

ESSEX TOWN BIKE PATH FEE ANALYSIS

The Town of Essex currently maintains a total of 5.71 miles of paved Bicycle/Pedestrian paths, excluding concrete sidewalks. According to the 2008 U.S. Census population estimates, the Town houses a total of 10,593 residents. Combining these figures indicates that the Town is currently meeting a service standard ratio of 0.539 miles per 1,000 persons.

The 2004 Essex Recreation Impact Fee Analysis includes paths/trails in the fee calculation, based on a service standard ratio of 0.5 miles per 1,000 persons. Thus, the Town appears to be providing the anticipated level of service for paths and trails.

It is also noted that the existing paths and trails are very popular and there are frequent requests to expand the system. This suggests that the current service level ratio might not accurately reflect public demands for these services, and could be increased slightly. If the service ratio were to be increased to 0.6 miles per 1,000 persons, the current population would generate a need for 6.36 miles of paths. This suggests a current deficit of 0.65 miles.

Plans provided by the Public Works Department show five additional segments of Bicycle/Pedestrian paths.

- Along Pinecrest Road from Shillingford Crossing to Route 2A 0.3125 miles
- Along Route 2A to Bike Path on Old Colchester Road 0.75 miles
- Along Route 15 from just north of Perry Drive to Allen Martin Drive 0.425 miles
- Along Route 15 from light at Shopping Center to Intersection with Towers Road 0.303 miles
- Along Towers Road from Clover Drive to Route 15 0.189 miles

Altogether, these segments will add a total of 1.98 miles to the Town's Bicycle/Pedestrian path system. Assuming that they will all be completed by 2019, at that time the Town will provide a total of 7.69 miles of Bicycle/Pedestrian Paths. At the revised service level ratio of 0.6 miles per 1,000 persons, the planned network would be satisfactory until the population exceeds 12,817 persons. At the growth rate specified in the current Town Plan (210 persons per year, on average), this population level will be reached in 10.5 years, or 2020.

The 2004 Recreation Impact Fee Analysis incorporated an estimate of the Town's cost of \$24,005 per mile for paths and trails. If this were adjusted to 2009 dollars, the cost would be \$27,365 per mile. A more recent (2006) analysis conducted by the Vermont Agency of Transportation, "Report on Shared Use Paths and Sidewalk Unit Costs" indicates actual costs average \$132 per linear foot (\$696,960 per mile). If these estimates are adjusted to 2009 dollars, the adjusted costs estimates are \$141 per linear foot or \$744,480 per mile. At this time there is no estimate of any non-town funding for these paths.

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An impact fee would be based on estimates of the Town's cost per person which can be computed using the service level ratio of 0.6 miles per 1,000 person, and the various cost per mile estimates described above. This results in the following cost per person estimates:

- $0.60 \times \$27,365 / 1000 = \16.419 per person
- $0.60 \times \$744,480 / 1000 = \446.688 per person

These can be converted to base impact fees per dwelling unit by using the person per dwelling ratios used in the 2004 Recreation Impact Fee Analysis: 2.967 persons per dwelling for single family detached dwellings, 2.255 persons per dwelling for multiple family dwellings. The results are as follows:

If the estimated Town cost per mile of path is \$27,365, the base fees would be:

- \$48.71 per single family dwelling
- \$37.02 per multiple family dwelling

If the estimated Town cost per mile of path is \$744,480, the base fees would be:

- \$1,325.32 per single family dwelling
- \$1,007.28 per multiple family dwelling

From these base fees would be deducted any applicable credits to account for possible double paying for the planned paths.

At this time it is not recommended that the Town establish a new impact fee for bicycle/pedestrian paths. Instead, it is recommended that the Town consider amending the current Recreation Impact Fee to reflect the increased service level ratio and the updated estimate of the cost of constructing bicycle/pedestrian paths.