



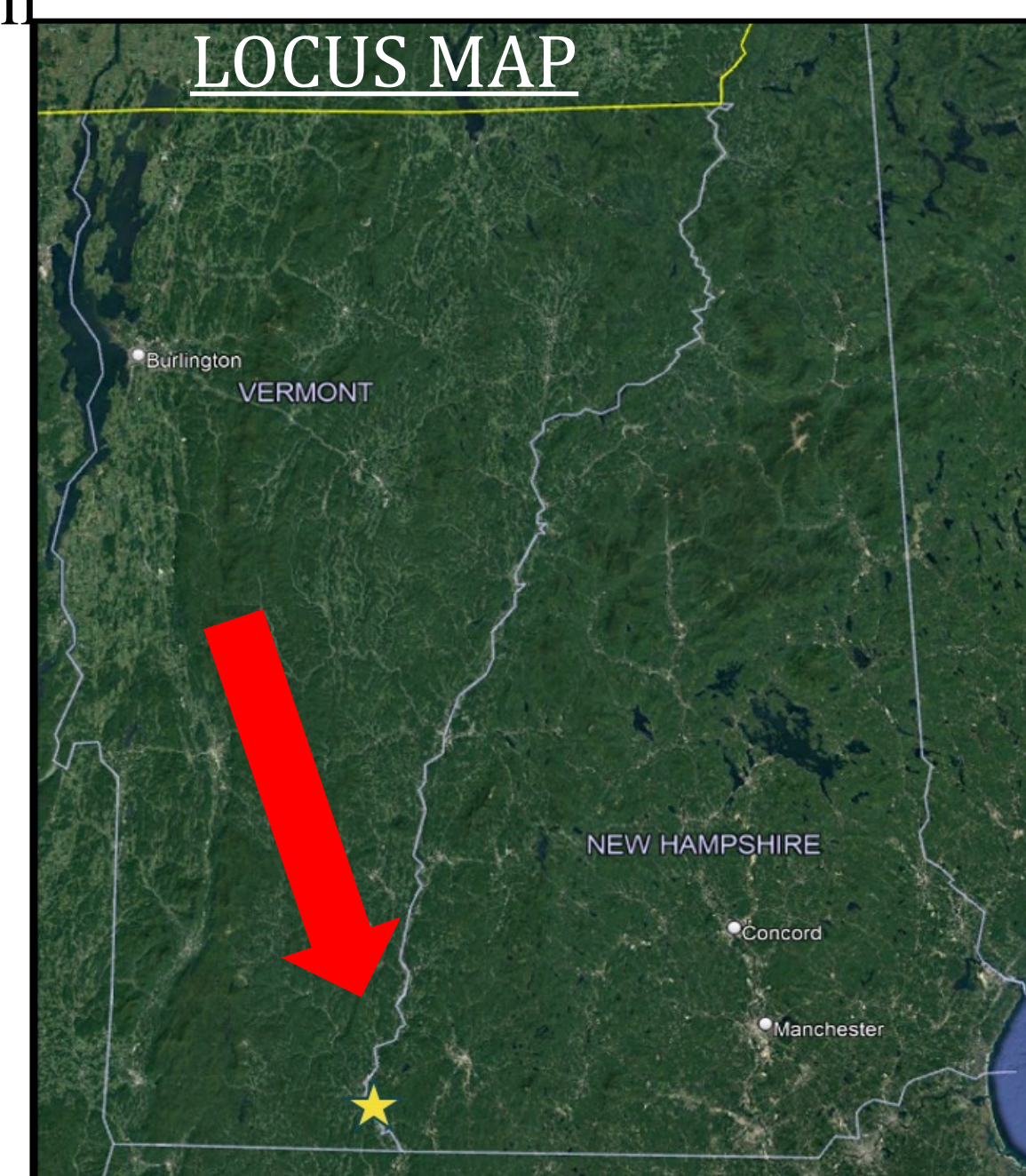
Fort Hill Truss Bridge and Connecting Rail Trail

