



Welcome To The  
Danvers Rail Trail

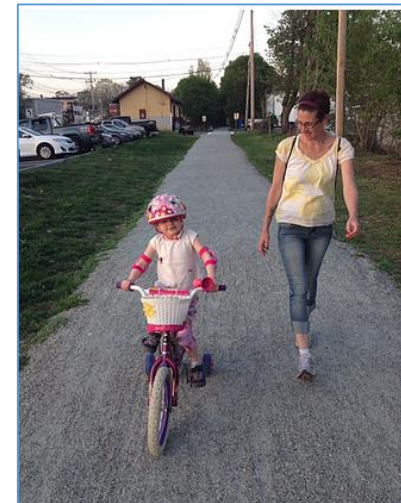
*From Rails To Recreation  
Something For Everyone!*



# Danvers Rail Trail Survey



April 2016



# Survey Overview

- Survey goal: ensure the RTAC focuses efforts on key needs of trail users.
- Online survey completed March 24 to April 4, 2016.
- Mailed to approximately 600 Rail Trail Users and Supporters (email and mobile app push)
- 109 responses, 315 comments.
  - CAVEAT... The survey participants had already expressed an interest in the trail. This sample is not representative Danvers residents in total, but only trail users.
- 29 people interested in volunteering and provided contact info.

# Executive Summary

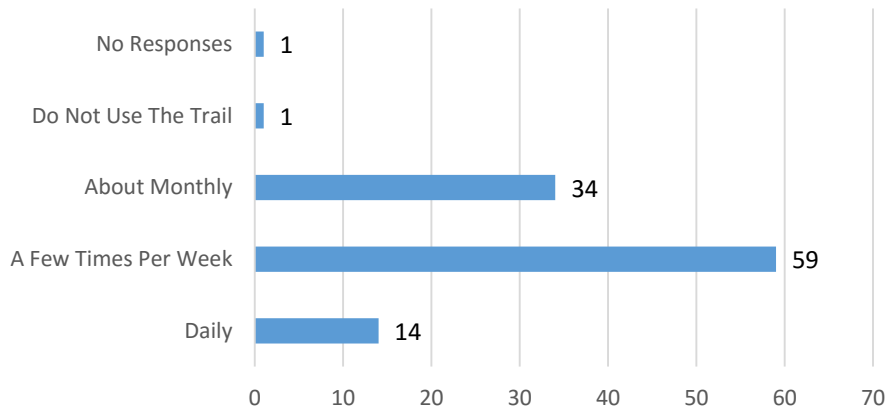
- The trail is used by older, health conscious, Danvers residents, who walk/bike to the trail.
- The trail is clearly viewed as a town asset.
- The DRT volunteers are very much appreciated.
- The trail is felt to be well maintained.
  - Dog poop is most commented maintenance issues
  - Top request - add pedestrian lights at more crossings
- The trail is felt to be safe, with some comments.
- The RTAC should focus on:
  1. Maintenance of trail bed and embankments
  2. Removal of trash and debris
  3. Extending the trail
  4. Ensuring seasonal toilet facilities



# 65% use the trail weekly or daily, 92% for their health, and most are 41 years or older

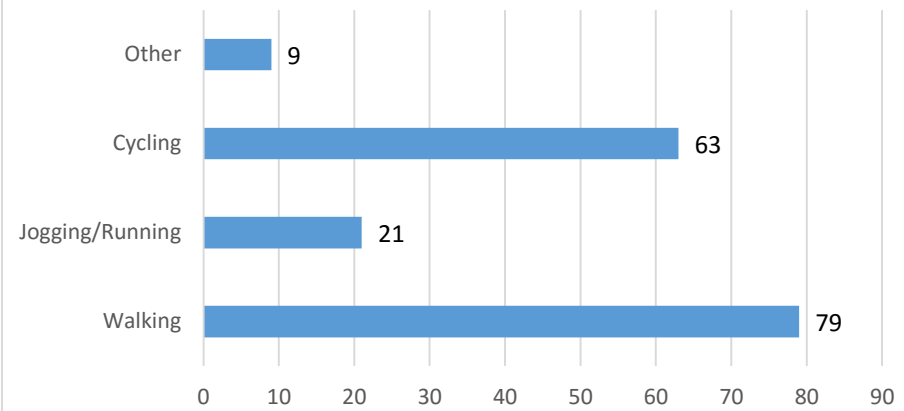
## 1. How Often Do You Use The Trail?

