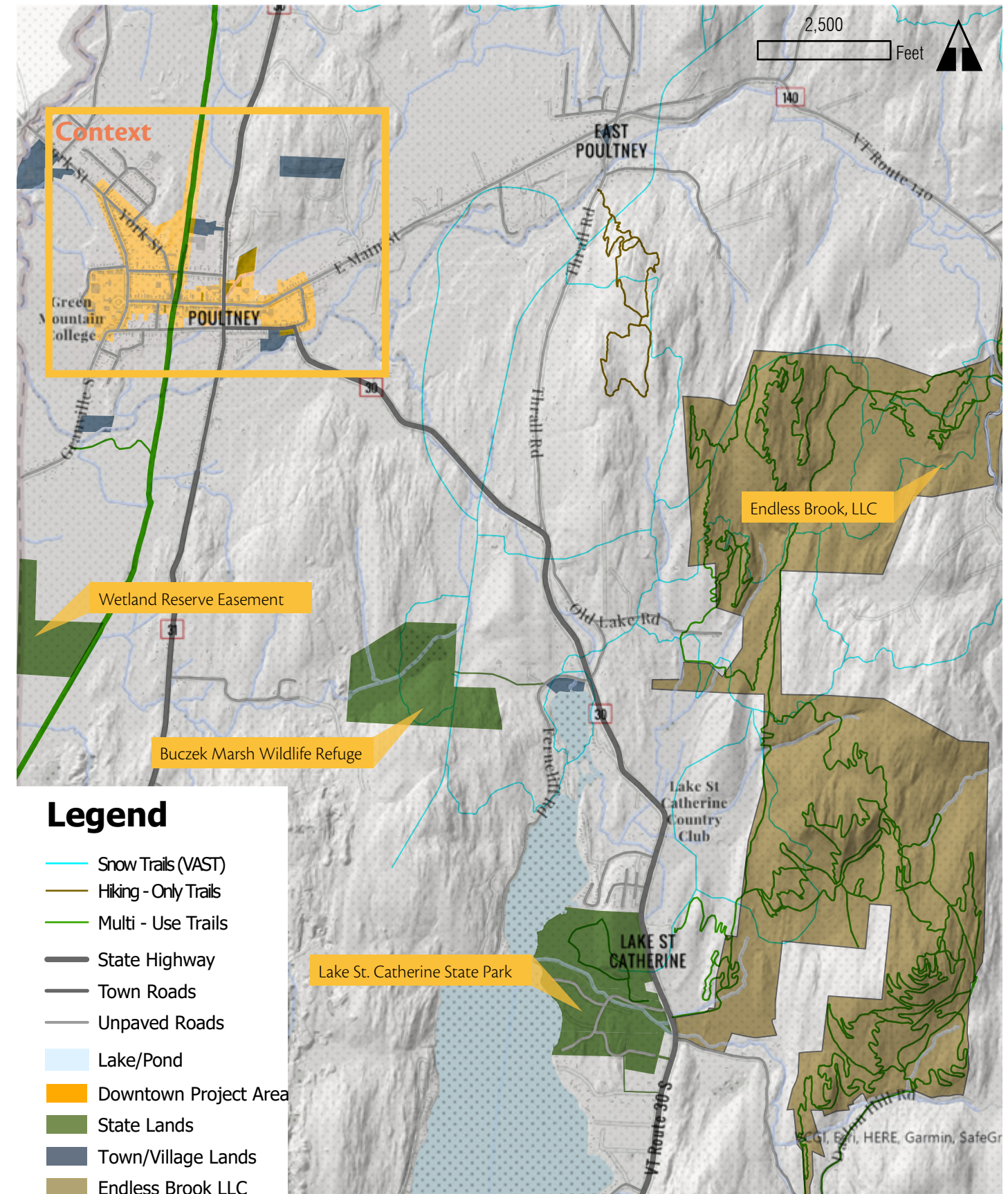
Land Ownership

Trails can't be built without willing landowners. Poultney is fortunate to benefit from Endless Brook LLC supporting a majority of the SVT trail network. Their lands, illustrated on the map at right in brown, lie east of the downtown core, and are accessed primarily through Route 140 or Route 30.

Linking these lands to downtown through a seamless trail connection requires either development of safe trail corridors along existing roadways, agreements with other private landowners or both.

Public lands that could support a Town to Trail project and are illustrated in green (State owned) or blue (Town/Village owned). These lands offer potential connection to existing trails (Poultney Fire Station's adjacency to D&H Rail Trail north of Main) or access to other recreational resources (Senior Center's proximity to Poultney River.)

Multiple state owned lands lie between major trail networks and downtown. These larger tracts of land include Lake St. Catherine State Park and Buczek Marsh Wildlife Management Area. There is also a USDA Wetland Reserve Program Easement directly adjacent to the D&H Rail Trail south of Downtown. Although working with state or federal agencies can be complex, these areas should be seen as potential additional assets to utilize on future trail and recreational resource projects.



Getting to Poultney

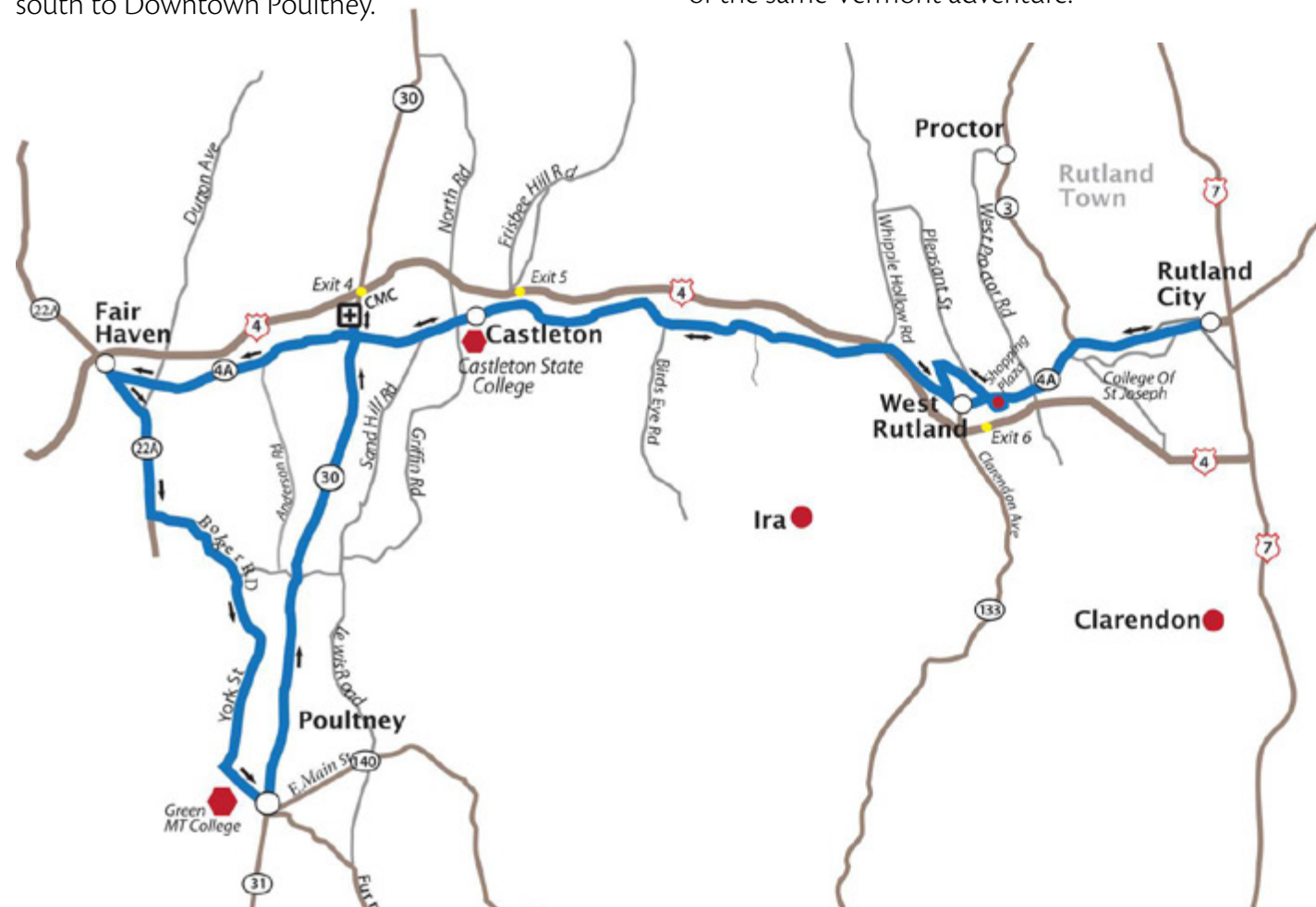
Public Transit

Poultney is served by fixed-route transit operated by the Marble Valley Regional Transit District (branded as "The Bus"). Route 4 links Poultney with Castleton and Rutland five times a day on weekdays, and four times a day on weekends.

While the route may appear to provide local service along VT-30 (Beaman Street), it is not very useful for short-distance trips within the Town of Poultney because of its one-way-loop design west of Castleton. While it may be easy traveling northbound, those living along VT-30 cannot use the service to travel south to Downtown Poultney.

Where this route excels is in serving longer-distance trips between Rutland and Poultney, both for commuting, and for recreation. Using this transit route, visitors from Rutland and beyond can make a round trip to Poultney for a car-free day of outdoor recreation. With bike racks on the buses, this route also enables the unique experience of one-way travel for long-distance touring cyclists, a type of trip that is often logistically impossible by car if you must return to your car at the end of your bike ride.

This current service may offer some unique creative marketing campaigns for Poultney, Rutland, and "The Bus" to market bicycle tours and public transit as part of the same Vermont adventure.

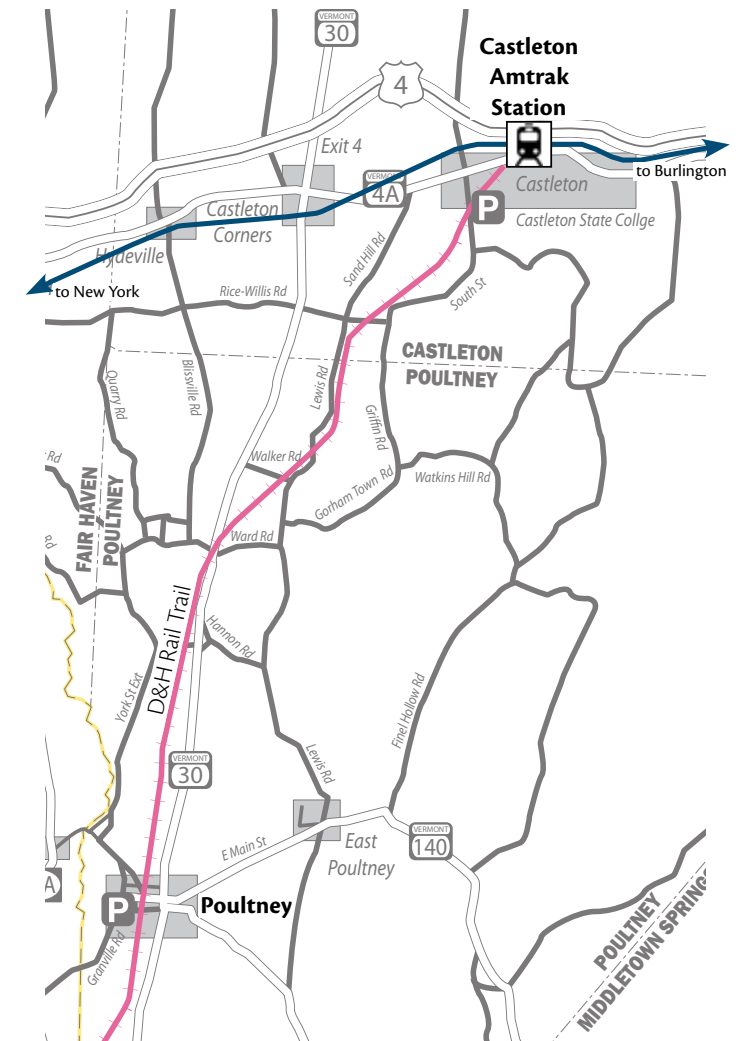


Marble Valley Regional Transit District's Route 4, links Poultney with Castleton and Rutland.



Regional Amtrak Connections

The D&H Rail Trail provides safe and easy connection between Poultney and Castleton Station, where Amtrak's Ethan Allen Express offers daily service to New York City and Burlington. At a distance of about 8 miles, some people may find cycling along the Rail Trail to be the most convenient way to access Castleton Station, particularly if they plan on bringing their bikes on board the train for use at their destination. Passengers have the option of bringing their bike on board the train for a fee.



Amtrak's Ethan Allen Express can be accessed by the D&H Rail Trail

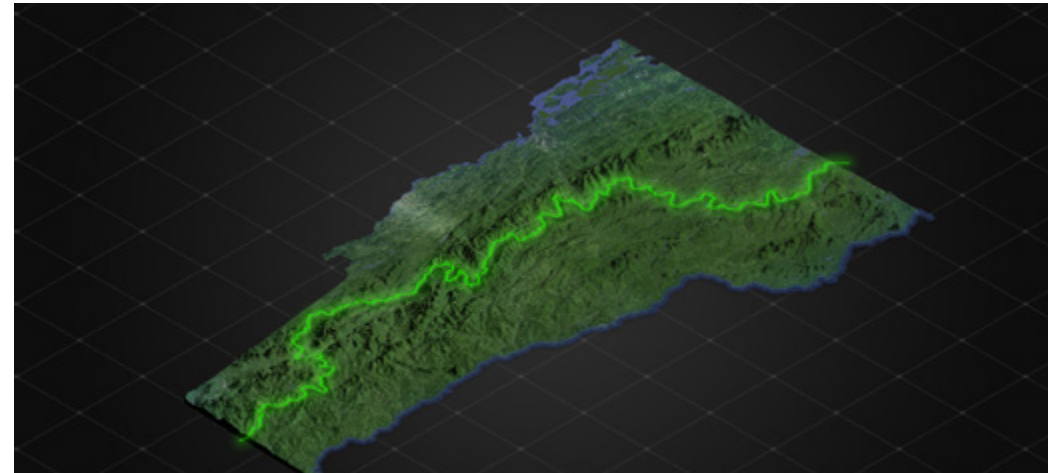


Long Distance Cycling

No less than three unique long distance cycling routes pass through Poultney. Each corridor has been developed independently and utilizes Poultney's outdoor recreation assets - from existing trails in the Slate Valley Trails network (Velomont) to the D&H Rail Trail (Eastern Divide and Super 8) to using Downtown Poultney and the D&H Rail Trail as the final destination to the long distance Tour (Eastern Divide)

The presence of these routes points to opportunities for Downtown Poultney to market long distance cycle-touring as part of the outdoor economy, as well as opportunities for future outdoor recreation hubs to support and encourage these types of low-impact events bringing additional lodging, meals, and future economic growth opportunities to the town.

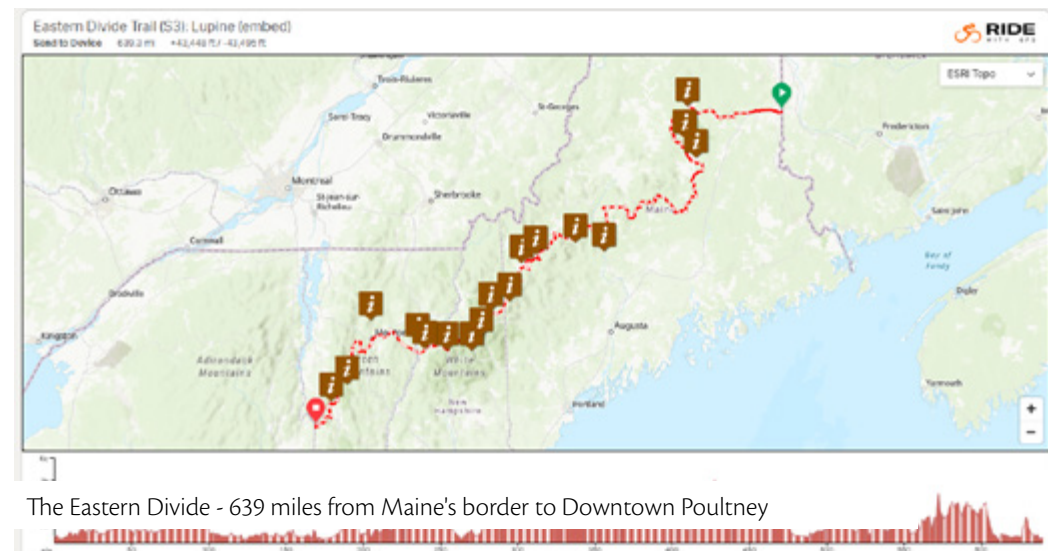
One commonality among all these corridors as currently designed is the use of the D&H Rail Trail and Main Street Poultney as a major element of their route. Areas of downtown adjacent to these routes may be ideal for future the development of an outdoor recreation hub.



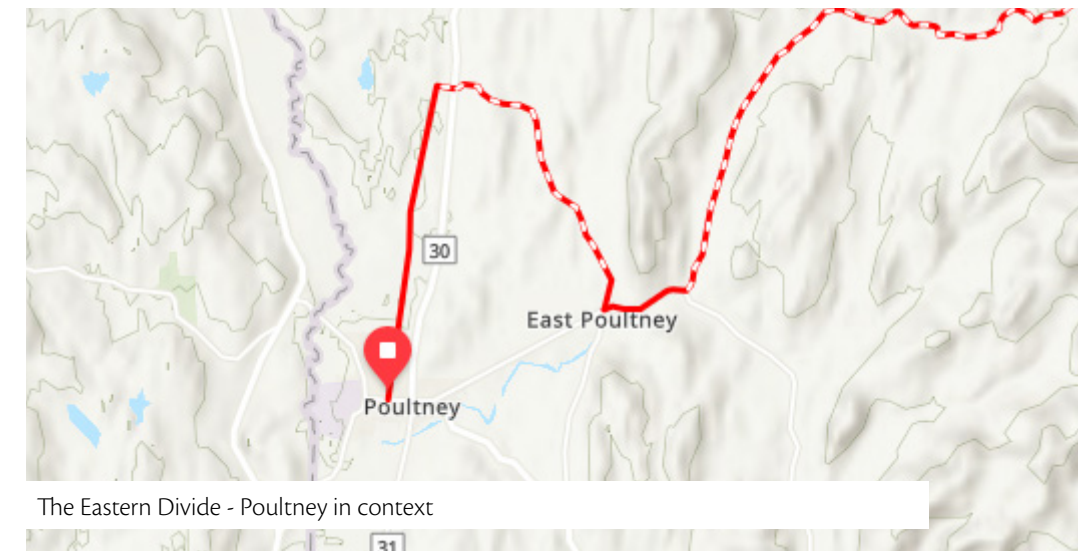
Velomont - A mountain biking corridor through the length of Vermont



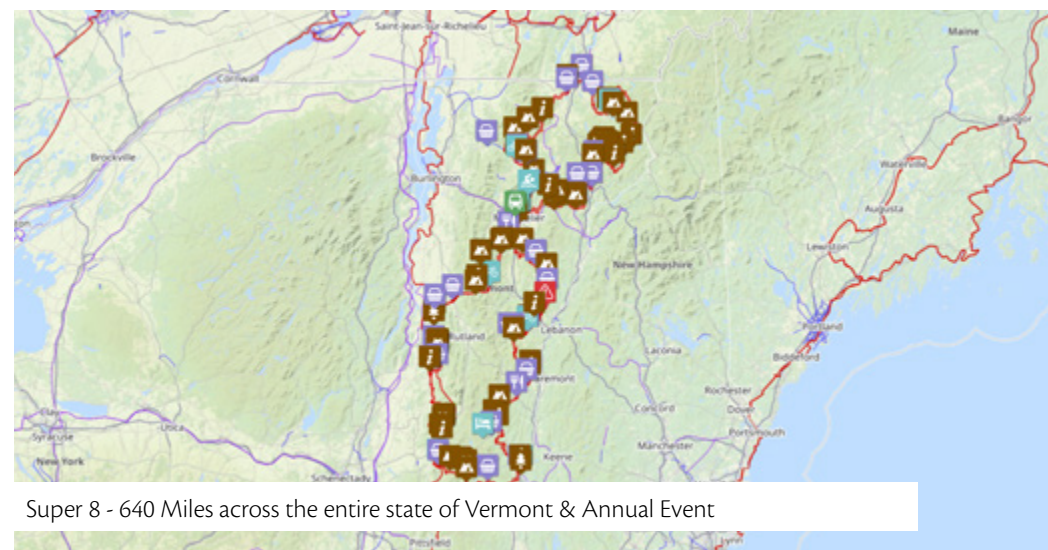
Velomont - Poultney in context



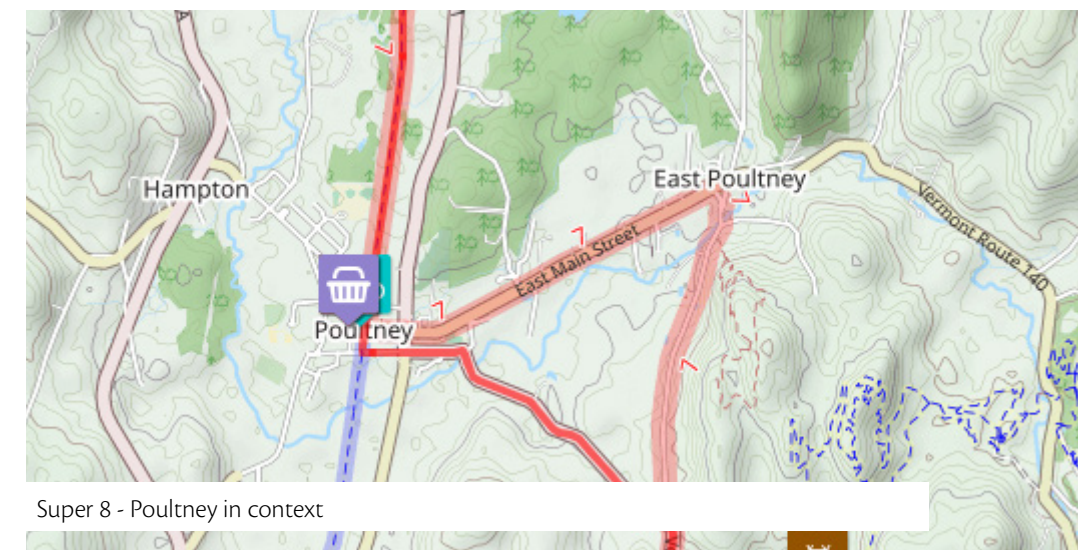
The Eastern Divide - 639 miles from Maine's border to Downtown Poultney



The Eastern Divide - Poultney in context



Super 8 - 640 Miles across the entire state of Vermont & Annual Event



Super 8 - Poultney in context



Routes Downtown

Route 30 and Route 140

In linking Town to trails, there are two road corridors that could be used, Route 30 and Route 140.