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Introduction

The small town of Hinsdale, New Hampshire is home to an abandoned railroad line that has been unused since 1983 and connects New Hampshire with Vermont across the Connecticut river. The railroad itself was removed in 1983, and what remains is a maintained rail trail that terminates at the Fort Hill truss bridge. The objective of the project is to furthermore create a pedestrian link between Hinsdale and Brattleboro safe for travel, utilizing the old truss bridge and existing railroad clearing. This would complete the connection of the Fort Hill Rail Trail with the Whetstone Trail, West River Trail, and Brattleboro-Hinsdale Pedestrian Island project in downtown Brattleboro.



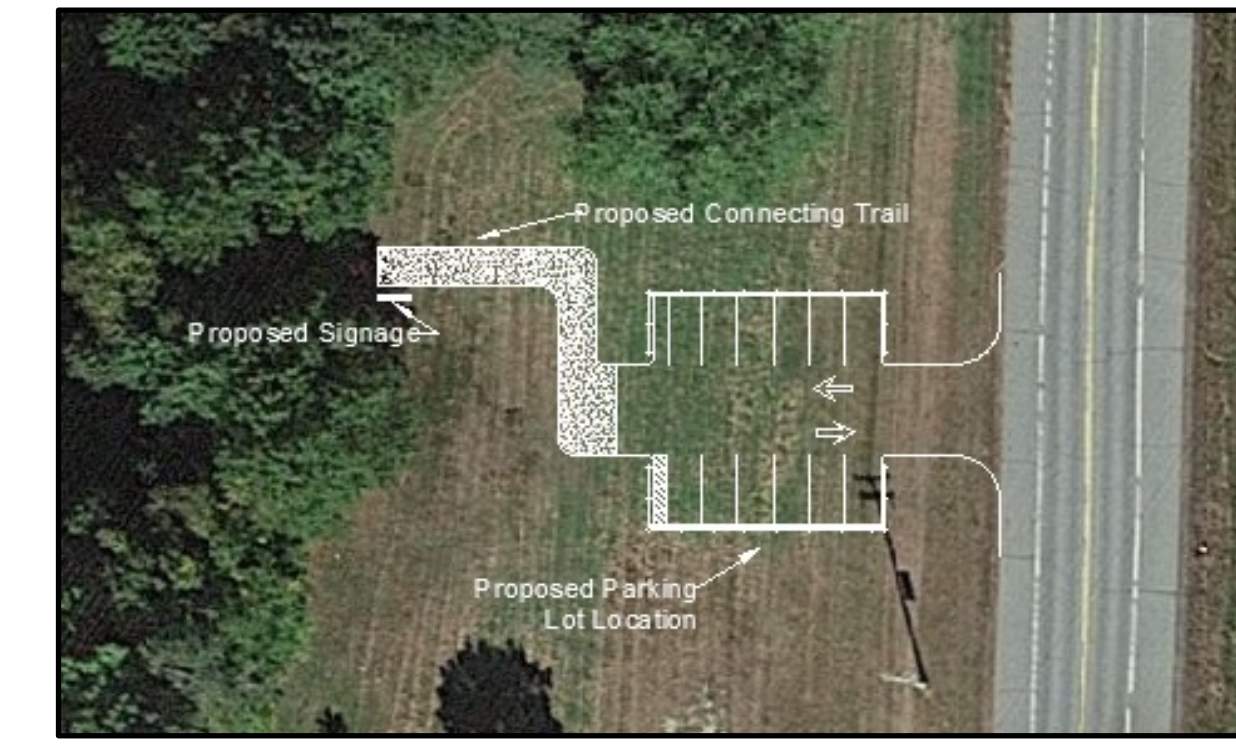
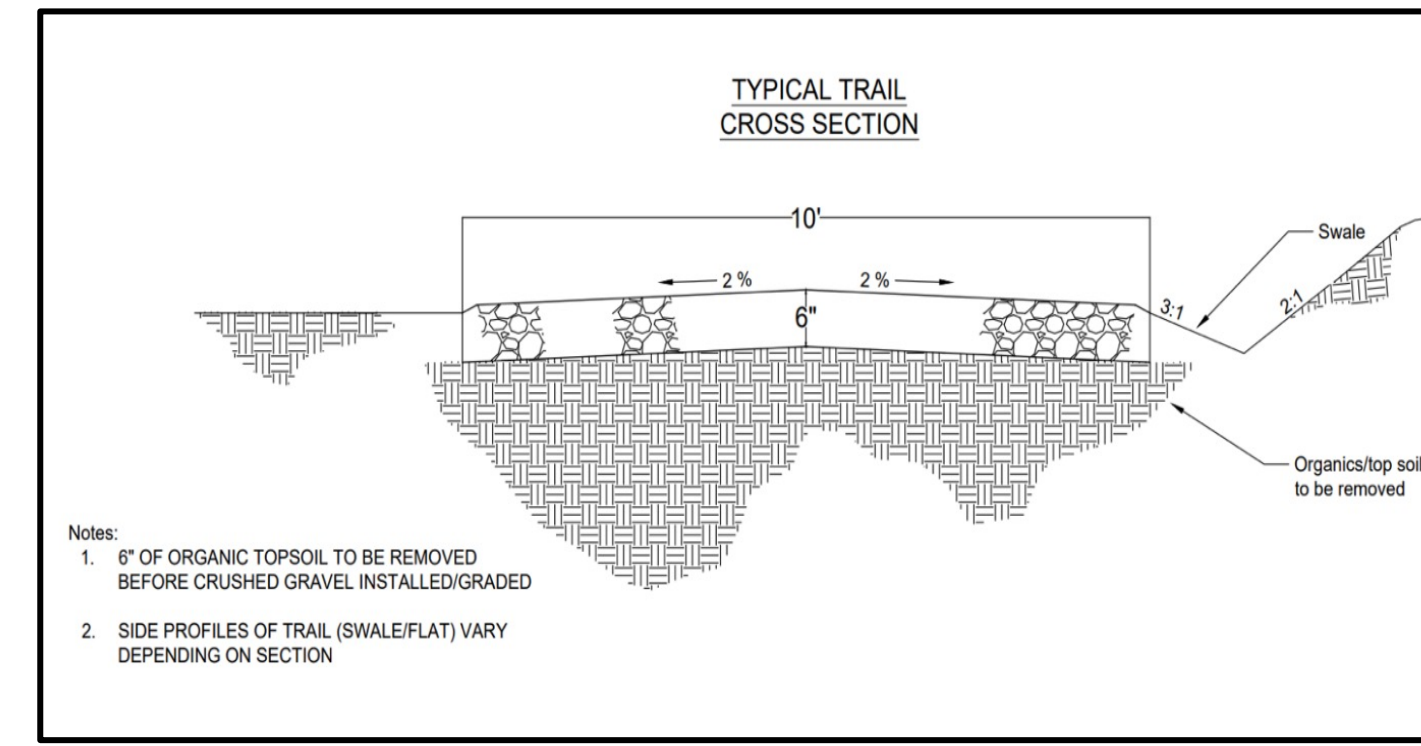
Project Phasing



The project was phased in such a way that the completion of one phase would put pressure on the next phase of work to be completed. Each phase contains its own unique challenges in completion of the project given the existing conditions and the \$8,000,000 budget. The map to the left shows the location of each phase relative to Brattleboro, Vermont and Hinsdale, New Hampshire.

