



MONTPELIER AREA MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOCIATION

North Branch Trail Initiative

Expanding Montpelier's Access to the Outdoors. A Healthy Choice. Good for Business. Fun for the Whole Family.

Towns across Vermont are capitalizing on visitors to their towns to ride bikes, hike, ski, and recreate on their trails, on their lakes and rivers, and in their forests. A new economic impact report released by the Vermont Trails & Greenways Council found that Blueberry Lake bike trails in Warren bring in \$1.8 million annually to the Mad River Valley. The totals come from looking at direct consumer spending associated with using trails (trail tickets, rentals, etc.), and the activities recreationists love doing before and after hitting the trails, such as visiting nearby watering holes, shopping, or grabbing a bite to eat.

Now it's Montpelier's turn.

North Branch Park can be a potential hub for new shared-use trails that once built will greatly expand local options for family friendly riding and other outdoor activities. Last year, a working group of trail advocates, led by then Mayor John Hollar, began laying the groundwork for new trail building within the city's limits with a specific focus on providing more trail recreation options that are easily accessible from downtown.

The trail plan, designed by professional trail builder Brooke Scatchard of Sinuosity and commissioned by the Montpelier Area Mountain Bike Association (MAMBA), proposes improvement of existing trails and the addition of nearly four miles of new, multi-use trail in North Branch Park, just below Sparrow Farm. The plan, which was approved unanimously by the Montpelier Parks Commission, will provide the Montpelier community with sustainable trails that the whole family can enjoy. Hikers, runners, mountain bikers, snow-shoers, and cross-country skiers will all enjoy more trails right in town.

The [approved trail plan](#) can be seen online.

This trail system is just **1 mile** from the heart of downtown Montpelier.

This trail plan will:

- Add 4 miles of NEW, Shared-USE trails within city limits
- Improve on and in some cases, reconstruct existing trails to make them more sustainable and user friendly
- Include adequate signage
- Be environmentally responsible [in terms of limiting impact on the ecosystem and being sustainable!]
- Provide trails that are family friendly, including beginner-friendly trail
- Allow for a multi-phased approach to trail building and improvement

Over the next year, MAMBA will fundraise to make the North Branch Trails Initiative a reality. The trail plan has a price tag of \$110,000.

Your tax-deductible gift today will provide the support needed to expand Montpelier's access to outdoor recreation.

With your donation, MAMBA promises to:

- Thank you and provide a receipt for your tax-deductible donation!
- Update you on our fundraising progress
- Invite you to a trail building kickoff event, trailside
- Keep you informed on the trail building process
- Include you in our Tour de North Branch, where we will walk or ride the trails with you

Together we will expand Montpelier's access to outdoor recreation. It's the healthy choice. It's good for business. And it's guaranteed fun for the whole family. Thank you for supporting this effort.

About the Montpelier Area Mountain Bike Association

Montpelier Area Mountain Bike Association (MAMBA) is a collection of mountain bike enthusiasts who advocate responsible trail use, perform trail building/maintenance, and secure additional riding areas in the Montpelier, Vermont area. For years, MAMBA has worked in and around Montpelier to improve access to trails for all levels of mountain bike enthusiasts. MAMBA is a chapter of the Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA).

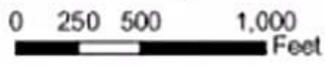
Donations can be sent to:

Montpelier Area Mountain Bike Association
P.O. Box 1091
Montpelier, VT 05601

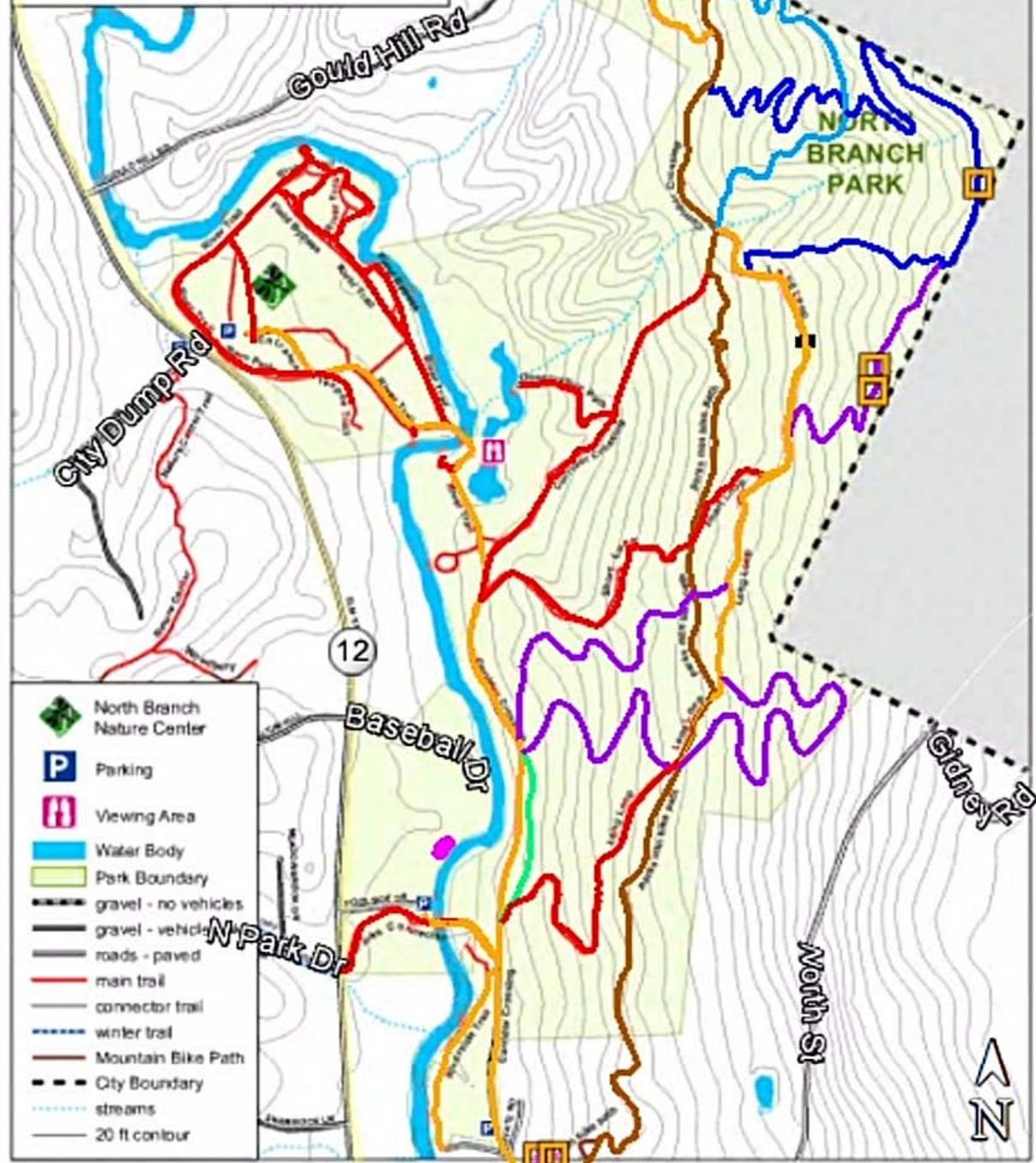
Checks should be made payable to **Montpelier Area Mountain Bike Association**.

We are a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. When you make a gift, so you will receive a receipt for tax purposes.

NORTH BRANCH PARK Montpelier, VT



City of Montpelier GIS - Updated August 2011



- North Branch Nature Center
- Parking
- Viewing Area
- Water Body
- Park Boundary
- gravel - no vehicles
- gravel - vehicles
- roads - paved
- main trail
- connector trail
- winter trail
- Mountain Bike Path
- City Boundary
- streams
- 20 ft contour

Legend

- Existing Multi Use / Bike Trail
- Existing Trails to Open for Multi Use
- New Bridges
- Phase 1 Existing Bike Trail Rebuild
- Phase 1 Multi Use Kids Trail
- Phase 1 New Multi Use Entrance
- Phase 1 New Multi Use Trail
- Phase 1 New Multi Use Trail
- Phase 2 New Multi Use Trails
- Planned Bike Pump Track
- Walking Only Trails - No Bikes



MAMBA blazing new trails

The Times Argus | April 09, 2018

By LUKE CATLIN

STAFF WRITER

Montpelier is attempting to become the mountain biking capital of capitals.

For many outdoor enthusiasts who live in Montpelier, development of a network of trails has been an overdue endeavor. Neighboring towns have turned into mountain bike meccas, with out-of-state athletes flocking to the Millstone Trails in Websterville, the Perry Hill Trails in Waterbury and the Kingdom Trails, based out of East Burke.

For nearly 20 years the Montpelier Area Mountain Bike Association has been working to promote, build, expand and maintain local trails. There are nearly 20 miles of trails in Calais, East Montpelier and Berlin that MAMBA oversees in association with the Vermont Mountain Bike Association, a state organization. Meanwhile, Montpelier only has 1 mile of trails. Over the next few years, MAMBA members would like to see that distance increase to 5 miles.