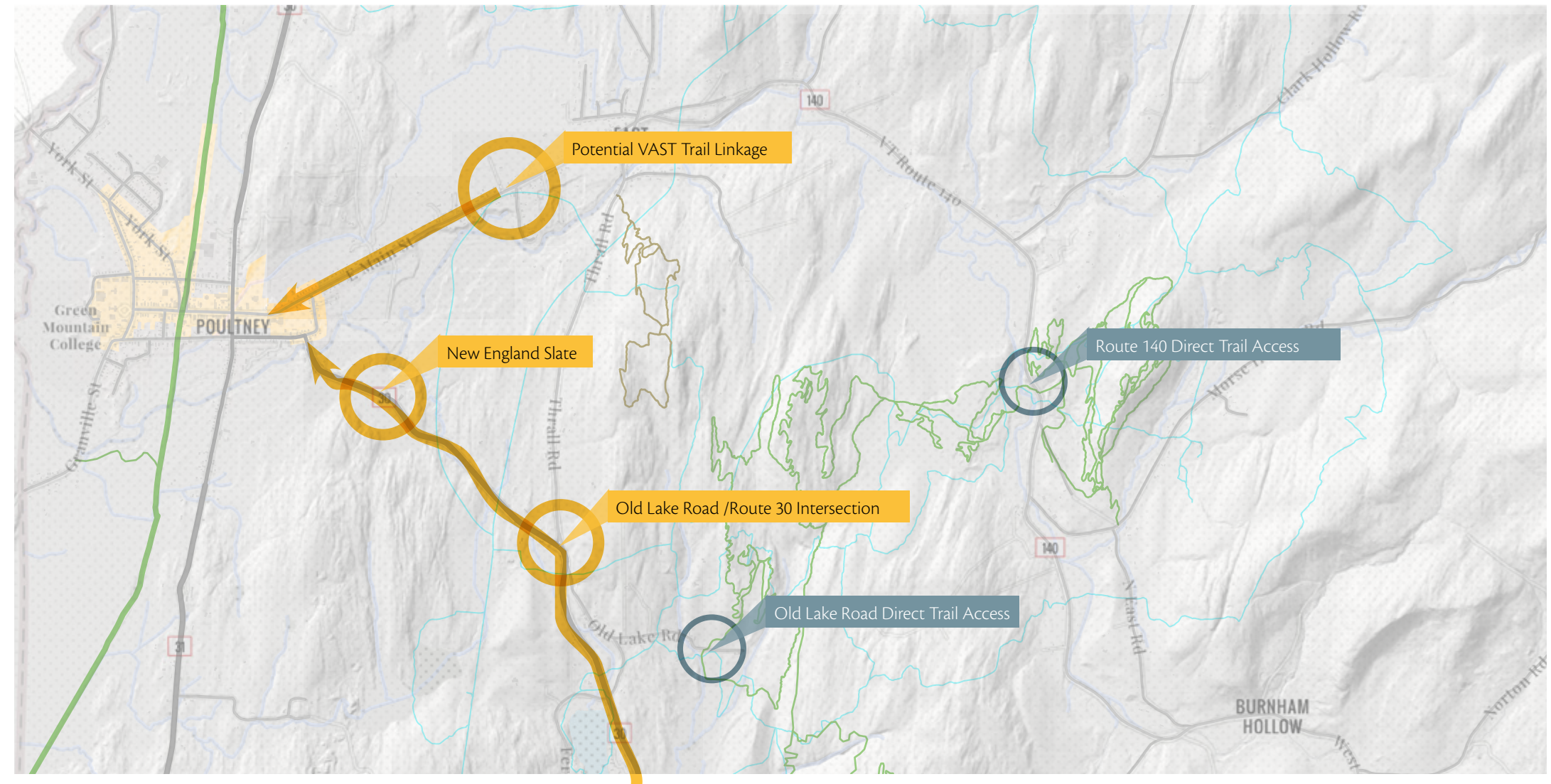
Route 30 is state owned (excluding the Class 1 portion in the Village). Route 140 is owned and maintained by the Town of Poultney. Route 30 is a more mountainous corridor, with steep slopes on either side of the road. Route 140 faces level residential yards on either side. The VTrans Transportation Data Management system indicates that vehicles on Route 140 typically travel at speeds of up to 42 mph, which is above the posted speed limit of 35 mph. Route 30 sees typical speeds of up to 63 mph., which is above the posted speed limit of 50 mph. Both corridors maintain approximately 49.5 foot rights of way.

Route 140 presents a safer and less complex multi-modal corridor. However, the land use context is perhaps more challenging on Route 140. A steady series of 1/2 acre small residential parcels line Route 140 between Poultney and the East Poultney green, and these landowners feedback and interest in improvements to the town road fronting their properties would be crucial in gaining support for any improvement along this corridor.

Route 30 shouldn't be discounted from consideration, but emphasis should be on solutions that bridge key gaps along the roadway rather than expensive pathways built along the entirety of the corridor.

Town to Trails Today

Four Miles. That's the distance from downtown Poultney to one of two access points - Old Lake Road's dead end access to Carnie and Ringmaster



Trails, or Route 140's intersection with Ringmaster and the Fairground networks.

Either of these access points face challenges - the Route 140 corridor is winding and more dangerous east of East Poultney, with limited sight lines and minimal road shoulder. The route from East Poultney, to Thrall Road and Old Lake Road must deal with the dangerous intersection of Old Lake Road, Thrall Road, and Route 30.

Roadway Corridor Comparison							
	Owner	Context	Traffic Volumes (AADT)	85th Percentile Speeds	Sight Lines	Wetlands	Existing Bike / Ped Facilities
Route 140	Town of Poultney	Level, Residential	2,221 (2021)	42 mph	Good until E. Poultney	None adjacent to road	Sidewalk only, no shoulder
VT Route 30	VTrans	Sloped, Rural	1,552 (2021)	63 mph ¹	Some Poor	Significant wetlands present towards LSCSP	None

¹ VTrans data indicates an 85th percentile speed of 63 mph in 2018 but 52 mph in 2015. Such a large discrepancy may suggest data error and should be investigated in future studies



Route 30 Corridor

Downtown Poultney lies in the middle of the Stone Valley Byway, a designated scenic byway connecting Poultney with Castleton and Hubbardton to the North, and Dorset and Manchester to the south. This 3.7 mile road section is the most direct corridor to connect Downtown Poultney with the trails and resources located near Lake St. Catherine State Park, and Lake St. Catherine Country Club.

Constraints

Despite its recreational value, this road corridor is not a comfortable place for most people to walk or bicycle. Narrow shoulders rarely extend more than 2 feet on the side of this 40mph road. This is far short of the minimum safe pedestrian and cycling width of 5 feet. This narrow profile is dictated largely by the road being elevated roughly 2 feet about the surrounding terrain. Additional portions of the corridor find road adjacent wetlands and steep slopes, and constrained sight lines due to horizontal curves.

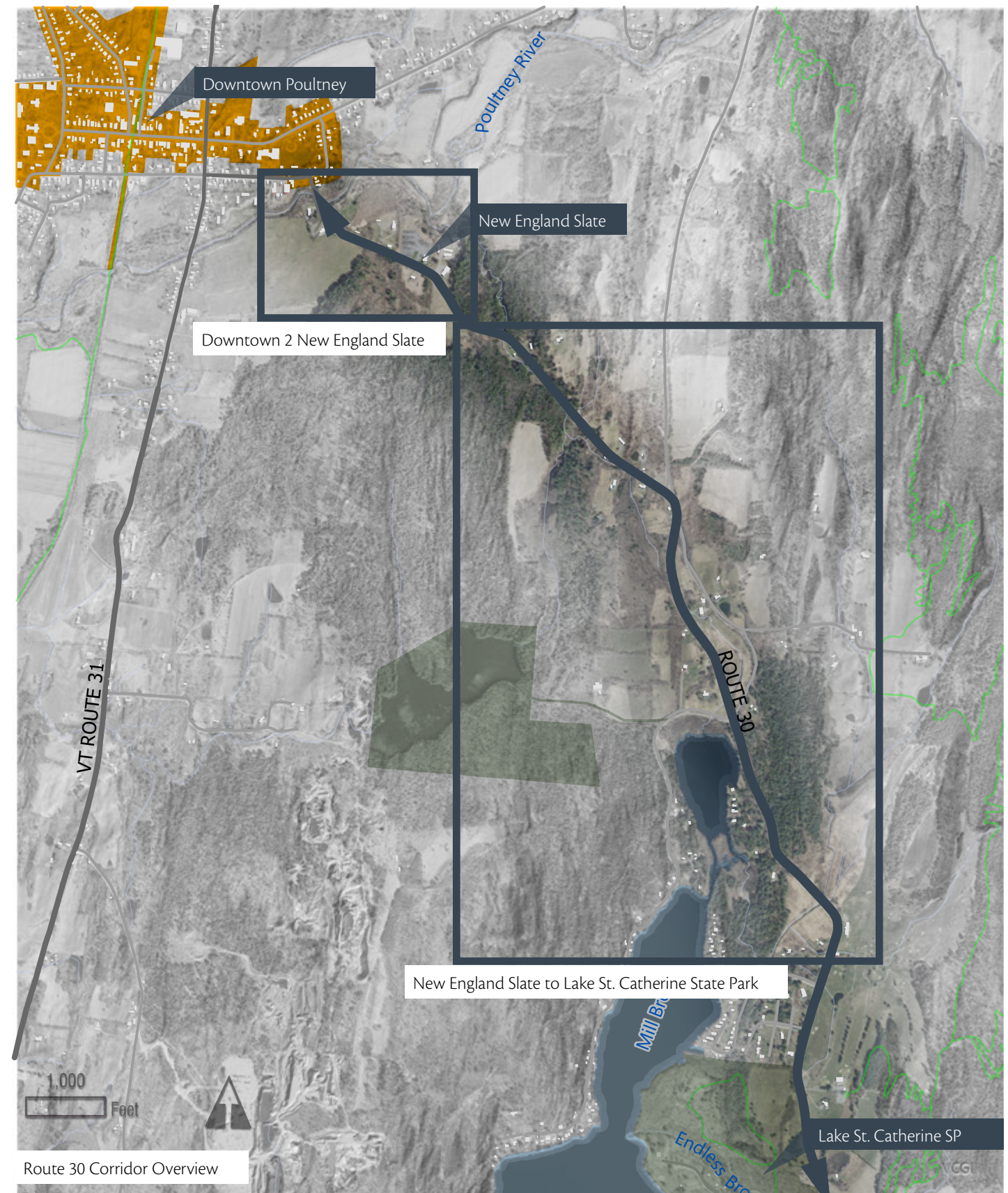
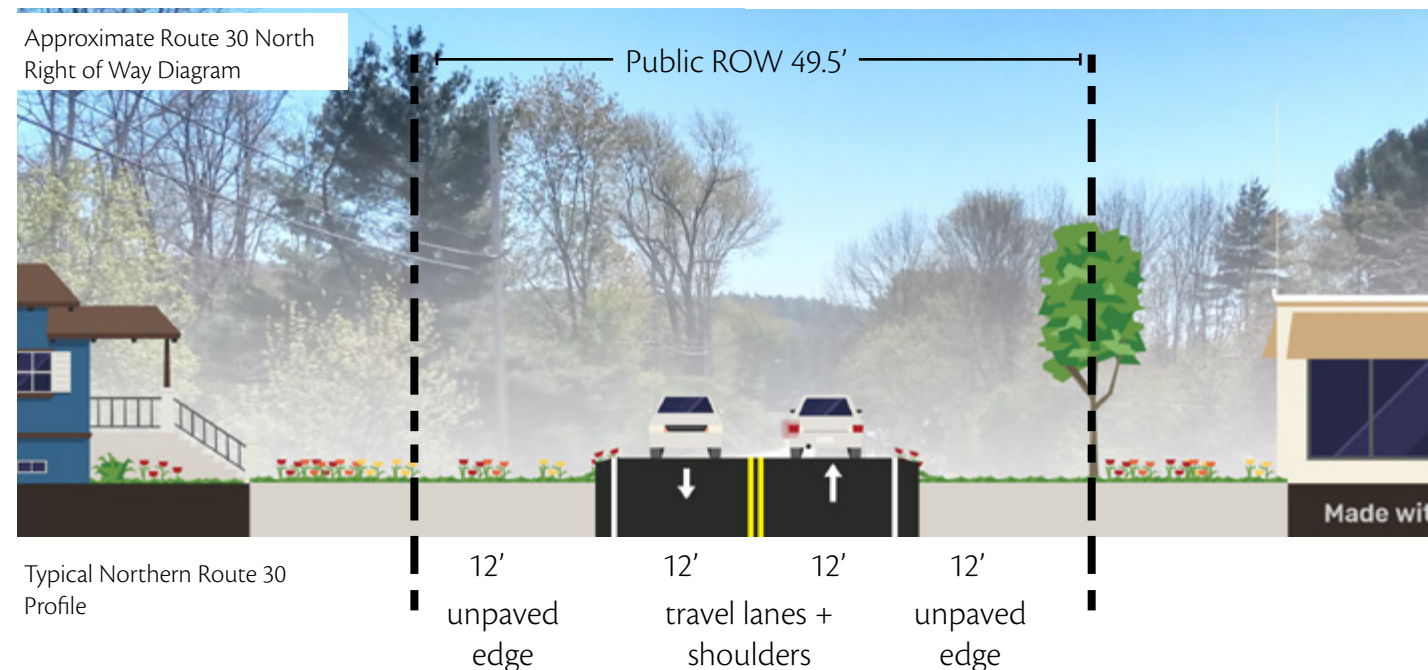
Opportunities

The ideal connection along this roadway would be a more complete-street design, that provides a safe, designated, and separated corridor for people to

walk, bike, or drive between Poultney and Lake St. Catherine State Park. Along this constrained corridor, such a vision would represent a multi-million dollar investment.

However, the northern corridor has reduced constraints adjacent to the roadway, and due to potential trail linkages with New England Slate, a 1/2 mile Route 30 corridor between this site and Furnace Street could be considered for more investigation to how a shared use path, bike lanes, or road-adjacent natural surface trail could be constructed to connect with existing sidewalk on the east side of the Route 30 bridge over the Poultney River and Furnace Street.

At a minimum, future road projects should look to expand shoulders to a 5 foot minimum wherever possible and resolve the intersection safety issue at Route 30 and Thrall/Old Lake roads. Expansion of shoulders, or development of a bike lane, sidewalk, or pathway in the public ROW would need additional design and/or scoping work ahead of any construction.



Downtown to New England Slate

Slate Valley Trails has reached discussions with New England Slate to propose trail linkages to this location from the Fairgrounds network. This would bring a trail within a half mile of downtown.

However, this short 1,500 foot corridor of Route 30 roadway falls short of being a safe and comfortable corridor to connect people walking and bicycling to Downtown Poultney.

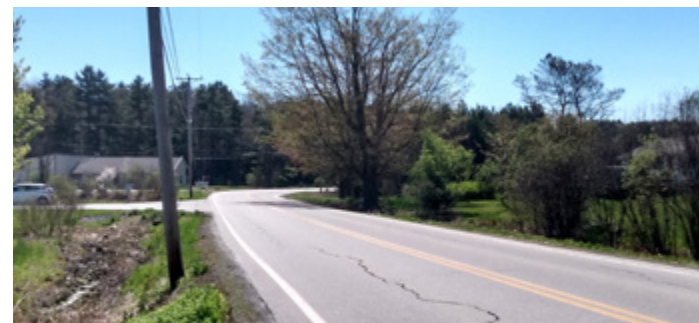
Road Character

As illustrated on the prior page, Route 30 is a two lane highway, with typical paved widths of no more than 24 feet. These 11 foot lanes and 1-2 foot shoulders are not sufficient for safe walking and bicycling on this road. According to the [Vermont Right of Way Spatial Data Hub](#), the right of way along this corridor is approximately 49.5 feet wide. Assuming that the paved road is centered within the public right of way, there should be approximately 12.5 feet of publicly owned space on either side of the pavement. This could provide sufficient space to build a 10-12 foot wide shared use pathway on either side of the road to link Town to Trails.

There are challenges building such a facility. The road is elevated above the surrounding terrain by a few feet. Although this elevated design helps the paved road shed water during storms, it means that construction of a shared use facility adjacent to either travel lane would have to be built with retaining walls and/or fill to build a level facility - a functional, but costly solution.



A 5 foot wide sidewalk is present on the eastern side of the Poultney River Bridge.