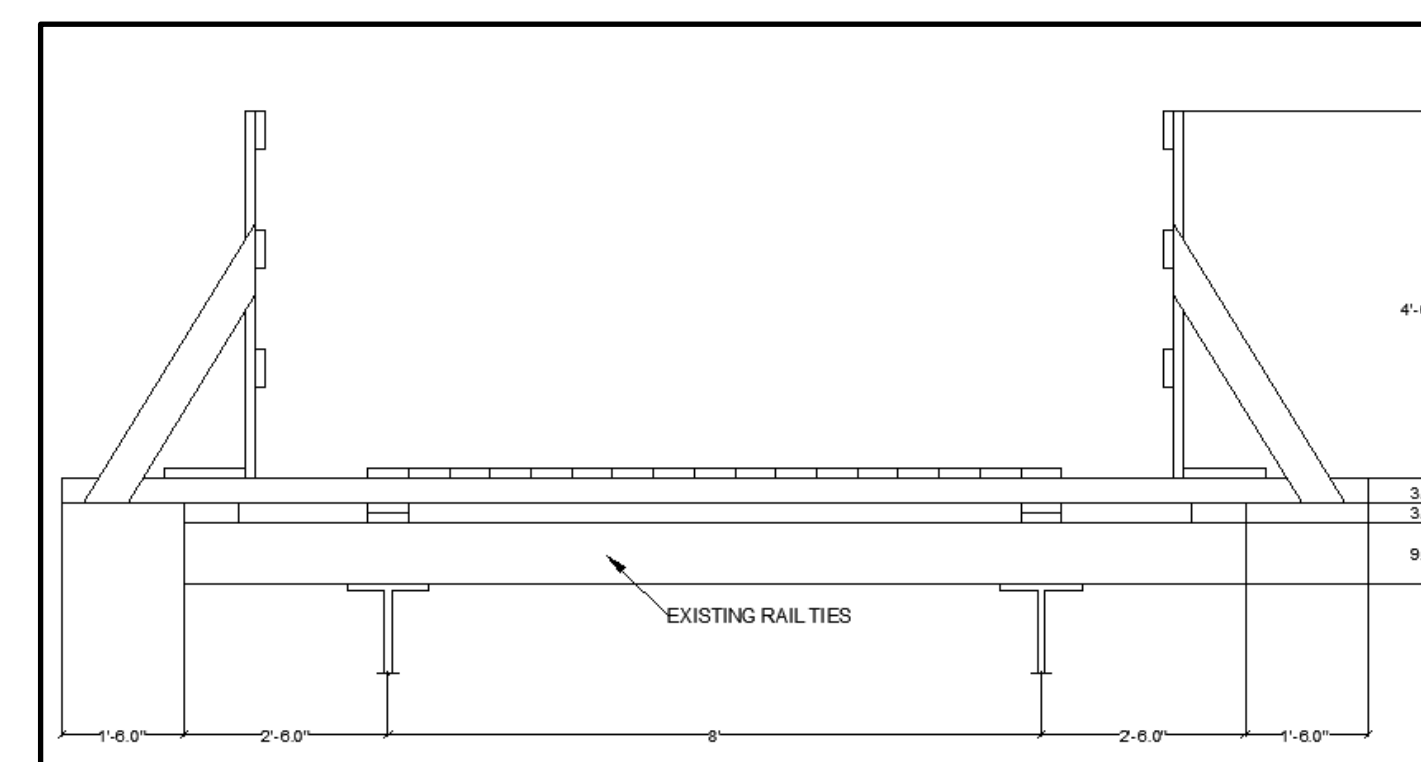
LEGEND	
█	Phase One
█	Phase Two
█	Phase Three
█	Phase Four

Phase One



Phase One encompasses a ten-foot-wide crushed stone trail that runs 0.7 miles from A-1 Pizza to the southern end of the existing Fort Hill truss bridge. Beginning on New Hampshire Route 119, the most southern point of Phase One will include a proposed parking lot in the empty grass lot adjacent to A-1 Pizza in Hinsdale. ADA-compliant switchbacks were designed to allow access between the parking lot and trail, which there is a twenty-foot elevation change between the two. The typical trail cross section (shown above) was designed along with a culvert and swale to overcome drainage concerns along the trail.