Number of Response(s)



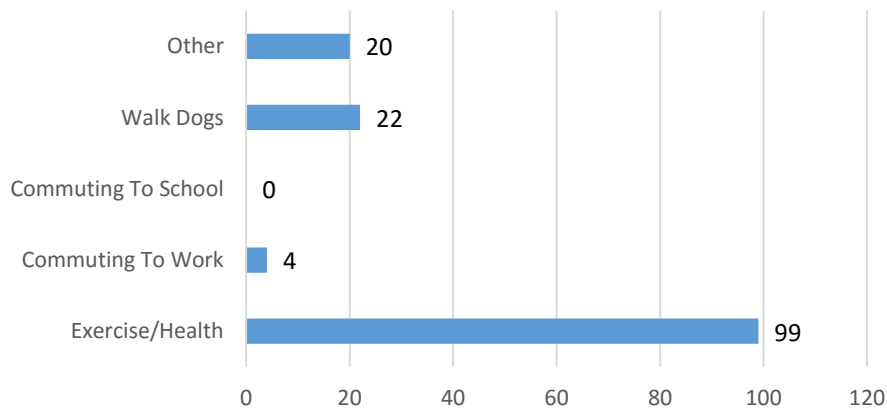
## 2. How do you use the trail?

Number of Response(s)



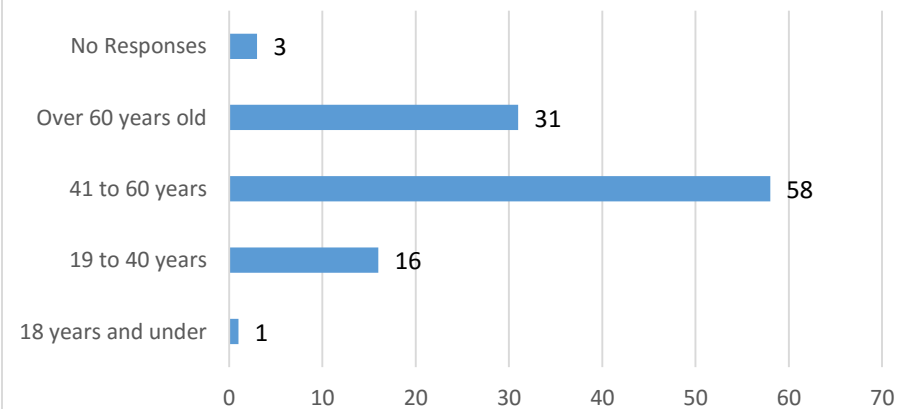
## 3. Why do you use the trail?

Number of Response(s)



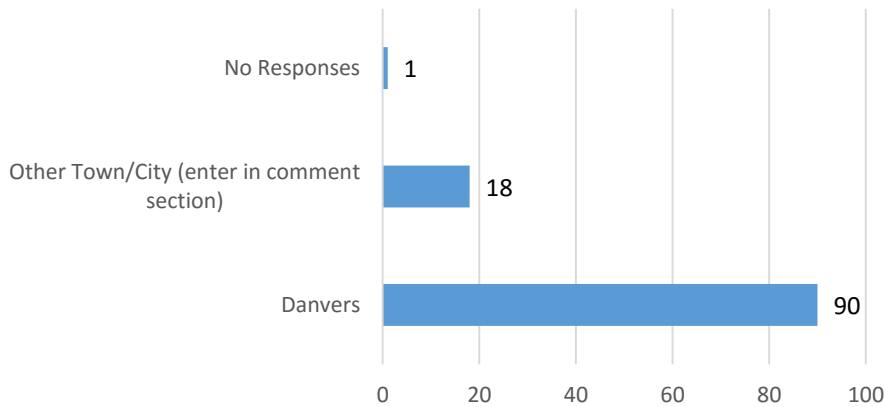
## 7. How old are you?