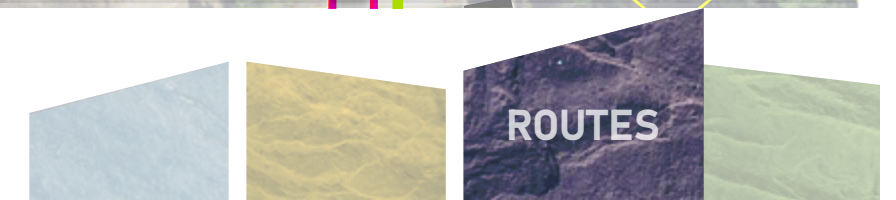
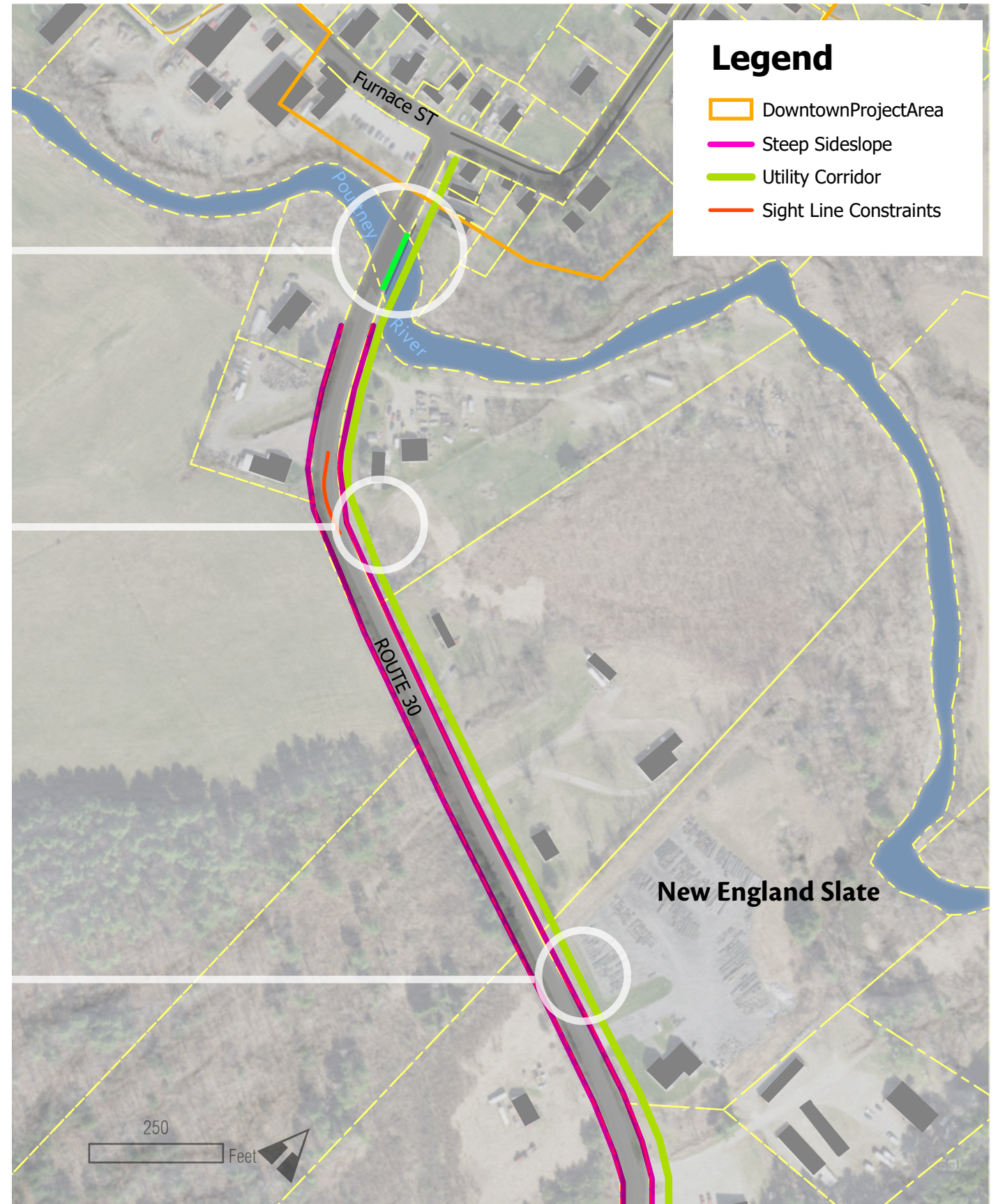
Electric Utility Poles line the eastern side of the roadway at this location, and complicate any future construction on this side.



Steep side-slopes line the entirety of Route 30 between New England Slate and Furnace Street.



An existing culvert points to this portion of NE slate being used for highway access at a point in the past.



New England Slate to Lake St. Catherine State Park

This portion of the Route 30 corridor linking the Downtown adjacent homes and businesses with Lake St Catherine State Park is not an inviting place to walk or bicycle.

Existing shoulders provide between six and 24 inches on the side of the 11 foot wide travel lanes, not enough for safe accommodation for any person. Steep slopes are present on either side of the roadway, and the areas towards Lake St. Catherine have numerous roadside wetlands present which constrain any potential construction project.

The winding nature of the roadway creates curves and rises/dips in the road that result in limited sight lines, meaning a driver or cyclist can not see oncoming traffic around the bend or over the hill. Of particular concern is the intersection of Route 30 with Old Lake Road & Thrall Road. Pictured at right, this intersection was created when the Route 30 project utilized the former Thrall / Old Lake Road roadbed to build the new highway. Concerns with this geometry include:

- Oblique angles make it difficult for drivers on either roadway to see oncoming traffic.
- Thrall Road and Old Lake Road are key cycling routes connecting East Poultney Green directly with trails at the end of Old Lake Road. In theory, this requires riders to cross a high speed roadway, on a curve, twice within a 200 foot space. In practice, this results in many non-motorized travelers moving counterflow to traffic within the travel lane.

Future solutions should look to roadway realignment and/or establishing a counter flow walk/bike corridor that could reduce conflicts at this intersection while providing connection. Any solution should recognize that uphill slopes and downhill private property constrain opportunities for simple realignment.



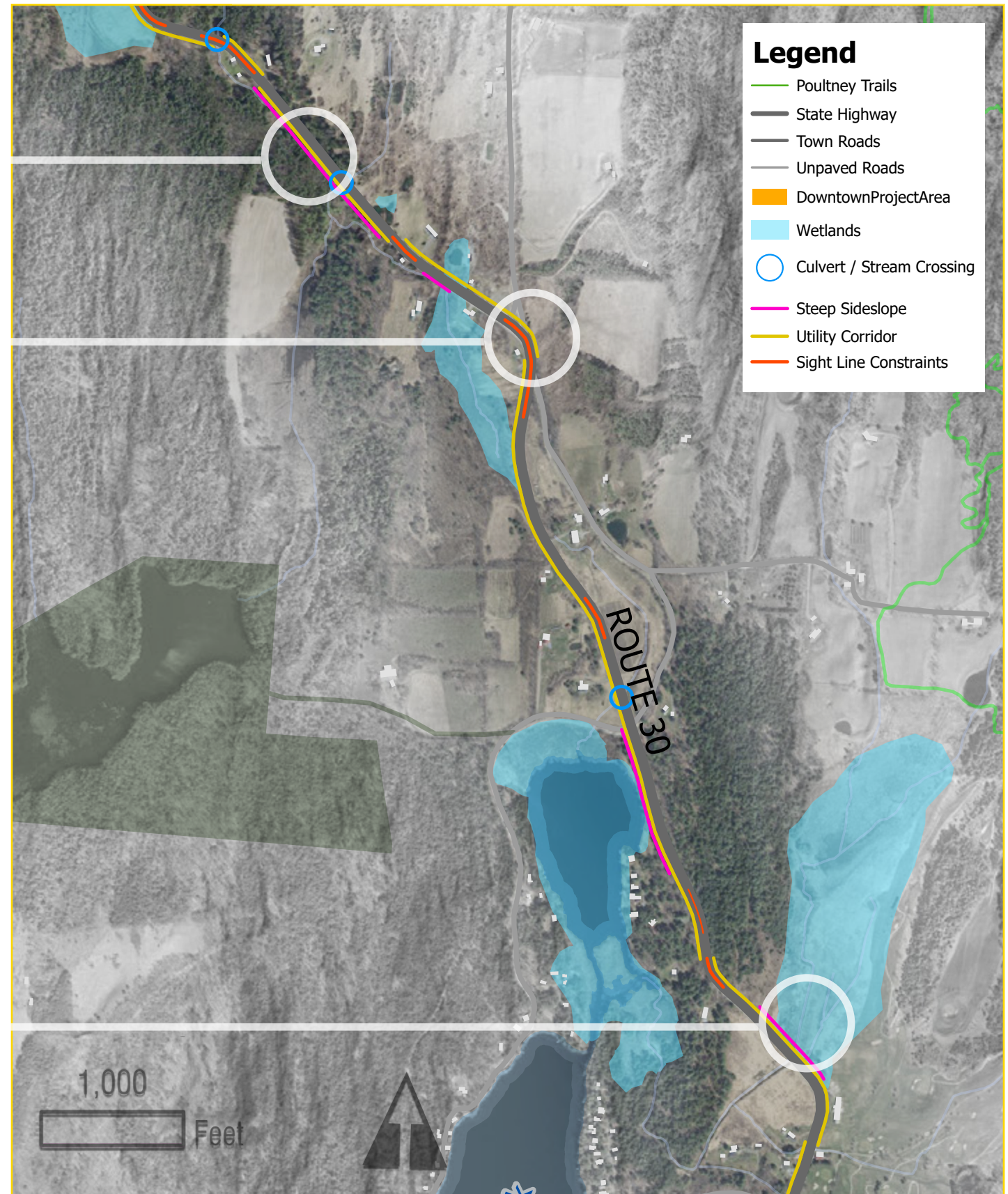
Minimal shoulders and steep slopes occur throughout the corridor



These intersections are not safe. Thrall Road and Old Lake Road are currently key connections between Town and Trails.



Significant wetlands are present adjacent to the roadway



Route 140

Route 140 is a direct corridor connecting Downtown Poultney to the village green and general store of East Poultney. This roadway connects downtown Poultney with Poultney High school, East Poultney, and the Fairgrounds Trail Network farther east.

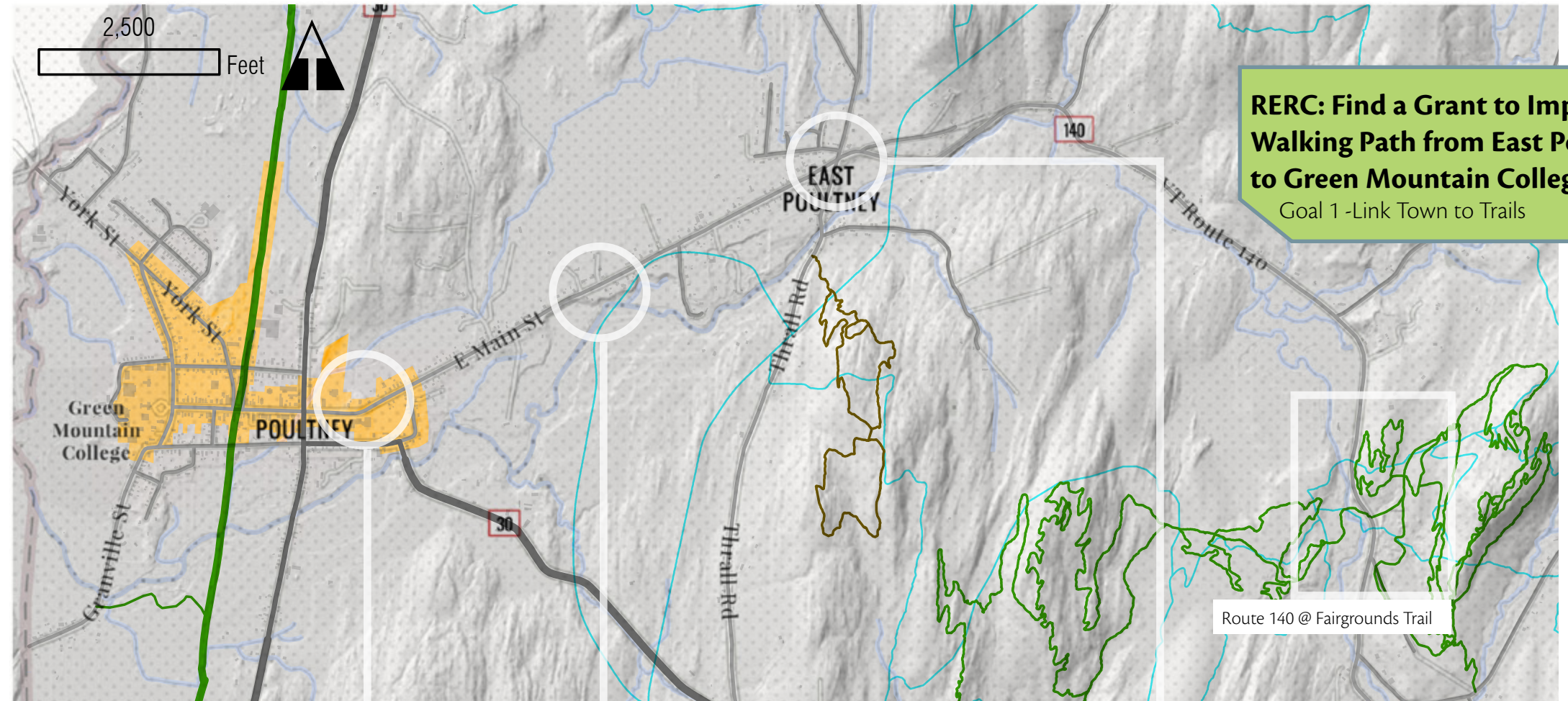
This roadway is town owned, and has the notable distinction of having a continuous sidewalk along the entirety of its northern edge, between Poultney and East Poultney, except the area in front of Poultney High School.

Opportunities

The continuous sidewalk north of Route 140 is 5 feet wide, and more than ample for the amount of use the corridor currently sees. As recreational use in the area grows, this corridor could be looked to for improvements that could more safely accommodate two way traffic. The sidewalk is only appropriate for pedestrian travel, so an alternative for cyclists would need to be developed. Travel lanes are currently 12 foot wide through this corridor, and could be looked to be narrowed between Poultney and East Poultney, offering up to 4 feet of additional road user space that could create a bike lane or some additional shoulder.

The historic East Poultney Green acts as a gateway for travelers entering Poultney from the East, and the space exudes small town charm. The future use of this green space should be considered as added use in the area could impact parking and access to this historic green.

Future planning efforts could look at how this green and the surrounding roadways could be improved to offer more parking for East Poultney store patrons, while preserving the 'cafe seating' area outside of the Village store.



The steep slopes opposite of the Poultney High School break the sidewalk corridor between Poultney and East Poultney. This corridor also does not provide safe and easy crossings into the high school campus for pedestrian traffic.



The existing sidewalk along the Route 140 corridor does not safely accommodate cyclists. No shoulders are currently present on the roadway and road users must share 12' travel lanes. 1/2 to 1 Acre residential lots face the roadway along its length between the two communities.



The East Poultney Green is a destination in its own right with historic churches, an attractive general store, and a pleasant town green creating a gateway to Poultney from the east.



Route 140 @ Fairgrounds Trail

Within the extensive Fairgrounds Trail network, there lies a challenging public safety and community recreation challenge - the Ringmaster Trail and Route 140 crossing. Ringmaster Trail is a four-season trail in use by bikers, hikers, snowmobiles and skiers alike. But the crossing of Route 140 in the current location creates some significant safety concerns.

Sight Lines, Signs, and Speeds

In other locations, a trail crossing a roadway with moderately low traffic volumes might not be a significant concern. But this particular crossing offers both trail users and drivers on the road little time to react. The trail crossing location is not very visible, with the exception of advance warning signs placed approximately 300 feet on either side of the crossing. 2021 data from VTrans indicates an 85th percentile speed of 50mph on Route 140 near this location. This is well above the posted speed limit of 40mph, at which an attentive driver would require 305 feet of sight distance to effectively stop before the trail crossing.

A key to future improvements at this location, beyond redesign, may be to make this trail crossing more visible to the motorist traveling Route 140. This could be through additional road signage at the crossing itself (and/or revising the locations of the advanced warning signs), a marked crosswalk, or traffic calming measures. Targeted police enforcement for a period of several weeks may also reduce speeds.

Slopes and Culverts

Existing drainages and steep slopes line both sides of this trail crossing. Future improvements could consider drainage culverts large enough to allow safe passage for trail users below the roadway, creating a grade separated crossing. Additional trail relocations could also move the trail to a more visible area of the roadway, with improved sight lines.



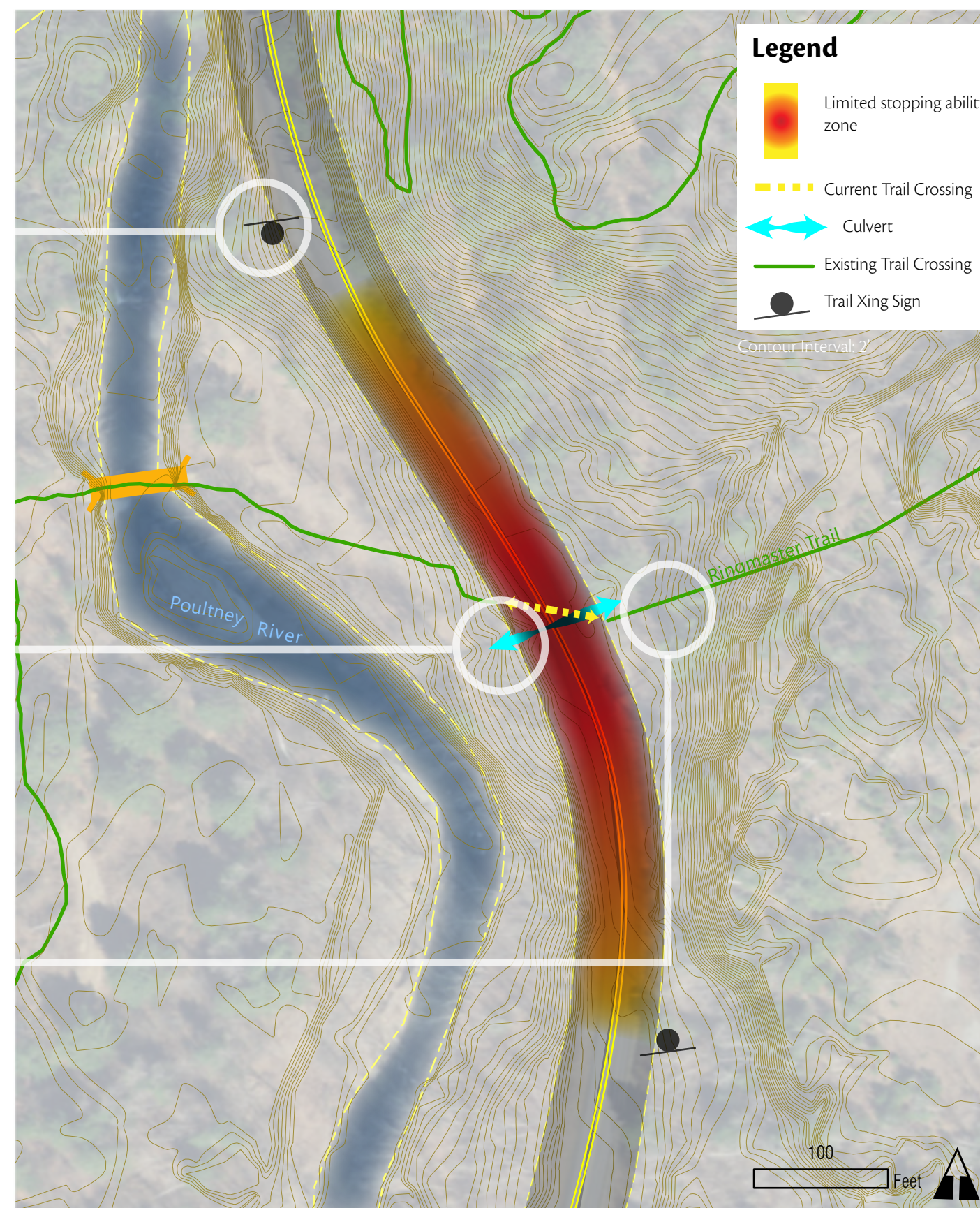
Trail signage provides warning in advance of crossing, but not at actual crossing.



Steep slopes have existing drainage culverts in place.



A gate slows down roadway crossing traffic.



Downtown Poultney

Overview

The Town to Trails project boundary uses Poultney's established Designated Downtown Boundary, and expands to encompass the D&H Rail Trail corridor and residential neighborhoods surrounding downtown.

This chapter examines the physical structure of Downtown Poultney, including its public streets, parking capacity, trail connections, gateway and outdoor recreation hub opportunities.