On Feb. 20, the Parks Commission voted unanimously to approve the North Branch Trail Initiative, a trail design by Brooke Scatchard of the Morrisville-based Sinuosity company. Scatchard, who has made significant contributions to some of Vermont's best trail systems, was commissioned by MAMBA, and Montpelier city officials agreed to pay the first invoice for trail design. The multi-use trail network will incorporate and improve upon the existing trails near the North Branch Nature Center in addition to adding 4 miles of new trails.

On the hillside across the river from the Recreation Fields on Elm Street lies North Branch Park, a large parcel of town land with trails that connect Cummings Street, the North Branch Nature Center, Montpelier Recreation Fields, Gould Hill Road and the Sparrow Farm Trails. In 2005, the Montpelier Parks Department and MAMBA worked together to build a trail from Cummings Street to the bottom of the Sparrow Farm Trail. This has functioned as a multi-use trail for skiers, snowshoers, runners, walkers and advanced riders.

"One of the association's main goals and missions is to look at trail capacity in Montpelier, and how do we build trails that are accessible to all sorts of riders," MAMBA board member Judy Stermer said. "In Montpelier right now, access to beginner trails is pretty limited, and so that was really the focus of this project: How do we not only expand trails but expand trails for beginner riders?"

John Hollar recently stepped down as mayor of Montpelier but his ties to the community are still strong. He is one of the founders of MAMBA and has been optimistic about the latest project.

"A critical thing for this project and why it is successful is we were able to show that this is a really important element of recreation in Montpelier and a need that's not being met," Hollar said.

Hubbard Park is off limits to bikers, and currently the Capital City's lone bike trail is not suitable for beginners or even intermediate riders. As a result, MAMBA members have been happy to see the city supporting entry-level participants. In the past, MAMBA has worked on getting "hand shake"

agreements from private landowners to access trails, but knowledge of these trails only spread by word of mouth and could not be promoted online.

“One of the new things that MAMBA has been talking about is that we are going to put our money, our effort and our volunteer time behind public land,” Hollar said. “If trails can’t be mapped and can’t be signed, then we totally support the development of those trails, but MAMBA itself is not going to be one to put its energy there.”

During Hollar’s six years as mayor he spent a lot of time working on making Montpelier a more bike-friendly town. The North Branch Trail Initiative has provided a big boost, along with the bike lanes on city streets and the recently approved pump track at the Recreation Field. Hollar supported all three projects while in office, though he resigned from the MAMBA board when he became mayor.

MAMBA is now attempting to raise \$50,000 from local businesses and residents to fund the first phase of the trail-building project. Organizers will then shift their efforts to grant writing in search of the remaining \$60,000 it will take to complete the initiative. Although \$110,000 might sound like a lot of money for narrow wooded trails, MAMBA officials anticipate that the Capital City will see returns on the investment immediately.

A recent study by the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council found that the Blueberry Lake bike trails in Warren generate \$1.8 million annually for the Mad River Valley.

“Places like the Mad River Valley, the Northeast Kingdom and East Burke have seen huge economic booms because of trail development,” Stermer said.

Montpelier is more centrally located than many of the more remote trail destinations, and MAMBA members believe the city has a lot to gain from an expanded network of multi-use trails.

“By having a downtown that has a lot of bars and restaurants, that is something that can distinguish us from other places that can make us a hub for outdoor activities. I think this (trail network) has the opportunity for creating a lot of excitement among people who like the outdoors, and making Montpelier an attractive place for young people to want to come not just to visit but to live,” Hollar said. The ambitious project has required public hearings, meetings with the Parks Commission and approval from the City Council. After getting the green light from the Parks Commission, MAMBA members were asked to meet with the Conservation Commission last month to review the project. By maintaining an open dialogue with the commission and partnering with an experienced trail builder, MAMBA is planning to remedy any environmental concerns.

“We want to make sure these trails are sustainable and safe for not only bikers, walkers and hikers, but also the natural habitats they will be coexisting with,” Stermer said.

The new ownership at Onion River Outdoors on Langdon Street is eager to promote the new trail development. This year the Muddy Onion Spring Classic Gravel Ride on April 28 will benefit MAMBA, specifically the North Branch Trail Initiative. For more information about the event, email kipmroberts@gmail.com.

“This is really a big deal to have city approval, backing from the business community and now we’re looking for support from the Montpelier community at large,” Stermer said. “This is pretty momentous.”

YES! I want to support the North Branch Trail Initiative and bring more shared-use trails to the heart of downtown Montpelier.

My Gift Today: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to *Montpelier Area Mountain Bike Association*

Please provide your contact details so we can keep you updated on our progress.

Name: _____

Address: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ Is this a cell number? Yes ___ No ___