Number of Response(s)

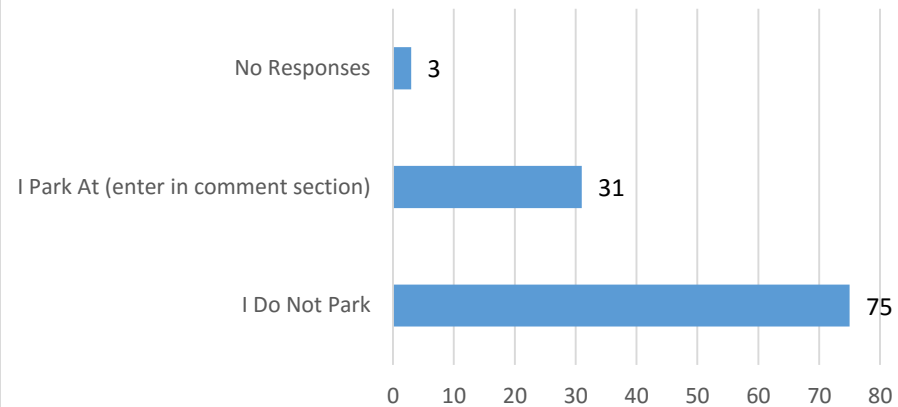


# 82% of trail users live in Danvers and only 28% drive to and park near the trail

5. Where do you live?  
Number of Response(s)



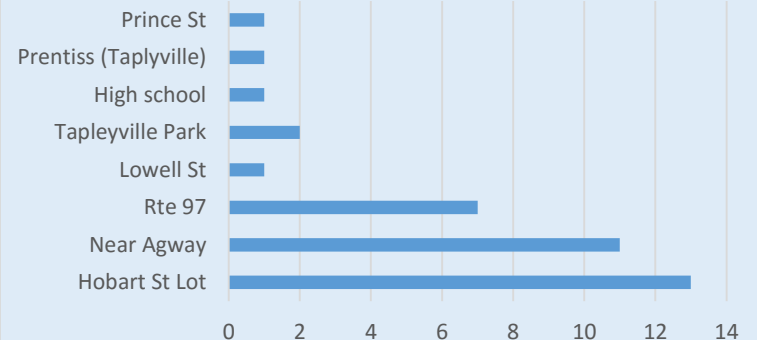
4. Where do you park when you enter the trail?  
Number of Response(s)



## Living Outside Danvers

- Peabody – 5
- Beverly – 3
- Boxford - 2
- Ipswich
- Lynnfield
- Wenham
- Salem
- Saugus
- Topsfield
- Gloucester
- Reading