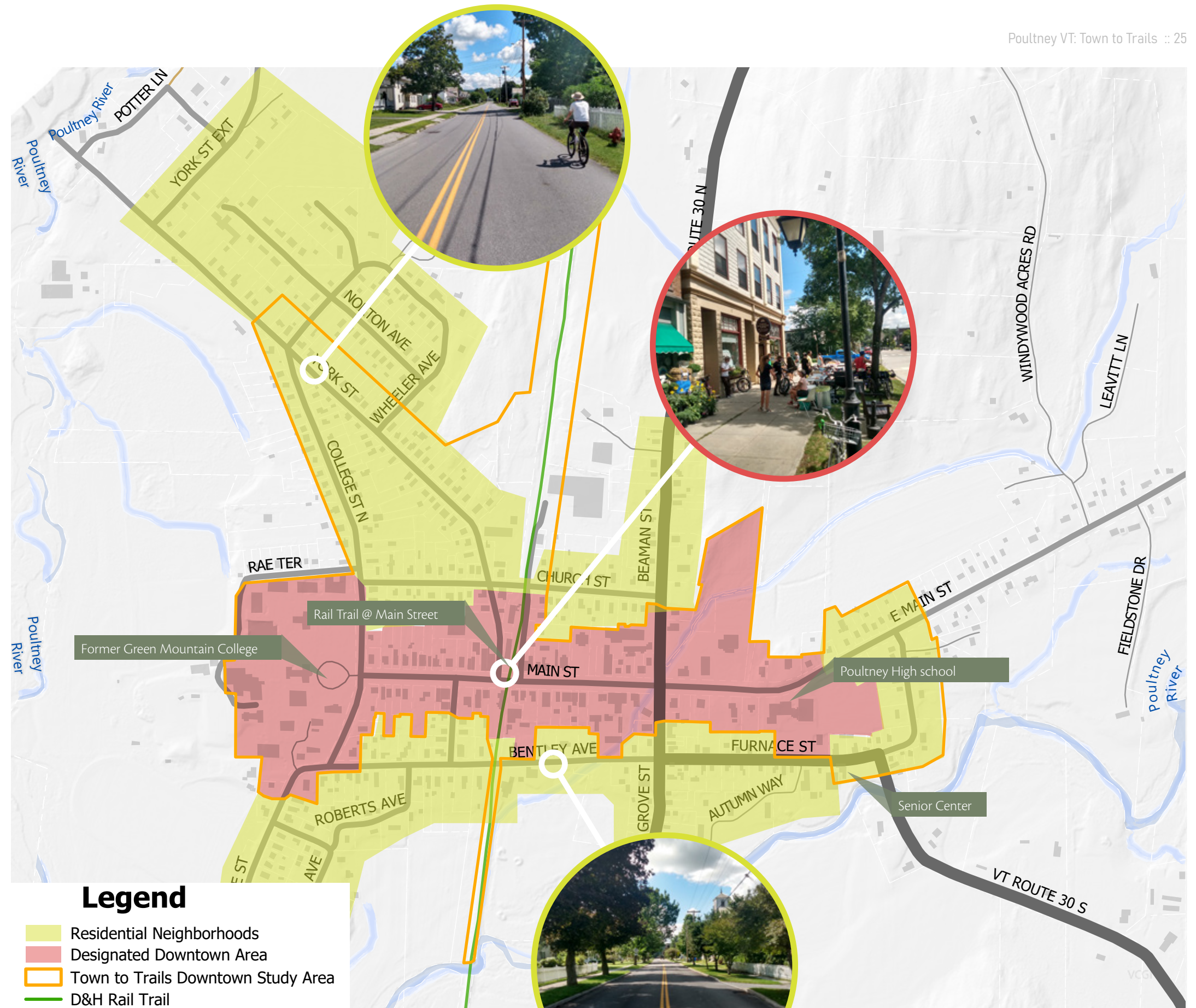
Designated Downtown Area

The designated downtown, illustrated in red at right is a state-designated area that provides historical tax credit benefits to property owners within the area, and opens opportunities to state grants, loans, and other opportunities to enhance the economy and vitality of this important area. [Learn more about the Poultney's benefits as a designated downtown from the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development.](#)

The project team chose to examine beyond the designated downtown as part of this study to ensure that major gateways, and the D&H Rail Trail were included within the study area.

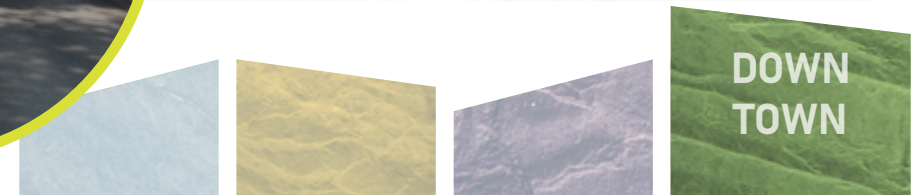
Land Use

The land use pattern of Poultney is centered on a historic commercial Main Street running east west, with the Green Mountain College campus acting as an anchor at the western edge of downtown. Surrounding the commercial core are several residential neighborhoods along Bentley, Church, and York streets.



Legend

- Residential Neighborhoods
- Designated Downtown Area
- Town to Trails Downtown Study Area
- D&H Rail Trail



Downtown Trails

D&H Rail Trail

This 19.8 mile long Rail Trail links the New York State Line with Castleton, Vermont - right through Downtown Poultney. A southern section connects Pawlet to Rupert. Its flat, wide, and accessible design makes it suitable for use by all ages and abilities. The D&H crosses Main Street in the heart of Downtown Poultney. **This downtown access is what sets Poultney apart from numerous other Rail Trail destinations**, which typically engage with Rail Trails through a more 'edge of town' relationship. The central placement of the Rail Trail makes Poultney an ideal place to stage starts and finishes to adventures that use the D&H Rail Trail. Formerly managed by Vermont Forest, Parks and Recreation, this recreational rail trail is now owned and operated by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), which established its Rail Trail program in 2022.

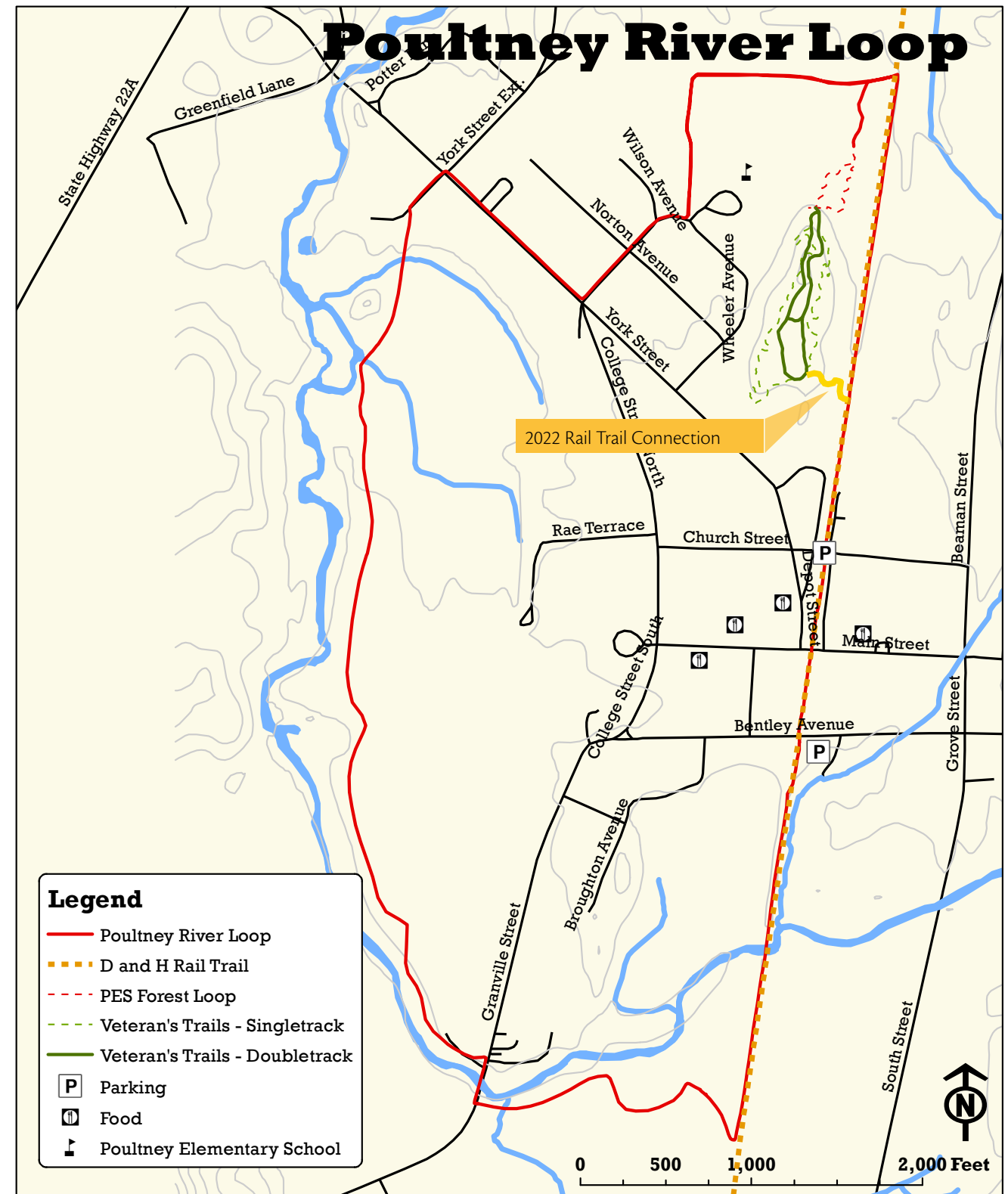
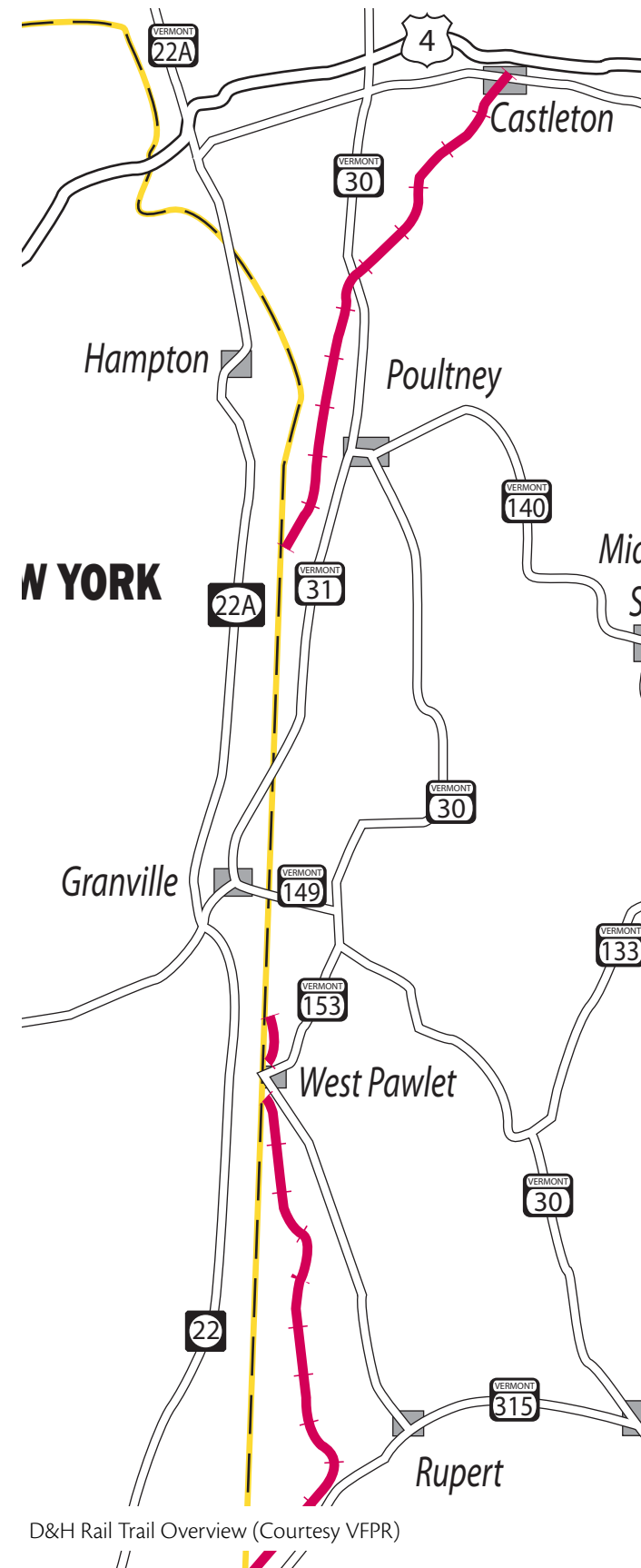
No official trail counts are available for the D&H. Future partnerships between Slate Valley Trails, The Town of Poultney, and Rutland Regional Planning Commission could offer opportunities to track use along this important downtown trail and gateway.

Poultney River Loop

The Poultney River Loop is a flat, 3.3 mile trail that uses a central portion of the D&H Rail Trail, but accesses the Poultney River and provides scenic views and recreation west of Downtown. This corridor is maintained by Slate Valley Trails and offers scenic views of the River and Downtown across its length.

Veteran's Trails

Hosted by the Poultney Elementary School and adjacent private landowners, these trails are open to the public when school is not in session. In 2022, a connection to the D&H rail trail was permitted to allow these public facilities to be directly accessible from the D&H Rail Trail Corridor north of Main Street.

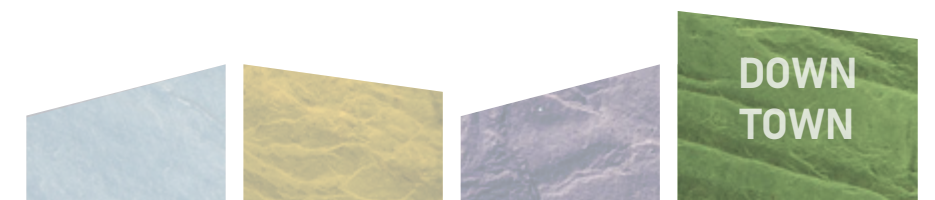


Volunteers, membership dues and donations make these and other trails in the area possible. Please make a donation to us if you appreciate them.

Poultney River Loop and Veteran's Trails - Courtesy Slate Valley Trails.

Report any issues to info@slatevalleytrails.org. Get more info and become a member at SlateValleyTrails.org.

SVT is a chapter of the Vermont Mountain Biking Association (VMBA).



Downtown Streets

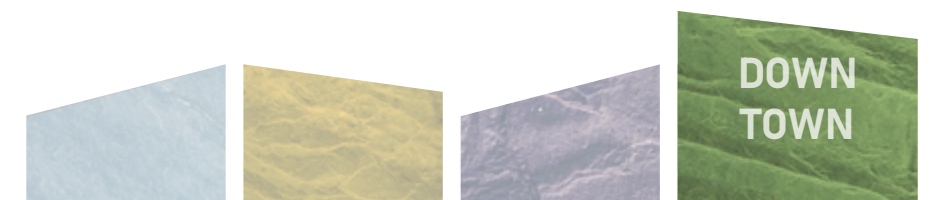
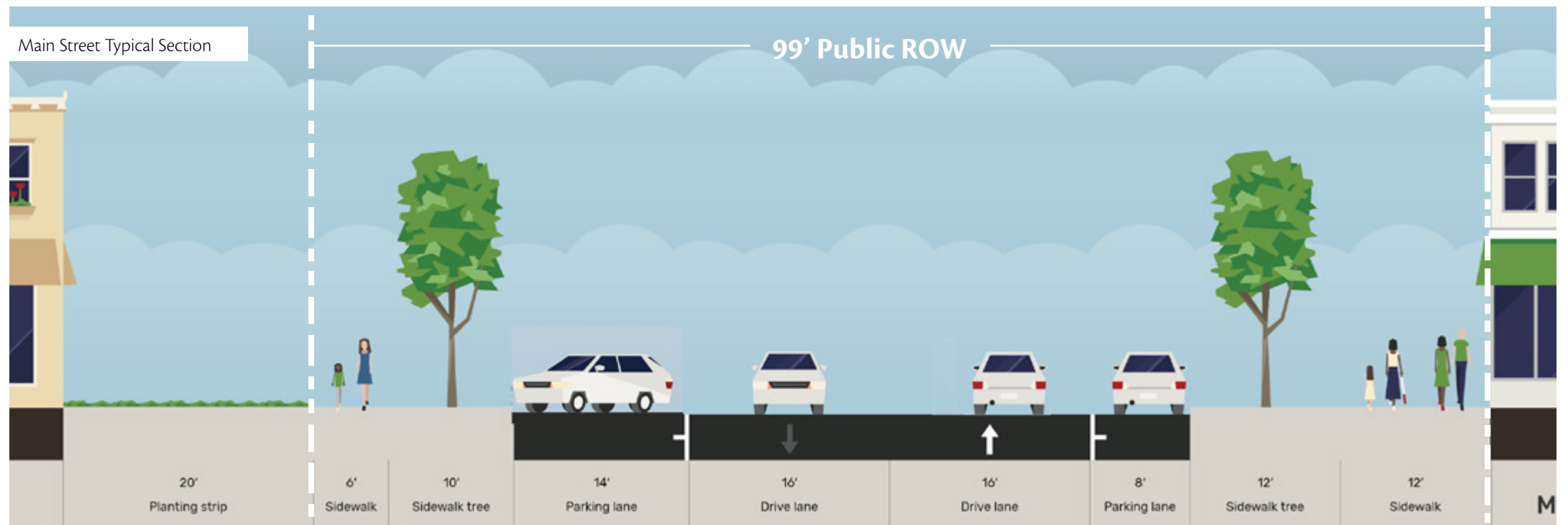
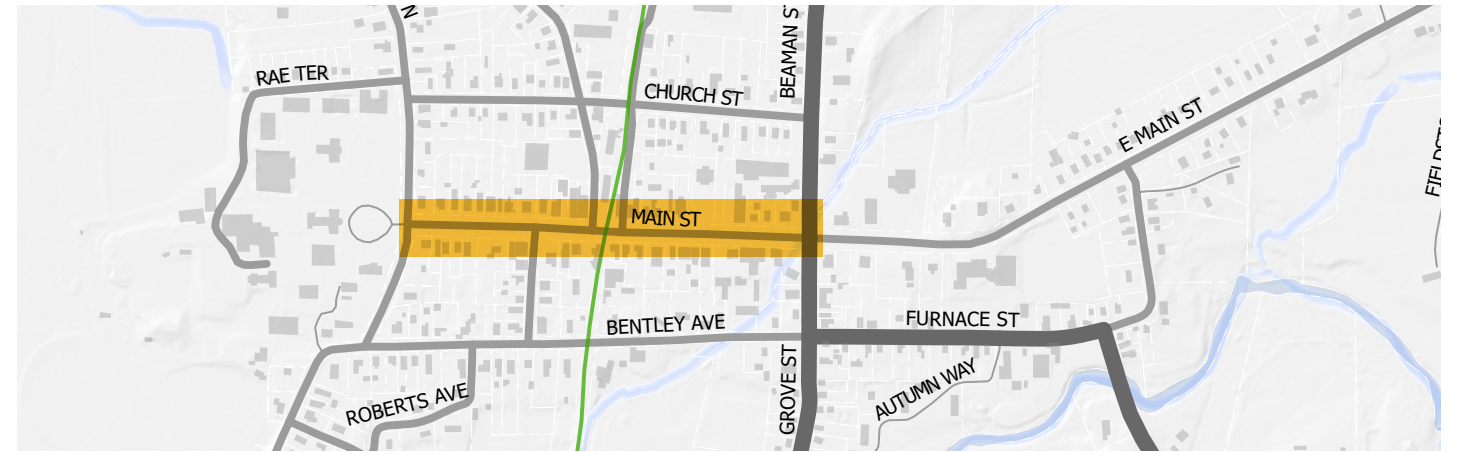
These pages detail the dimensions and layouts of key streets in the core downtown, specifically, Main, Church, and Bentley. Not every roadway is described in this segment to keep the focus on the major streets and opportunities downtown.

Main Street

Poultney's Main Street enjoys a broad, near 100 foot wide right of way. A pleasant pedestrian streetscape and mixture of historic and new shops line this right of way, with sidewalks along both sides of the street, and a broad mixture of uses fronting on either side. Hardware store, bicycle shop, hunting and fishing supply, or gas station, pub or pizza, Downtown Poultney has something for everyone.