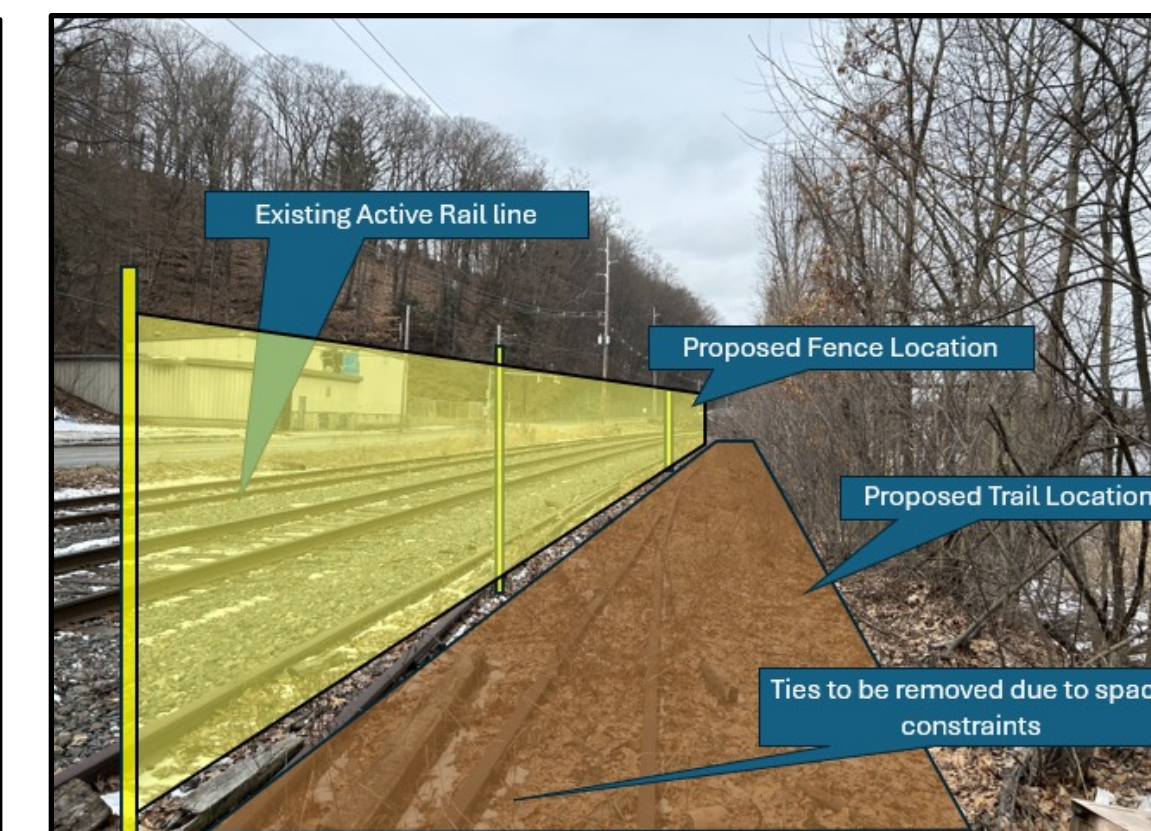
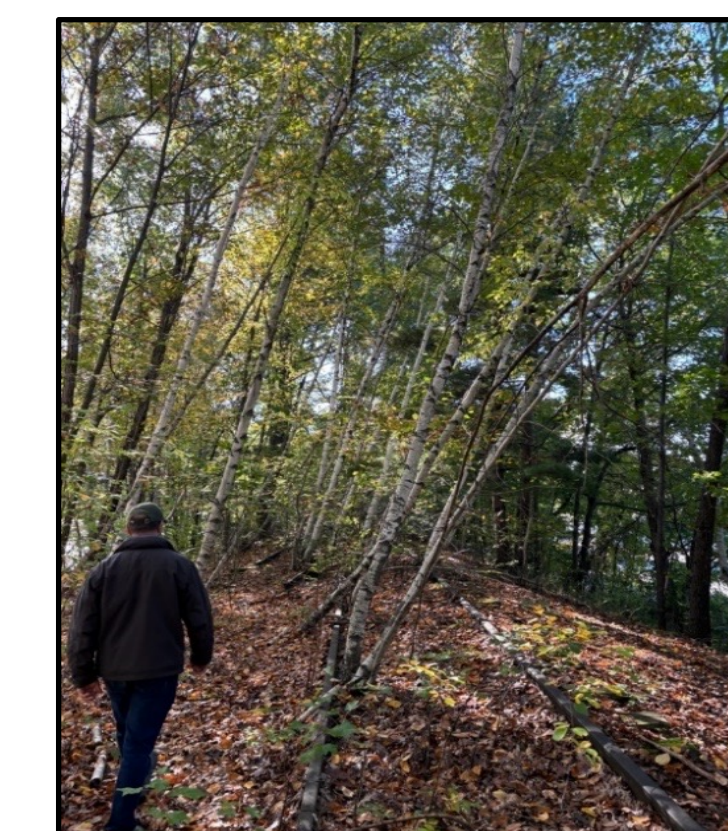
Phase Two