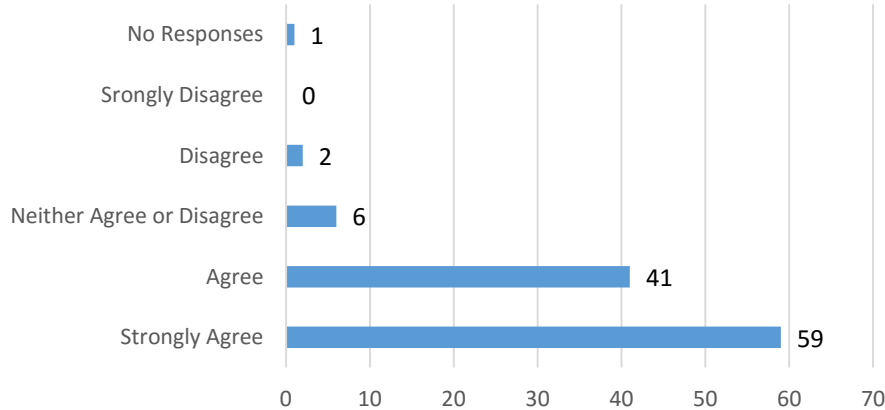
Summary of Parking by Mentions\*



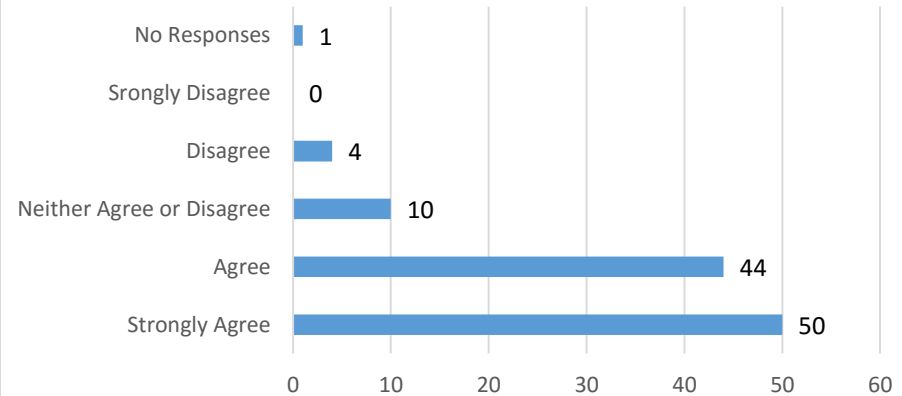
\* Many mentioned multiple locations, thus over count of 31 parkers.

# 91% of users feel the trail is clear of trash and 96% believe it is well maintained

8. The trail is generally kept clear of trash and litter  
Number of Response(s)



9. The trail surface and embankments are well maintained. Number of Response(s)



## Representative Comments - 21 total

- + “The trail is kept clean of trash, someone is doing a GREAT job.” (7)
- + “Would be a good idea to put barrels at a few trail heads...” (1)
- Peabody overpass and Prince St need attention (2)
- “Lots of dog waste bags.” (8) Plus 8 similar in Other Comments.

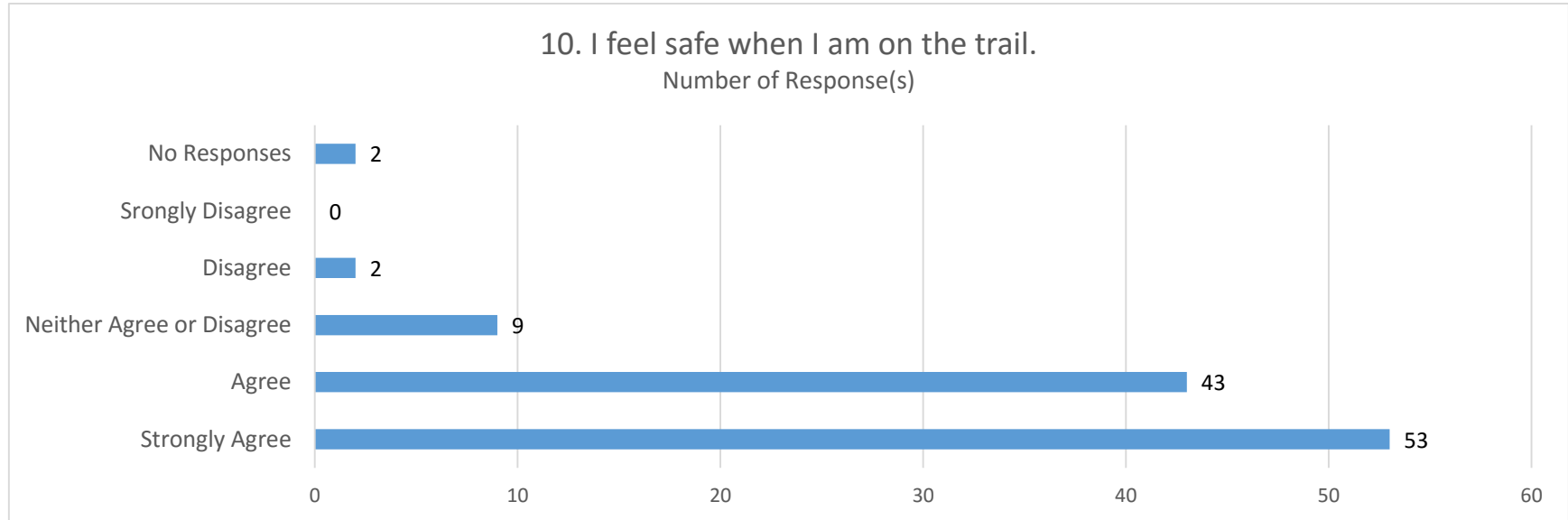
Count of similar comments referred to in parenthesis.

## Representative Comments - 11 total

- + “Trail surface is well kept. Embankments & homeowners back yards could be better.” (1)
- + “Very smooth and easy to walk/ride/run on” (3)
- “After hard rains and some of the trail surfaces are left with gully's for days/weeks.” (3)
- “I’d like it better paved.” (1)

Count of similar comments referred to in parenthesis.