However, car-centric uses such as gas stations erode the walkability of the area, by creating large unbroken areas of access between their sites and the road travel lanes.

Vehicles travel along wide lanes, nearly 16 feet in width. On street parking is free downtown. Parking stalls are arranged with parallel parking on the north side of the street, using 8 feet of space, and angled parking on the south, using 14 feet of space. A wide grassy strip of approximately 10-12 feet separates the sidewalk from the edge of the paved roadway. Sidewalks are primarily 6 foot wide through the whole of Main, with key commercial sections (north side of Main, west of Depot, and south side of Main, west of Maple) as wide as 12 feet. These wider sidewalk areas currently allow for accessible travel for many people in both directions but may also offer unique opportunities to explore outdoor cafe seating and other commercial / placemaking opportunities along the Main street streetscape in the future if desired.



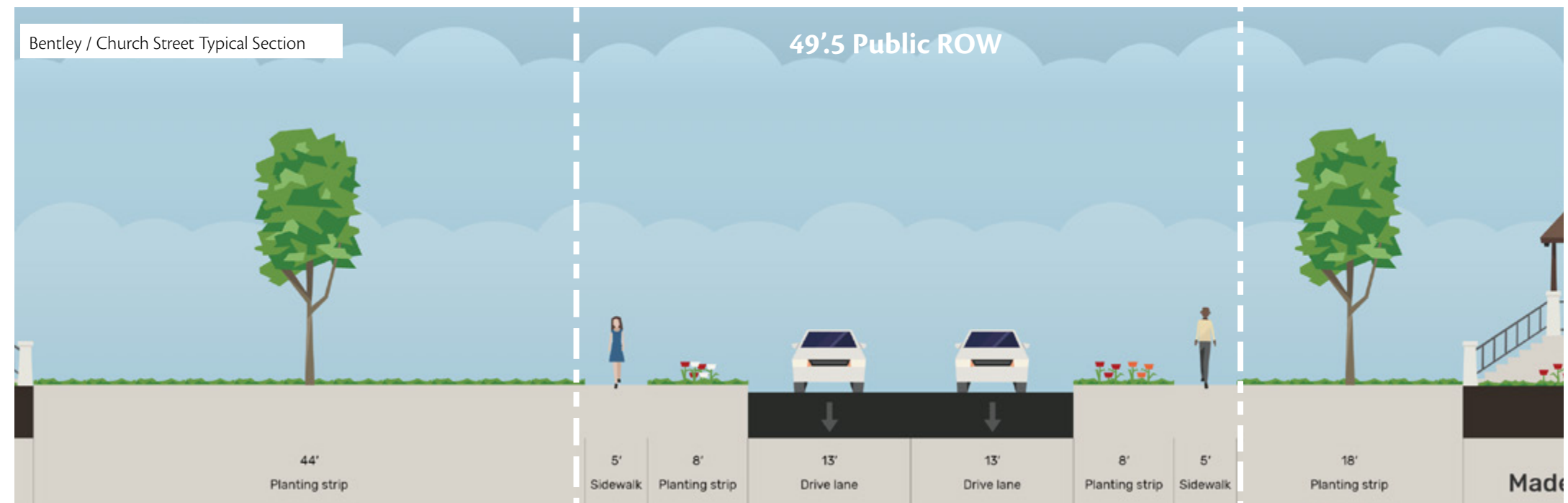
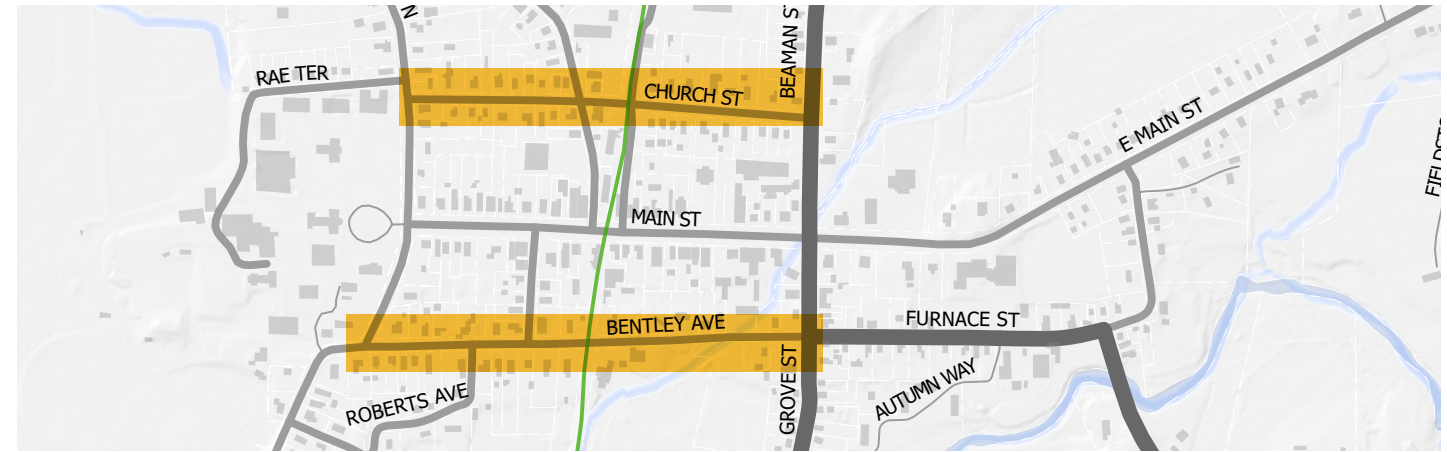
Bentley & Church Streets

The main east and west residential streets of Downtown Poultney are much narrower than Main, with GIS records illustrating approximately 49.5 foot (3 rod) right of way along Church and Bentley.

Both streets provide sidewalks along the majority of the downtown corridor between College Street and Furnace Street. These streets are primarily residential in character, with elegant street trees and spacious residential lawns fronting on the sidewalk corridors on either side of the street.

On street parking is allowed on these streets, although neither roadway profile has sufficient space to accommodate simultaneous two way travel AND parking on both sides of the road. Street parking may offer the potential of traffic calming by requiring drivers to slow down, yield and take turns when approaching oncoming traffic, just as pedestrians would when walking down a narrow hallway.

Bentley provides access to a small parking area for the Rail Trail just south of the Bentley and D&H Rail Trail intersection.



Furnace Street Placemaking Opportunities

As Downtown Poultney's southern entrance, Furnace Street does not have the same residential character and charm as Bentley or Church streets. This is largely due to the street's use as access point to the High School parking area, Town Garage, and Senior Center.

Each of these three sites maintains multiple access points to the roadway, many far over the [24' minimum standard for commercial driveways](#)¹. The diagram at right illustrates approximate widths of each entry point along this section of roadway.

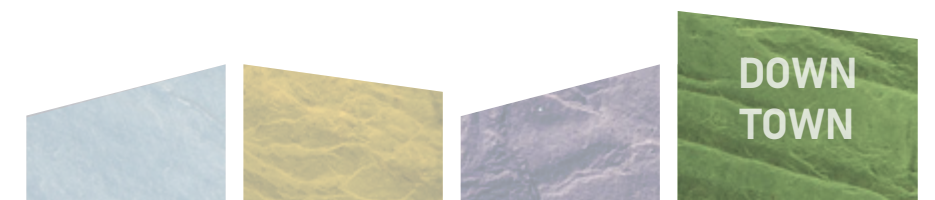
Reduction in the width of some of these spaces and/or removal of unnecessary access points could improve traffic flow along this gateway corridor and offer opportunities for beautification and/or wayfinding adjacent to the Route 30 / Furnace Street Gateway. It could also improve safety by reducing confusion.

Conversations with the School District and Town Highway department would be crucial to understand what elements of these access points must be maintained, and which could be improved through redesign of access, parking, and landscaping.

This primacy of auto access also creates a lack of pedestrian access to the Senior Center, as the nearest pedestrian crossing is over 500 feet away. Sidewalk access on the southern side of the street stops several parcels before reaching the Senior Center front door.



¹ Per VTrans Standard B-71a for commercial drives



Street Details

Pedestrian Alley

Poultney has a very unique "street" along the eastern side of the Methodist Church, by Church Street Apartments. This pedestrian only walkway links a Main Street crosswalk directly to Church Street. The 5 foot wide sidewalk provides direct access to the Church Street Apartments and Methodist Church. According to GIS data, this corridor maintains an approximate 16 foot wide right of way between adjacent parcels.

This unique feature creates a more walkable block length and should be a celebrated aspect of Downtown Poultney, as few communities can boast such a pedestrian-centric 'roadway.' This area's proximity to Slate Quarry Park and Main Street could point to future placemaking opportunities downtown, such as with murals and other public art.

A key issue with this corridor is its relatively 'underground' status - there are no signs or indicators that this is a public walking corridor, and in many cases feels like a private walkway. Public signage and/or artwork could offer an opportunity to celebrate this unique element and encourage public use.

Street Trees

The greatest strength of Poultney's street tree planting pattern is its diversity of tree species and age. These trees offer welcome shade and cooling, in addition to beautification. The street trees of Downtown Poultney include a combination of smaller flowering trees under utility lines, such as Crab Apples, and, where space permits, larger shade trees such as Red Oaks. Future street tree planting should continue to enhance this diversity. Due to this diversity, trees such as Sugar Maple, which are sensitive to street-edge conditions such as road salts, can be replaced as they age, without leaving large holes in the continuity, shade, and attractive appearance of Poultney's street tree planting.

Active Transportation

With the destination of the D&H Rail Trail, and recent additions of Analog Cycles and Slate Valley Trails office to the downtown mix of uses, there are more reasons to ride a bicycle downtown than ever before, but other than the D&H Rail Trail, there are no dedicated facilities.

However, as a pedestrian, Downtown Poultney shines, as the historic pattern of sidewalks has been maintained throughout downtown. Main, Church, and many other streets enjoy dual sided sidewalks. Key gaps in the downtown area include Bentley Ave between D&H Rail Trail and Grove intersections, and the west side of Beaman Street north of Main.

Bike parking is available in front of several establishments including the Post Office, the Library, Analog Cycles, and Williams Hardware Store. Most of these bike racks are located off-street. Additional bike racks on the street furniture zone may be convenient for cyclists visiting multiple nearby businesses in one trip, particularly small businesses that don't currently offer bike parking.

Street Furniture

Poultney's Main Street includes pedestrian-scale street lighting, hanging flower planters, and a few trash cans. These pieces of street furniture all serve to enhance the experience of walking around town.

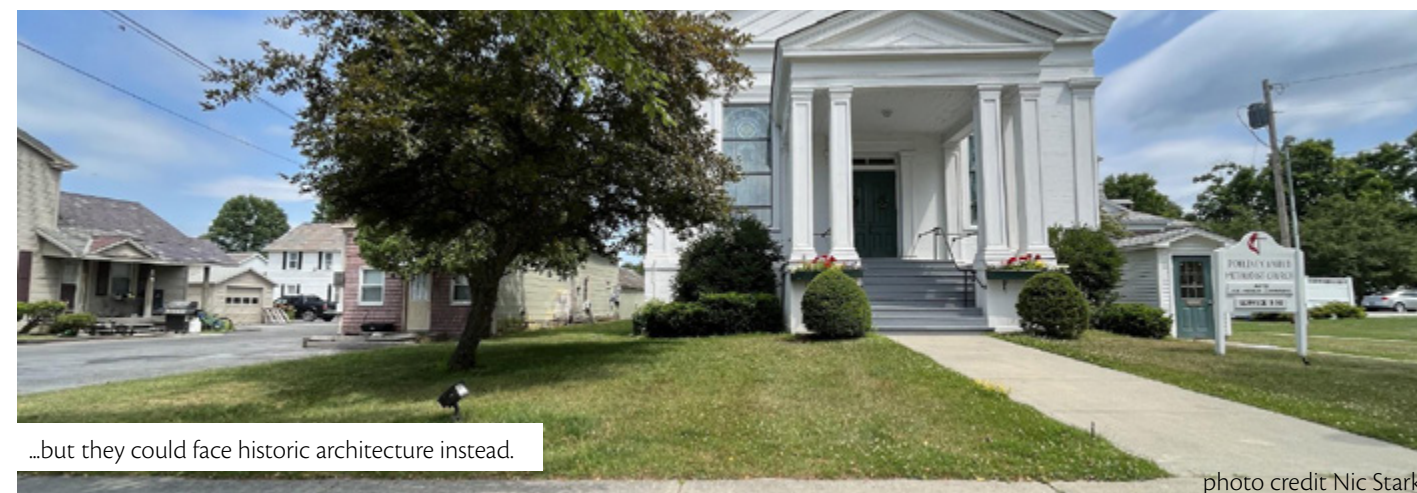
Poultney features several public benches placed throughout Main Street on the grassy area between the road and the sidewalk. All the benches currently face towards the center of the street, with a view sometimes obscured by parked cars. In most cases these benches could be rotated 180 degrees for a view of Poultney's building facades and of pedestrian traffic downtown.

Alternatively, future benches could include backless options to allow people to sit and look at the street, ideal for parades, or sit and look towards a store or downtown park.



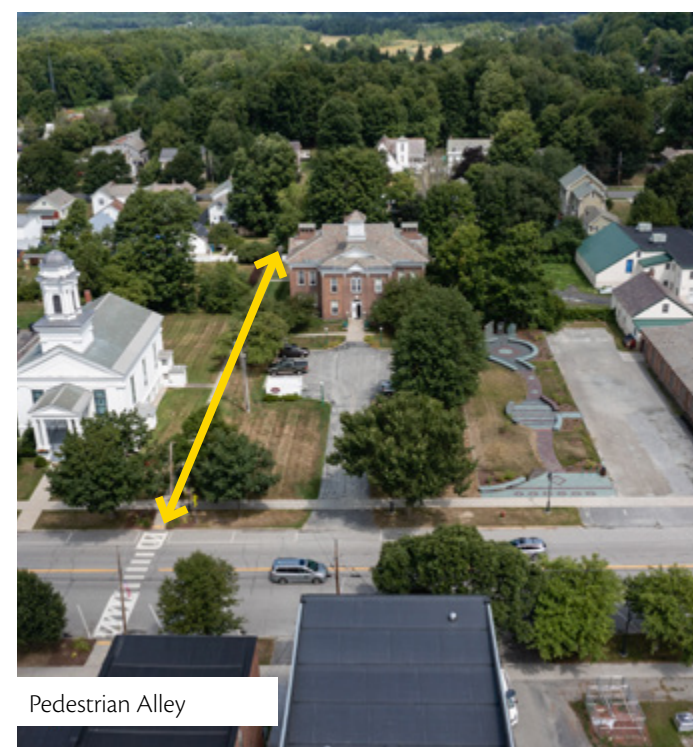
Benches currently face parking spaces...

photo credit Nic Stark

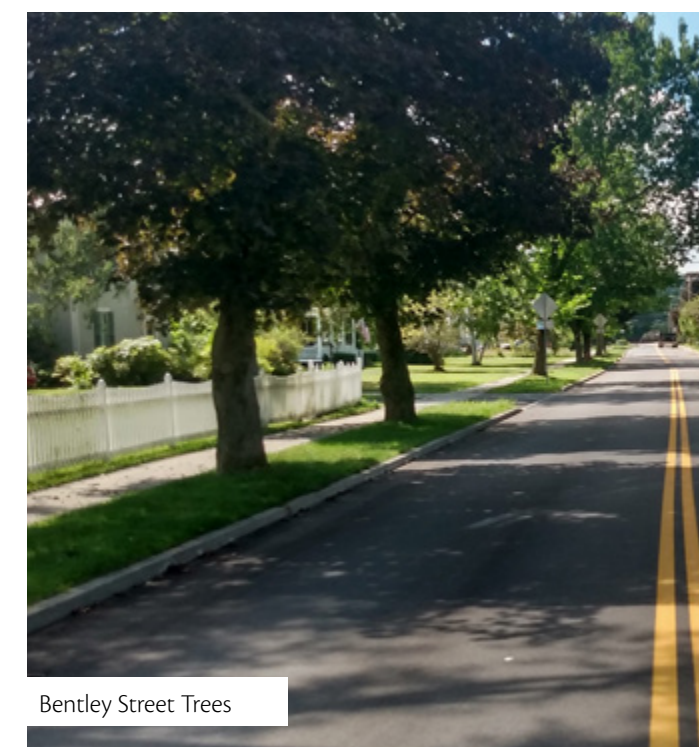


...but they could face historic architecture instead.

photo credit Nic Stark

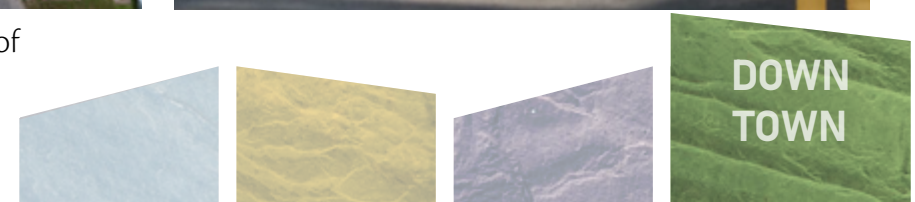


Pedestrian Alley



Bentley Street Trees

*Note: information on this page current as of 2022.



Poultney Downtown Mural Initiative

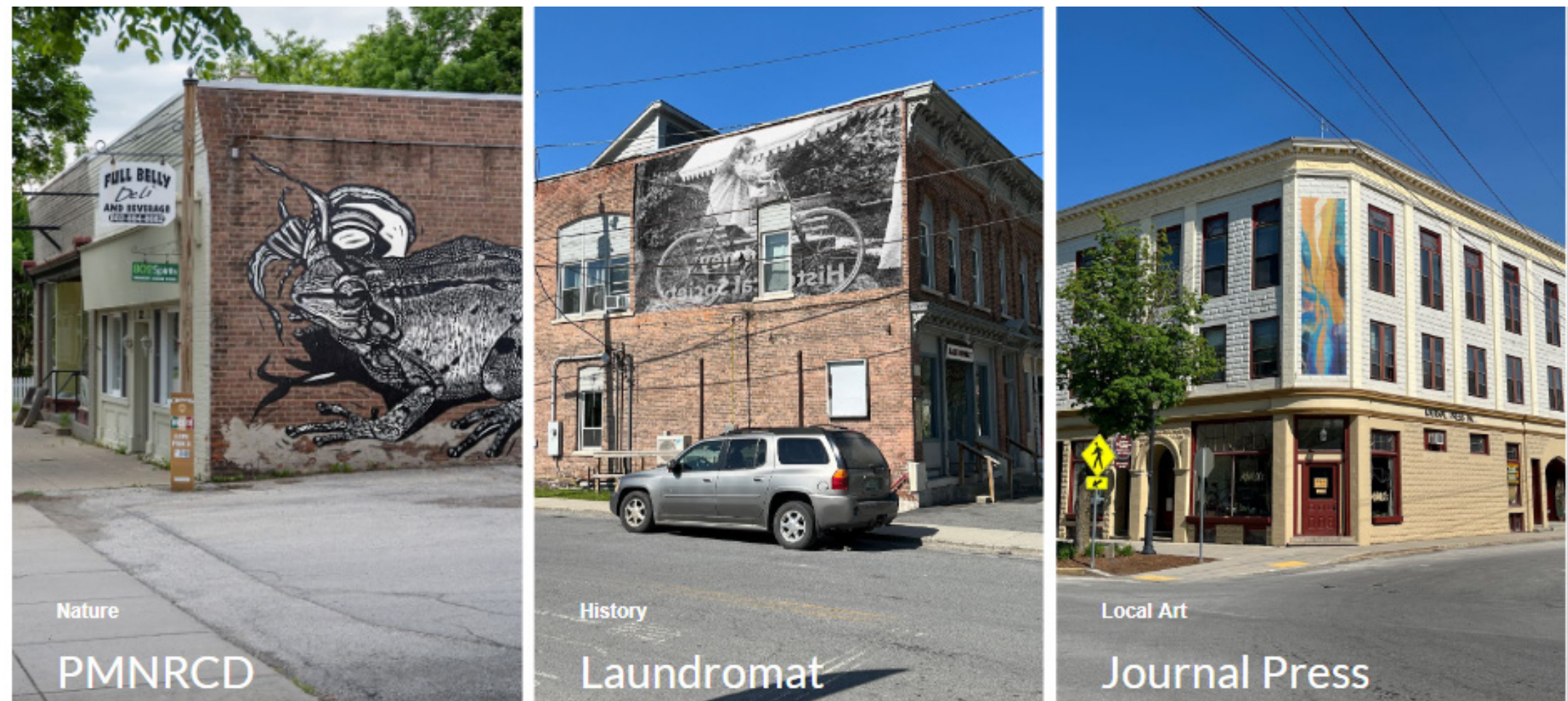
The Downtown Mural Initiative was born from an action goal prioritized in the Poultney Comes Together community workshop event in 2019 following the closure of Green Mountain College. The Downtown Mural Initiative is planning for the creation and installation of three murals at locations with high foot traffic.