The start of Phase Two entails the entirety of the 900-foot Fort Hill truss bridge that was built in 1913. The typical cross section (shown above) was designed to conform to state standards and load bearing capacities regarding pedestrian and snowmobile usage and used surrounding rail trails for inspiration. A 12-foot by 22-foot overlook was designed to be placed on the unused track on the northeastern portion of the bridge and faces upstream towards the town of Brattleboro.

Phase Three

Phase Three covers the 0.75-mile trail segment from the Fort Hill truss bridge to downtown Brattleboro. The trail will run alongside the Brattleboro Wastewater Treatment Plant and the operational New England Central Railroad line, it will utilize the unused railbed of the abandoned Fort Hill Railroad line. Following the same cross-section design as Phase One, this part of the trail runs along the western bank of the Connecticut River. The accompanying photographs depict the current state of the path along this stretch.



Phase Four



Phase Four includes a 0.25-mile trail segment situated in downtown Brattleboro. The land for this section belongs to Barrows & Fisher Oil, with plans anticipating for their relocation across the river once the new Route 119 bridge is finished. The trail is intended to link up with the parking lot on Depot Street in downtown Brattleboro, which serves as the convergence point for the Whetstone Trail, West River Trail, and the proposed Pedestrian Island project.

Permitting

This project takes place in two different states, resulting in each side having different permit requirements.

New Hampshire Side (Phase One and Two)

- 1) Alteration of Terrain
- 2) Shoreline and Wetlands

Vermont Side (Phase Three and Four)

- 1) Lake Encroachment
- 2) Stream Alteration and Stream Crossing Structures
- 3) Operational Storm Discharge
- 4) Construction Stormwater Discharge
- 5) Shoreline and Wetlands

Conclusion

The work outlined in this project proposes approximately 1.9 miles of trail, a parking lot for trail users, refurbishing the Fort Hill truss bridge, construction of a scenic outlook of the Connecticut river, and the attempt to connect the existing Fort Hill rail trail to downtown Brattleboro. The Fort Hill truss bridge and connecting rail trail project would be a pivotal milestone in pedestrian travel between Hinsdale and Brattleboro. The current existing conditions of the New Hampshire Route 119 bridge leave an unsafe route of travel for civilians via bicycle or foot to travel between neighboring towns. The Fort Hill Rail Trail would provide this safe route of travel with the benefit of outdoor recreation and the preservation of historical landmarks. The existing network of trails on both sides of the Connecticut river is missing this pivotal piece to connect the two communities.



Acknowledgements

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