These murals are meant to foster community identity and create a sense of place through streetscape beautification. More than just being a public asset that local residents can be proud of, successful mural projects can become landmarks that help the community build brand recognition beyond its borders. Over time, distinctive murals may be photographed thousands of times and these photographs may be distributed through social media content or print media. At the very least, they may serve as landmarks that visitors remember the community by.

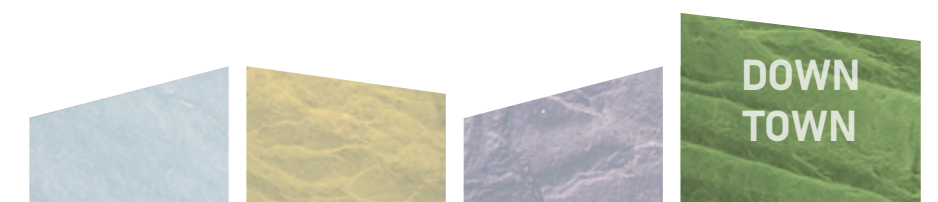
Three murals are currently proposed:

1. The side of the **Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District** and Slate Valley Trails building. The unique setback of the Full Belly Deli offers a high visibility, easily accessible, and heavily trafficked location.
2. The **laundromat** at the corner of Main Street and Maple Street. The open area of the adjacent Stewart's gas station and parking lot offers high visibility of this location. Stewart's has installed outdoor tables and chairs that look out to this side of the building.
3. The **Journal Press building** at the corner of Main Street and Depot Street. This building's cut corner architecture offers a unique space for a highly visible and distinct mural location. Historically this space was used for business signage.

Through extensive public engagement, the Downtown Mural Initiative has chosen three themes for the murals. These themes are Nature, History, and Local Art.



These three photographs are illustrative mockups of murals at the Downtown Mural Initiative's planned locations. The artwork in the photos is for illustrative purposes only and is **not the final chosen art**.



Downtown Gateways

A key direction from the RERC planning process was the call for projects that could create a sense of 'arrival' to the Poultney Downtown.

Three potential gateway locations are identified and compared here for their potential to accommodate changes - from welcome signs to pedestrian safety improvements to plantings that could improve their function as gateways into historic Downtown Poultney.

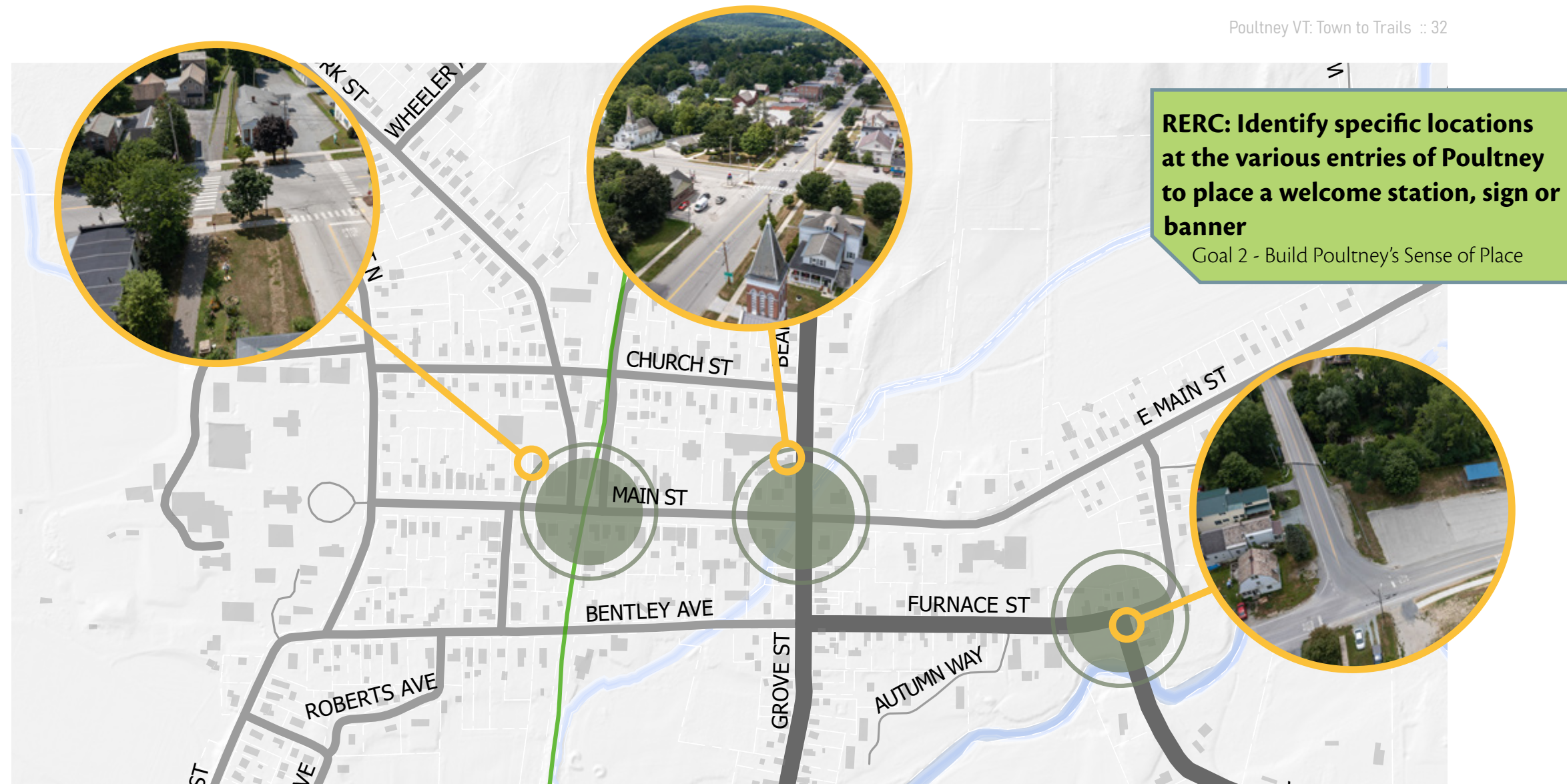
These three gateways are:

- Route 30 at Main Street
- Furnace Street At Route 30
- D&H Rail Trail at Main Street

The D&H Rail Trail intersection is distinct from the other two road intersections as it represents a gateway, between trail access and downtown commerce.

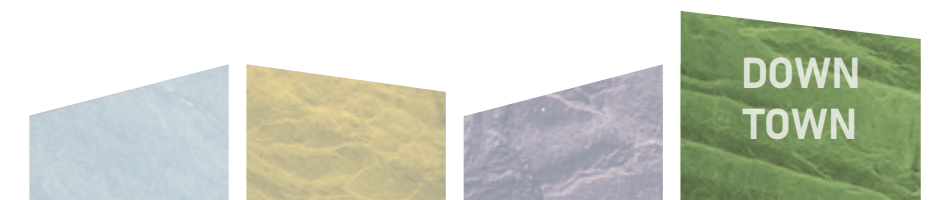
Both the Route 30 intersections are key points of entry to Downtown Poultney. Available traffic count data from VTrans MS2 Data Management System illustrate the highest volumes of traffic passing north/south by the Main Street / Route 30 intersection along Beaman and Grove streets (2908 AADT (2022)). Slightly lower traffic levels have been measured at Furnace Street, with AADT of 2387 (2022). Dedicated traffic counts for Main Street at the Rail Trail intersection were not available, but site visit review of relative traffic volumes on weekdays and weekends points to this intersection having a lower volume of traffic.

These volume differences, and differences in travel modes between state highways and rail trails point to the types of improvements that could be considered for each corridor.



The road intersections provide an opportunity to consider signs, artwork, or other placemaking elements that can be seen from a passing car. In addition, these intersections may provide opportunities to create public streetscape improvements that create a sense of transition from the open highways of Route 30 and Route 140 into Downtown Poultney.

Gateway Comparison				
Gateway	Maximum AADT	Bike/Ped Access	Public Property Adjacency	Access Management
Main/ Rt 30	2387	Moderate	Town Office	Uncontrolled Access to NW corner parcel, and Gas Station
Furnace / Rt 30	2908	Poor	Senior Center	Uncontrolled access to Senior Center parking lot
Main / D&H	Unknown	Excellent	None	Parking blocks crosswalk visibility



Route 30 @ Main

This entry in to the heart of Downtown Poultney is bordered by a gas station and a vacant lot, as well as the historic green space and lawns fronting the Poultney Town Office and the Stonebridge Visitor Center.

Some opportunities and constraints present at this Intersection currently are called out in this aerial image of the intersection. Absent from this area is any transit focused amenities, or stops, despite the Fairhaven route connecting through Poultney using both Main Street and Route 30 North through this intersection.

1. Town Office Welcome

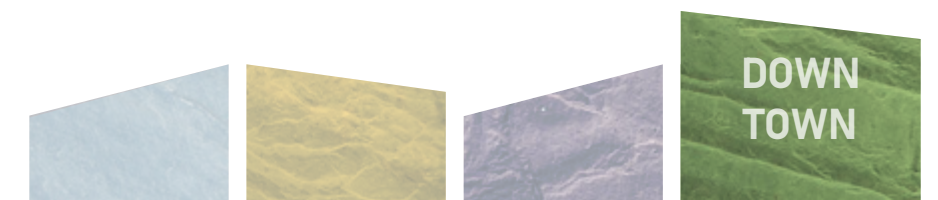
Town Offices are perhaps the most aesthetically pleasing element facing the intersection, and offer a park-like environment. However the single Town of Poultney sign is pulled far back onto the lawn and not well visible to road users.

2. Multi Modal Opportunities

The Town & VTrans have already established no-parking/driving zones at this intersection, which are indicated by hatched lines of paint on the pavement. This area already creates an ideal queuing space for cyclists moving east west across this intersection, and these areas highlighted at right could offer potential for future bulb outs to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, beautify the intersection, and offer bike lanes or other facilities to promote multi-modal access downtown.

3. Access Management

The vacant lot at the northwest corner and the gas station to the southeast both pose access management issues, with broad stretches of pavement allowing cars to access the site (and Route 30) in an unpredictable manner, and pedestrian facilities along much of these frontages are missing.



Route 30 @ Furnace Street

This southern Entry into Poultney's Downtown has numerous opportunities for better safety and pedestrian experience. Key issues include:

1. Sidewalk Access and Gaps:

There is no direct access for pedestrians to reach the Senior Center without crossing Furnace Street, or walking around the unimproved area adjacent to the building - likely impassable in winter months. There is an isolated portion of sidewalk built on the East side of the Poultney River Bridge. There is also no sidewalk on east of this intersection for those walking to Main Street. Improving sidewalk connectivity in this area would illustrate the transition from state highway into a walkable downtown Poultney.

2. Excess Road Edges

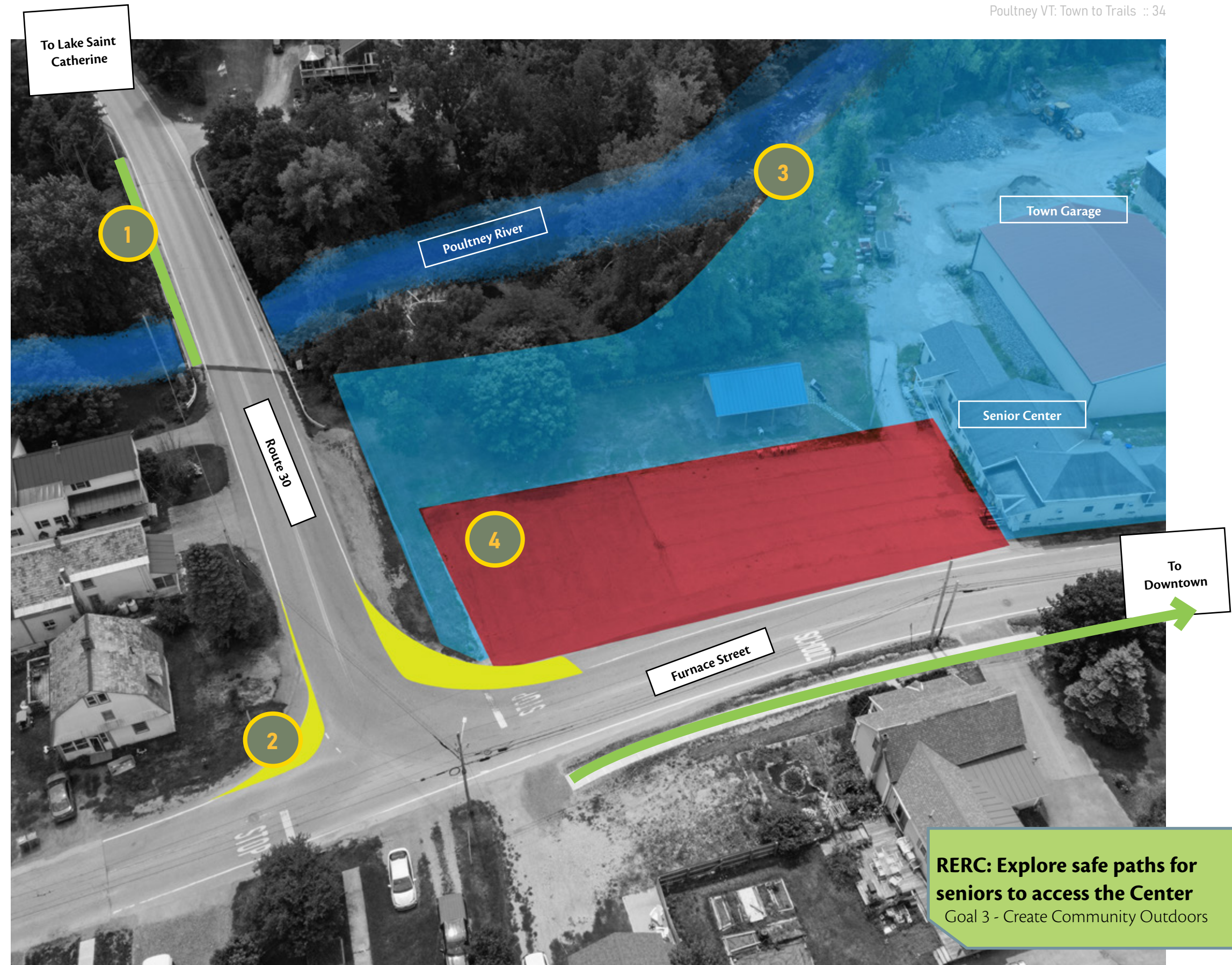
The areas highlighted in yellow at right are currently fully paved asphalt edges. But since traffic on Furnace Street must stop when accessing Route 30, engineering review could reveal opportunities to reclaim portions of this intersection for sidewalks and pedestrian improvements and/or slowing traffic at this intersection without reducing its capacity to handle larger vehicles.

3. Public Parcel & River Adjacency

The Town-owned parcel (highlighted in blue) is directly adjacent to the Poultney River. This adjacency offers an opportunity for improvements that could provide recreational water access, a river trail, or simply improve views of the River when entering Poultney from the south while beautifying this publicly owned property.

4. Parking Improvements

Currently, this parcel faces Furnace Street with a large, uncontrolled parking area. Restricting access to two in/out aisles could improve safety for all road travelers, and could also bring forward opportunity to improve pedestrian connectivity on this side of the street.



RERC: Explore safe paths for seniors to access the Center
Goal 3 - Create Community Outdoors



D&H Rail Trail

Context

The Delaware and Hudson (D&H) Rail Trail is a recreational trail built on former rail line corridor extending from the Vermont/New York border south of Poultney, through Poultney's downtown and up to Castleton, Vermont.

Downtown

The D&H Rail Trail crosses Main Street adjacent to the LiHigh School's gardens and sculptures, which lend a park like atmosphere to the space. This same location has Poultney Pub to the east, and Analog Cycles bike shop across the street to the west. Though the bicycle shop windows of Analog make clear the business' offerings, TAPS is completely obscured by unmaintained trees and shrubs along its property line.

Little marks this rail trail crossing from Main Street beyond standard MUTCD road signs at the crossing. Recent efforts by the Town, RRPC and others have refreshed the crossing markings, and added D&H Rail Trail specific wayfinding paint. No trail-specific signage exists at this central crossing but a trailhead kiosk and interpretive signage is placed within the state-owned parcel at the Knapp and Church Street crossing.

South of Main Street, the Maker Space REclaimED has built trail-adjacent services such as self-serve coffee and seating, but the State has not permitted an opening in the split-rail fencing that separates REclaimED from the rail trail, thereby limiting direct access. Further south, across Bentley Ave, is public Rail Trail parking for approximately 8 vehicles.

A key goal from the RERC process was to improve visibility of this recreational resource downtown. Simple approaches could include improving adjacent business frontages and access to the trail, and adding more visible wayfinding signage to the Main Street crossing, and improving visibility / access to rail-trail adjacent businesses.



Wayfinding and interpretive signage located away from Main Street.



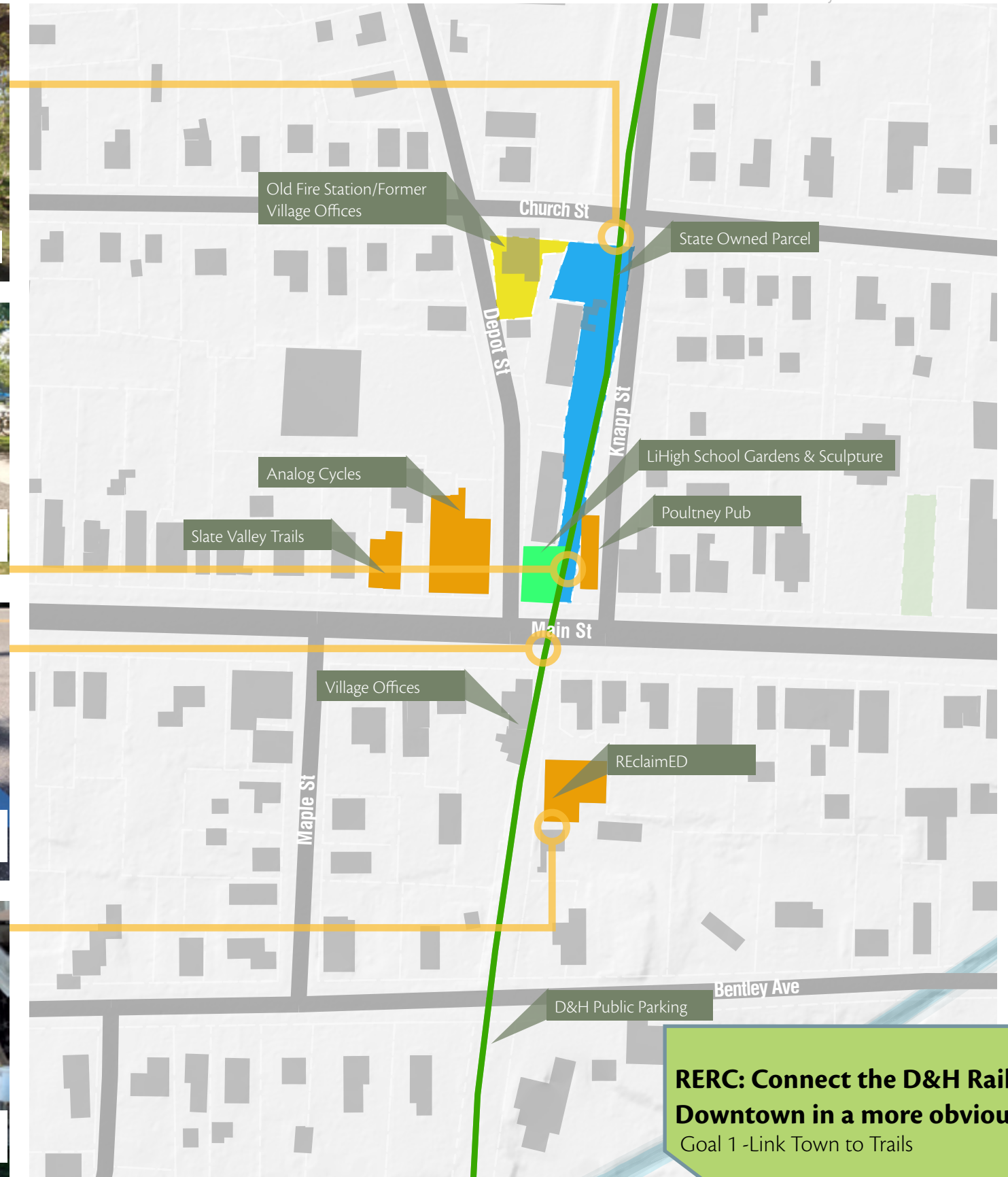
Beyond the rail trail, beyond the trees, lies Poultney Pub, but its hard to see from the trail.



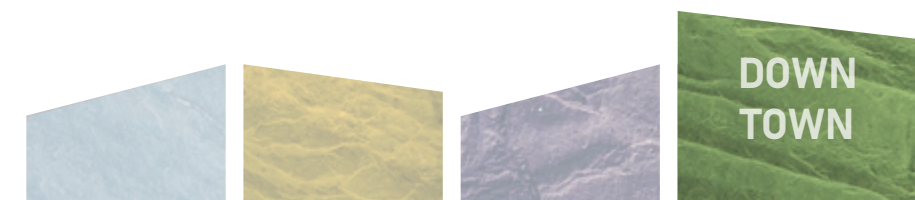
Recent additions to the crossing help create a sense of place around the downtown rail trail intersection.



How can the rail trail better connect with local businesses? Fencing reduces Rail Trail / local business synergy.



RERC: Connect the D&H Rail Trail to Downtown in a more obvious way
Goal 1 -Link Town to Trails



Main Street & Rail Trail Intersection

Context and Ownership

The D&H Rail Trail has long been operated by Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), but as of 2022 was transferred to the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) to operate as part of their role managing all of Vermont’s official rail trail corridors. Based on existing Railroad Valuation Sheets and dialog with VTrans staff, the Town of Poultney has maintenance responsibility for Rail Trail crossings. This means that improvements to these crossings of Town streets (Main, Bentley, and Church) must be completed by the Town, and the Town does not need VTrans to authorize such improvements.

Visibility Concerns

A lack of overall visibility of rail trail crossings, and safety concerns related to faded crossing paint and on-street parking spaces reducing bicyclists and pedestrian visibility entering the roadway are the major concerns surrounding Rail Trail Crossings downtown.

The owners of Analog Cycles, a Downtown Poultney bicycle shop located roughly 100 feet from the Main Street and D&H Intersection, report often having to give directions to this trail across the street. This illustrates the lack of visibility despite this resource’s central location in downtown.

There is an informational kiosk and interpretive signage located on the Rail Trail south of the Church Street intersection, and standard MUTCD compliant warning signage on main street. Church Street is a much less traveled roadway. Approximately 1800 vehicles travel Church Street daily, and 3100 travel along Main¹. These ‘entry point’ elements of a kiosk and interpretive signs would be better utilized adjacent to Main Street to boost visibility of the D&H Rail Trail downtown.

Safety Concerns

Currently, there are designated on-street parking spaces surrounding the entry of the Rail Trail crossing on Main Street. These parking spaces, when in use, create a safety hazard by blocking views between a driver on Main Street and people using the crosswalk until they are both in the travel lane.

Vermont State Law², and the [2019 VTrans Pedestrian Crossing guide](#) state clearly that parking spaces should not be marked within 20 feet of a marked crosswalk, as measured between the parking space and the closest crosswalk marking. However, according to VTrans crossing guidance, with raised bulb outs, this figure can be reduced to 10 feet.

¹ Source: VTrans MS2 Transportation Data Management System

² 23 V.S.A. § 1104



- 1. Parking within 20' of crosswalk
- 2. Crosswalk Paint Missing
- 3. Limited Visibility from Roadway
- 4. Rail Trail Xing Signs



Rail Trail Crosswalk Restoration

As illustrated at right, low cost improvements to the Rail Trail Intersection at Main Street could significantly increase the visibility and awareness of this downtown asset while improving bicycle and pedestrian safety.

Design Guidance

This design combines traditional crosswalk elements to evoke a railroad tie pattern and call attention to this resource along Main Street. Although not traditional, this design does align with the crosswalk markings section of the [Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices \(section\) 3B.17](#) which states:

“When crosswalk lines are used, they shall consist of solid white lines that mark the crosswalk. They shall be not less than 150 mm (6 in) nor greater than 600 mm (24 in) width.”

The wide bars in this illustration are proposed as 2 feet wide, the narrow ‘rails’ of the design as 6 inches wide.

Parking Impacts

In order to comply with state law (see prior page) four parking spaces should be relocated to create the needed clear space on either side of the crosswalk. Future improvements that create permanent bulb outs can reduce the needed space from 20 feet clear to 10 feet.

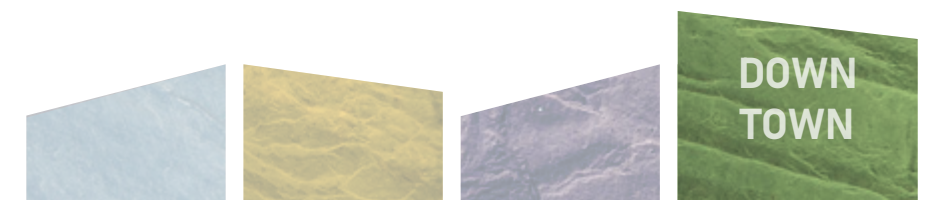
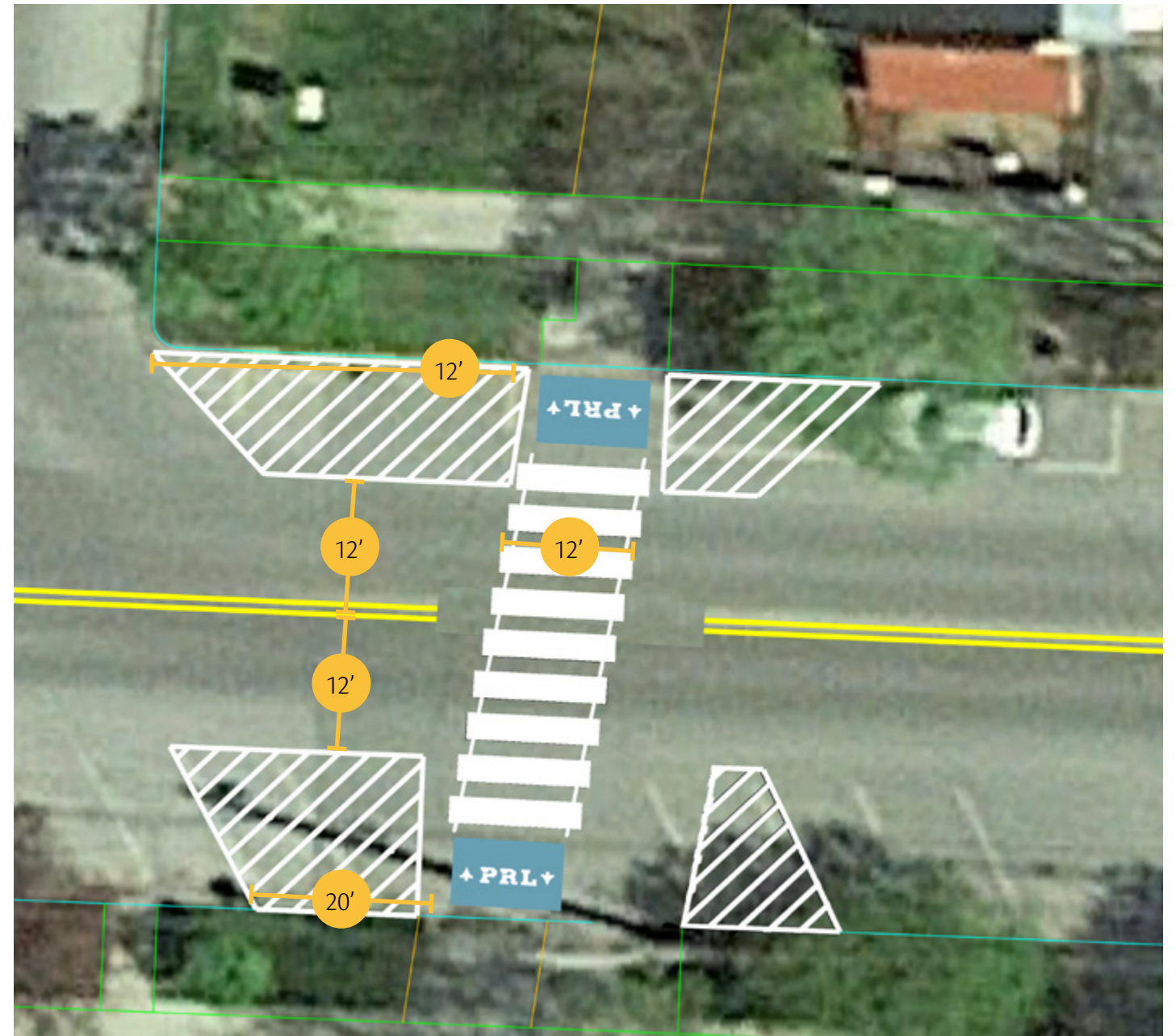
Durability

The core elements of this crossing design should be painted with Traffic Paint. This include all elements in white, and should last approximately one year. The areas behind the crosswalk are preserved for place-making artwork which can present the Poultney River Loop logo or other graphic artwork applied to the ground. This artwork could be applied as an asphalt sticker and/or house paint, which would have a 1-2 year to 2-3 month duration, respectively.

Future Phase Potential

This paint-based improvement is intended as the first of several pop-up improvements planned for this location as part of the Town to Trails project. Future phase improvements are anticipated to include:

- Signage & Seating: Expanding to the LiHigh school property, additional seating and/or wayfinding/interpretive signage could be developed to create a true destination along the D&H Rail Trail on Poultney’s Main Street.
- With appropriate buy-in and permission, additional outdoor seating and gathering space could be added to parking spaces / landscaped areas in front of TAPS. Vegetation to the west of this business could be cleared out, and business signage added to increase visibility to trail users.
- Addition of physical elements in ‘bulb out’ areas such as bike racks, planters, artwork or barriers could beautify the intersection while providing additional utility for people walking or biking.



Downtown Parking Supply

Downtown parking is an important consideration in any plan that looks to bring economic development downtown. Many residents and businesses depend on the availability of on-street parking and the visitors accommodated by that resource. As Poultney's existing recreational assets bring more visitors to the community, planning should continue to understand how additional parking demands can best be accommodated. Currently, the downtown has ample parking resources distributed as on street spaces.

On Street Parking Resources

Main Street is the primary public parking resource in Poultney, with approximately 126 designated parking spaces. Generally speaking, the southern side of the roadway maintains 60° nose in parking, and the northern side of the street accommodates parallel parking.

With the exception of Main Street, which includes marked on-street parking stalls throughout the downtown core, on-street parking elsewhere in the town is informal and unsigned. There are no signs that encourage or prohibit parking on Church St, Bentley Ave, or College Street. If parking on Main Street were ever to become overcrowded, there may be opportunities to formalize parking on these side streets. Some communities have found success on streets with similar profiles to Church and Bentley to establish designated one-side only on-street parking, and or time restrictions which exempt street residents.

Currently, there is a total of at least 358 on-street parking spaces available in the vicinity of Downtown Poultney.

Off Street Parking Resources

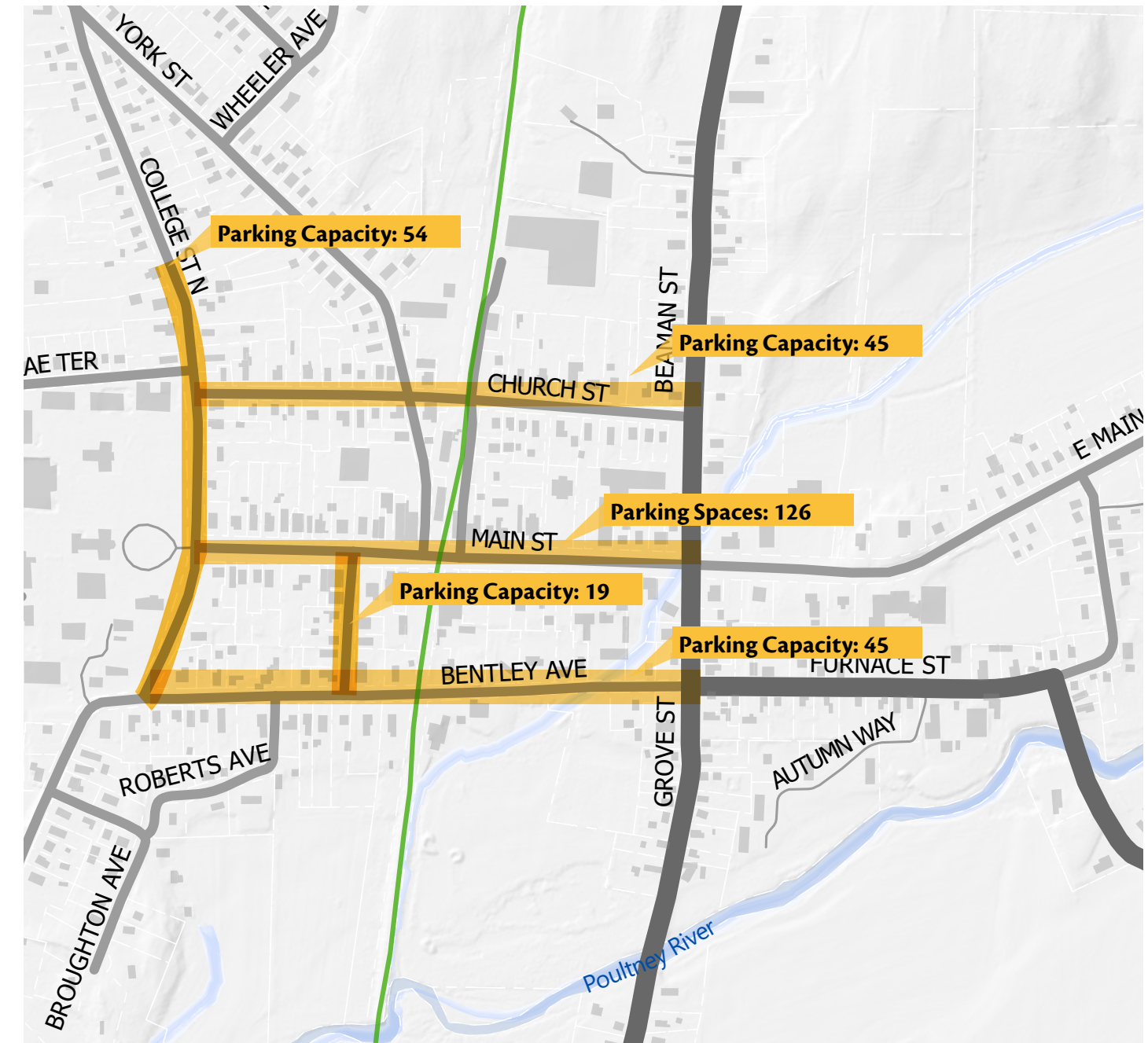
There are limited public parking resources outside of the designated parking areas on Main Street, and that is likely due to a lack of severe need for these spaces in the past. Large private lots at Shaw's Grocery, Poultney High school, and Green Mountain College accommodate their parking demand, while the streets provide additional. There is one public rail-trail parking space south of Bentley Ave that can accommodate approximately 8 vehicles.



Main Street Parking Example



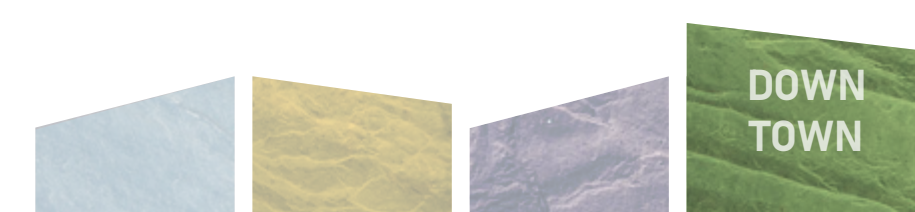
Rail Trail Parking @ Bentley Ave



The Rutland Regional Planning Commission completed a downtown parking study in June 2023. A summary of the results is presented in Book 2: Big Ideas, and the full report is attached in Appendix B.

RERC: Determine if there is enough parking and infrastructure to support the influx of people changes could bring to the community

Goal 2 - Build Poultney's Sense of Place



Downtown Parks and Open Space

Downtown Poultney's Parks and open spaces are community resources for gathering, recreation, and events. These spaces range from private property with a public role to public school property to public parks.

These spaces should be considered in conjunction with town and state owned lands for their potential to offer outdoor recreation programming, and potentially act as linkages for any future trail network planned to connect to Town.

Elementary School Fields

These open sports fields are primarily for school use, but like many communities, are often used by community members during periods of school closure. This area, immediately adjacent to the D&H Rail Trail north of Main Street, also hosts access to the Veteran's Trails.

Slate Quarry Park & Town Office Green

The recently built Slate Quarry Park celebrates the contributions of slate quarries to the Town of Poultney. Its unique design creates an ideal downtown gathering point. Across the street is the Town Office Green with four mature shade trees and a manicured lawn. Both park areas are well visible from Main, and the Town Office Green is clearly visible from the high traffic Main / Route 30 intersection.

Green Mountain College

This iconic and historic point in Poultney is still open to passive public access as it undergoes redevelopment. Its greens act as a focal point from anywhere on Main Street, with western views directed to the central lawn and building tower. Future redevelopment of this site is underway, and should be monitored for opportunities to contribute to downtown open space opportunities.



Elementary School Fields



Slate Quarry Park



Green Mountain Campus

High school Fields

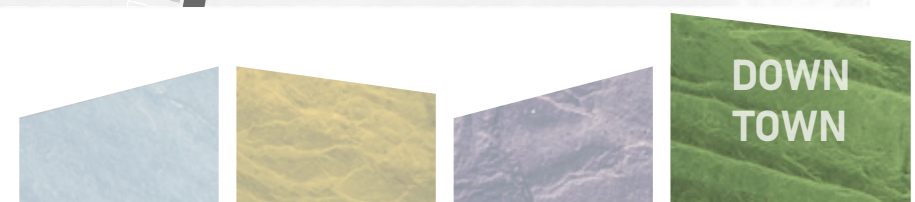
Accessible from both Furnace Street and East Main, these fields have a direct adjacency to the Town-owned Senior Center parcel. Together, these parcels could create a unique entrance for a future trail network coming from Route 30 or the Poultney River.

American Legion & East Poultney Green

Outside of the core downtown network of spaces is the American Legion parcel on Granville Street, which has offered public ice rinks in winter months and other community gatherings. The East Poultney Green, less than 2 miles east on Main Street is also a key public gathering space.



American Legion



Outdoor Rec Hub Opportunities

A key recommendation of the RERC report is to develop an Outdoor Recreation Hub in Downtown Poultney. An Outdoor Recreation Hub could be financed through private or public means, or a public/private partnership. Such a hub would create an economically significant downtown destination, offering outdoor recreation information, services, and goods. Its site would create a central gathering place for residents and visitors alike, further supporting downtown business and redevelopment.

Successful outdoor recreation hubs in Vermont communities share several traits that seem crucial to their success.

1. Available Parking.
2. Visibility
3. Current Use
4. Proximity to compatible businesses
5. Trail Adjacency

On site parking volumes are a core consideration as the intention of such a location is to create an inviting place to start and end outdoor recreation around Poultney - if more visitor vehicles use downtown as that start / end point, more visitor dollars will be left in Poultney.

High visibility from key roadways and/or gateways is also crucial, as there is no amount of online and print marketing can compete with physical visibility in a downtown area.

Pragmatically, the property should be in a state where development or redevelopment or adaptive-reuse is economically feasible.

Proximity (or even co-location) with complementary businesses can create a multiplier effect where the adjacent (restaurant, outdoor retailer, bar) business benefits from outdoor rec hub visitors, and the outdoor rec hub benefits from patrons to the complimentary business. Co-location with businesses should also consider how essential services like bathrooms are provided - as these simple needs play an out-sized role in figuring out where to start a day's adventure.

Finally, trail adjacency is an important aspect of an outdoor recreation hub, as the ability to park and play is crucial for attracting use.

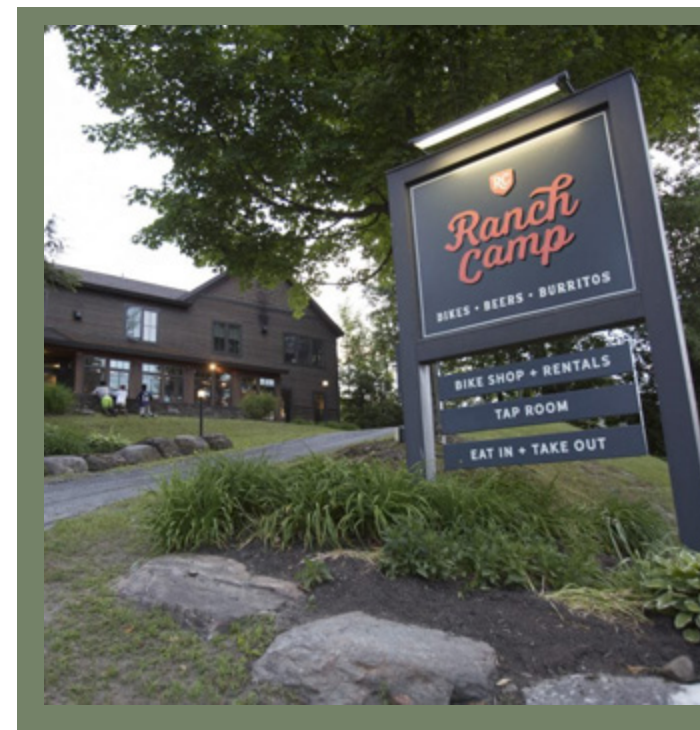
Two prominent Vermont examples of successful outdoor recreation hubs are featured here to illustrate how these aspects are utilized in Randolph and Stowe, VT. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to identifying potential outdoor recreation hub sites in Downtown Poultney and analyzing their potential based on the five characteristics at right.

RERC: Develop a centralized parking area downtown with basic amenities, bathrooms, info center, etc.

Goal 2 - Build Poultney's Sense of Place

RERC: Create a recreation hub in downtown for residents and visitors to Poultney

Goal 2 - Build Poultney's Sense of Place



Ranch Camp, Stowe VT

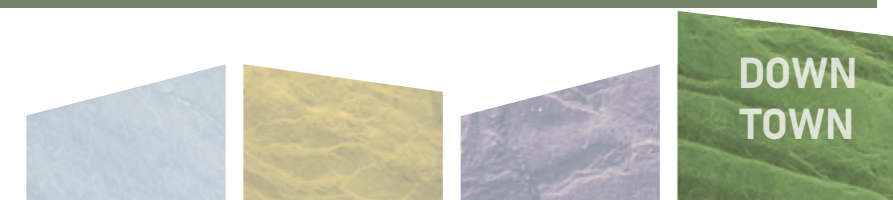
Located at 311 Mountain Road, Stowe VT, Ranch Camp is a combination bike shop and tap room established in 2018. This privately owned business benefits from approximately 28,000 square feet of shared parking area also utilized by Backyard Bar and as the de-facto trailhead for the Cady Hill Trail network.

This trailhead surrounded by private business is a public amenity, serving public trails, which creates real benefits for the private sector and Stowe economy.



Ridgeline Outdoor Collective Trail Hub, Randolph VT

Located at 16 Pleasant St, Randolph VT, the Ridgeline Outdoor Collective's Trail Hub was established in 2020 and is co-located with the Gear House, which sells new and used outdoor gear. The trail hub provides regional trail information for bike trails and backcountry skiing with a room full of 3D and 2D maps of the trails in Randolph, Rochester, Pittsfield, and beyond. A 9,400 sf Town owned parking lot adjacent provides both parking for customers and a staging point for group rides, trail work days, and events. The location is within a mile of two trail networks, creating a trail hub even without direct trail access.



Potential Sites for a future Recreation Hub in Poultney

When considering attributes that could result in a transformative outdoor recreation hub, five sites in Downtown Poultney rise to the top. These sites each offer unique opportunities for their redevelopment to become a destination and starting point for visitors coming to Poultney for outdoor recreation.

This analysis highlights strengths of various sites to support further conversation with property owners and the community. The analysis does not indicate present interest or support by property owners or adjacent landowners or residents for a site's use as a outdoor recreation hub. Such conversations are anticipated to be part of the Town to Trails planning process.

These sites were evaluated based on the six main attributes below:

Available Parking

Visibility

Current Use

Business Adjacency

Trail Adjacency

Ownership

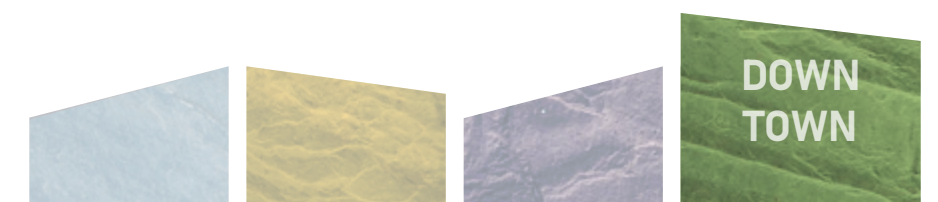
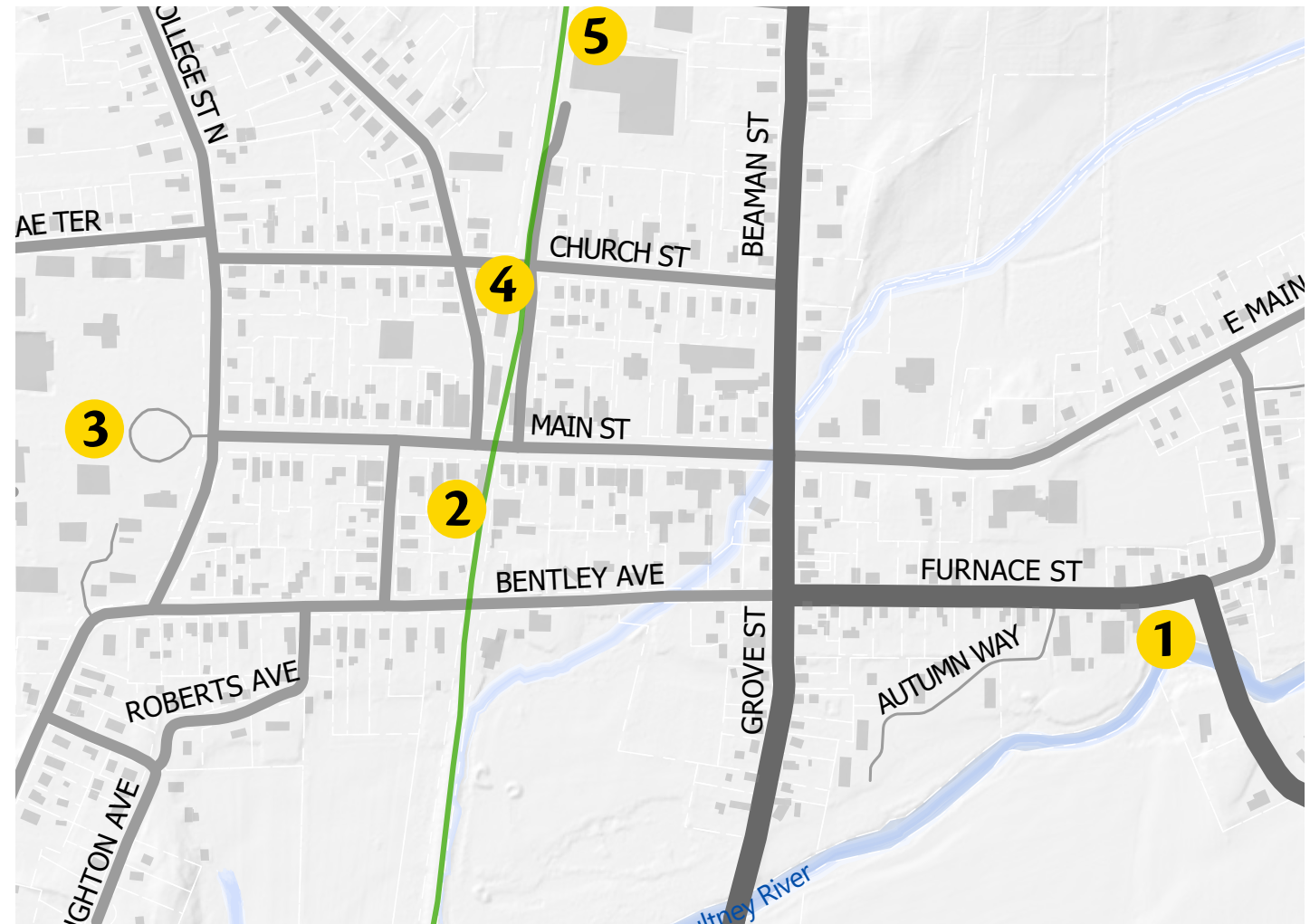
The five sites are numbered on the map at right:

- 1. 206 Furnace Street
- 2. 201 Main Street
- 3. Former Green Mountain College Campus
- 4. Church Street at Knapp Street
- 5. 288 Beaman Street

Centralized Downtown Parking

The development of a centralized parking area downtown with basic amenities, bathrooms, and information is an important recommendation from the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) for a future outdoor recreation hub. However, it is important to recognize that parking consumes valuable space within the densest and most walkable parts of the town so care should be taken to enable and encourage efficient shared-use with adjacent businesses and institutions. Some establishments, such as offices and educational facilities have peak parking demand times (weekdays) that are the opposite of that of outdoor recreation (weekday evenings and weekends) so there may be potential synergies from partnerships between nearby properties.

Partnerships could explore shared responsibilities for parking areas, including security costs, maintenance, or snow plowing in exchange for shared public / private use.



Site #1: 206 Furnace Street (beside Young at Heart Senior Center)



The Young at Heart Senior Center is located on a 4 acre publicly owned parcel at 206 Furnace Street. This parcel also houses a public works facility that must continue to operate but could be re-configured to create additional space for outdoor rec hub use.

Available Parking

Current capacity: 12,600 sf

Street Parking within 500 ft: <10 informal spaces on Furnace Street

Potential Partnerships: Redevelopment of adjacent residential properties or collaboration with Poultney High school could provide unique opportunities at this site. Poultney High School, just on the other side of Furnace Street, has a sizable parking lot that is likely under utilized most evenings and weekends. The Young at Heart Senior Center's parking lot offers ample parking, and could provide opportunities for redesign to facilitate outdoor rec hub use.

Visibility

This location enjoys a key location at the Route 30-Furnace Street gateway, Poultney's major southern entrance.

Current Use

The site is currently used for public works and for a senior center. If the public works operations are modified to accommodate a new recreation hub, it may be possible to adapt some existing buildings for re-use.

Business Adjacency

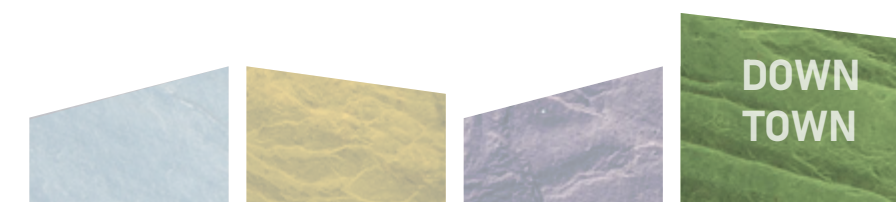
There are no adjacent retail businesses. Main Street access is approximately 1/4 miles away.

Trail Adjacency

This location is not adjacent to any existing trails but is located adjacent to Route 30 and the Poultney River. Future connections to the SVT network via Route 30 or the Poultney River could provide the ideal trail connection to this site.

Ownership

This parcel is owned by the Town of Poultney.



Site #2: 201 Main Street (behind Poultney Library)



201 Main Street is a 0.28 acre commercial lot behind the Poultney Public Library. The parcel does not have direct street frontage but is accessed from Main Street and Maple Street through adjacent lots.

Available Parking

Current capacity: approximately 9,000 sf (shared w library and post office)

Street Parking within 500 ft: 75 - 100 spaces

Potential Partnerships: The Nature Conservancy's office, and the commercial property at 177 Main Street likely have the highest need for parking at times that are opposite of the peak demand times for outdoor recreation. A partnership with these properties for shared parking could be benefit all parties.

Visibility

This location is set back from Main Street and can only be accessed by an easement on a neighboring property. It is not very visible from major roadways but this could be addressed with Main Street / D&H Rail Trail signage.

Current Use

This building is currently vacant Adaptive re-use of the existing building structure may be possible with some investment.

Business Adjacency

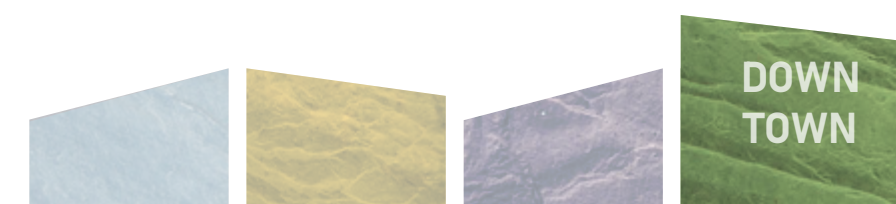
Poultney Pub, Poultney House of Pizza, Full Belly Deli, and Shaw's are all within 500 ft of this property. As well, Analog Cycles and the Slate Valley Trails office is just across Main Street, illustrating clear business adjacency opportunities with this property.

Trail Adjacency

This location is separated from the D&H Rail Trail by the adjacent lot, 177 Main Street. However, this location currently provides a sanctioned entry point to the rail trail for snowmobiles in the winter.

Ownership

201 Main Street is privately owned but is currently vacant.



Site #3: Former Green Mountain College (GMC) Campus



Since its closure in 2019, the Green Mountain College (GMC) Campus has been undergoing an ambitious redevelopment and adaptive-reuse planning process. While no formal discussion has occurred thus far on the potential of the GMC campus hosting a future outdoor recreation hub, the site has many attributes that may make it a viable location and that potential warrants further discussion as a part of the planned redevelopment process.

Available Parking

Current Capacity: 185,000 sf (total - only a fraction would be utilized for an outdoor rec hub)

Street Parking within 500 ft: >80 spaces

Potential Partnerships: As a former college campus, there is a large supply of parking available, but much of the existing parking is located towards the rear of the campus, which is furthest from town center and the D&H Rail Trail. Future redevelopment plans by the site's owners will likely involve some changes to existing parking structure.

Visibility

The visibility of a recreation hub at the former GMC Campus would depend on which part of the campus it is located in. However, the campus itself is a visual landmark and visible from throughout Main Street.

Current Use

There are many buildings on campus of various ages, sizes and layouts. Some of these many be well positioned for adaptive re-use for a recreation hub facility with some modifications. The campus is undergoing a redevelopment planning process.

Business Adjacency

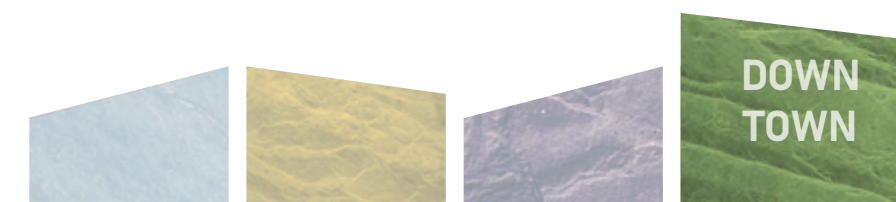
While still early in the planning process, the campus redevelopment is currently envisioned by the owner to include a restaurant, hotel, brewery, and distillery. The site is also about 1,000 ft from Poultney's town center where many existing businesses are located.

Trail Adjacency

The campus property is adjacent to the Poultney River Loop and is about 1,200 ft from the D&H Rail Trail.

Ownership

The campus is privately owned.



Site #4: Church Street at Knapp Street



Directly east of the Poultney's Village Office is a parcel of State owned land that is a part of the D&H Rail Trail corridor itself. The parcel is about 0.2 acres in size but is mostly a linear corridor connecting Church Street to Main Street. While any re-use of this small parcel as a recreation hub require compact, thoughtful design, its central location, public ownership, and adjacency to Village Office property make it a potential candidate for use a recreation hub.

Available Parking

Current Capacity: 3600 sf (approx 12 spaces)

Street Parking within 500 ft: 30 - 50 spaces

Potential Partnerships: LiHigh School, a private school in the former train station served by the D&H rail line, has some parking spaces that are likely to be unused during evenings and weekends. The northern edge of this site offers access to the adjacent

depot street parcel to the south, but such access is redundant with direct access from Depot Street, and could be redesigned as parking. Additionally, this site is opposite of Shaw's grocery store which could be a candidate for a shared-parking partnership.

Visibility

This location is highly visible from Church Street, and could be made more visible from Main Street with signage and other enhancements on the D&H corridor itself.

Current Use

There are currently no buildings on this site but it may be possible to integrate a recreation hub at the former Village Offices to offer the use of existing indoor restroom facilities with some modifications to accommodate access outside of office hours.

Business Adjacency

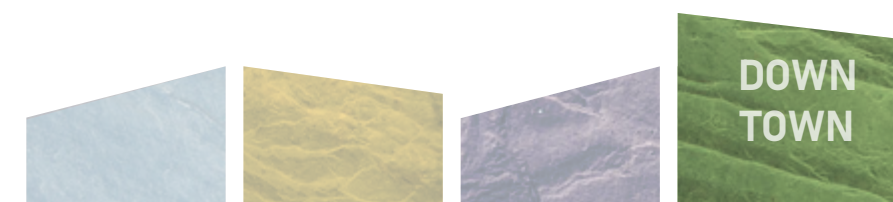
Poultney House of Pizza, Full Belly Deli, and Shaw's are all within 500 ft of this property. As well, Analog Cycles and the Slate Valley Trails office is just across Depot Street. Poultney Pub is located adjacent to the D&H Rail corridor in this section and may potentially benefit from an additional entrance or outdoor seating fronting the Rail Trail if this site is chosen as a recreation hub.

Trail Adjacency

This site is directly located on the D&H Rail Trail. It is also within close proximity of a network of trails planned to be developed in a wooded property north of Green Mountain Power's substation.

Public Ownership

This site is owned by the Vermont Agency of Transportation.



Site #5: 288 Beaman Street (Parking lot behind First Light Technologies and Fire Station)



The parcel north of the First Light Technologies manufacturing facility is owned by the Town of Poultney and houses the fire station and gravel parking lot in the back. The parcel has additional unused space that could potentially be used as an outdoor gathering space or additional parking area.

Available Parking

Current capacity: 22,000 sf (approx 50 spaces)

Street Parking within 500 ft: 0

Potential Partnerships: As an industrial facility, First Light Technologies south of this site may have high parking demands during shift times but very low parking demand when they are not operating. If they do not have plans for weekend shift work, they may be a potential candidate for a shared-parking partnership.

Visibility

This location not visible from main roadways. It is only currently accessible by motor vehicles through Firehouse Lane but may also be accessible from the south if Ideal Way is extended.

Current Use

The site is currently used as a parking lot and a fire hall. The fire hall is expected to remain in place and in operation but the parking lot behind could be subject to potential adaptive reuse.

Business Adjacency

This location is not directly adjacent to any retail businesses but is about 1/4 mile from Main Street via the D&H Rail Trail, where Analog Cycles, bars, restaurants and retailers are located.

Trail Adjacency

This site is located near the D&H Rail Trail, with a (currently) unimproved path connection from the northwest corner of the First Light Technologies building. It is also directly across the trail from the Veteran's Trail connection currently being built across a portion of Green Mountain Power's substation.

Ownership

This site is publicly owned.