# 88% of users feel safe on the trail. 2% feel somewhat unsafe

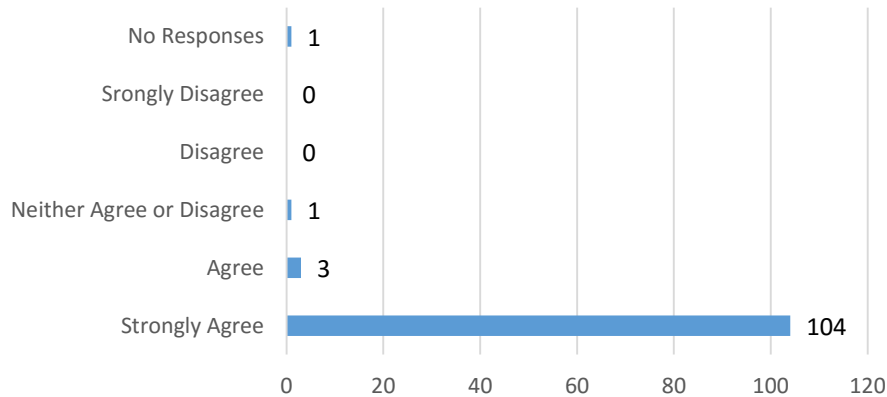


## All Comments

- Dogs are not always on a leash.
- When I use the trail there seem to be a lot of people out there, so I feel like if something happened there would be people to help pretty quickly.
- I grew up with a bike path in my backyard so I was well aware of the potential dangers of walking alone in the woods. I like to think that the trail is safe for everyone but I do not use it by myself. I do appreciate the bike police presence.
- I also have pepper spray on me at all times, not just on the rail trail.
- The occasional pile of debris indicating unscrupulous people is unsettling.
- There is wild life out there so you do need to be cautious after dark, although I will not walk it alone
- Some areas are a little isolated but otherwise it's feels pretty safe.
- There was a strange character once when I was walking he basically started talking to me and I tried to ignore him. When we got to an area where you walk around a pond area he wanted me to walk around with him. I said no thank you. He attached himself to me in 10 min span. I ran like hell to make sure I wouldn't run into him...so I do worry ever since that encounter.
- Hard to feel safe when your a women alone in the woods. I use trail during day light hrs only
- Except through the stretch past Putnamville heading towards the swamp walk. Fairly secluded
- There are those times when a cyclist will approach me from the rear and I do not know he or she is there, it could be a disaster because they do not give a warning.
- The Trail after Collins Street creeps me out.

98% feel the trail is a Town of Danvers asset.  
94% agree that the RTAC is doing its job effectively

11. The Danvers Rail Trail is an asset to the Town of Danvers Number of Response(s)

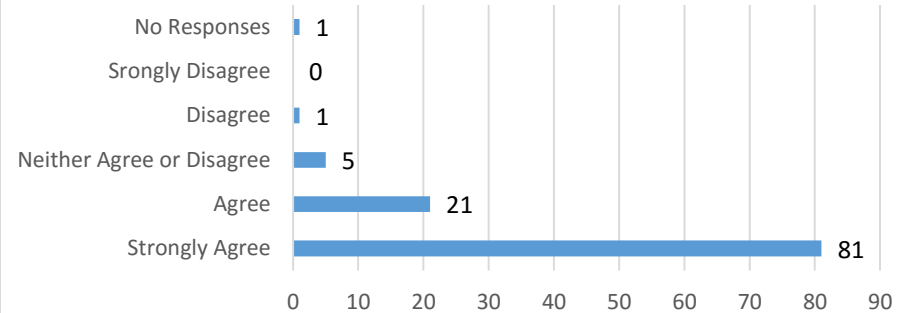


### Representative Comments - 10 total

- + "It's both an asset and a credit to the town to have a volunteer run trail do as well as it has over a sustained period."
- + "It is great gift - Friends of mine wish they had it in their respective communities... they are jealous!"
- + "Thank you so much for creating and maintaining the trail."
- + "One of the best assets!"

Count of similar comments referred to in parenthesis.

12. The volunteer group is doing an effective job of trail related communications, maintenance, and improvements. Number of Response(s)



### Representative Comments - 11 total

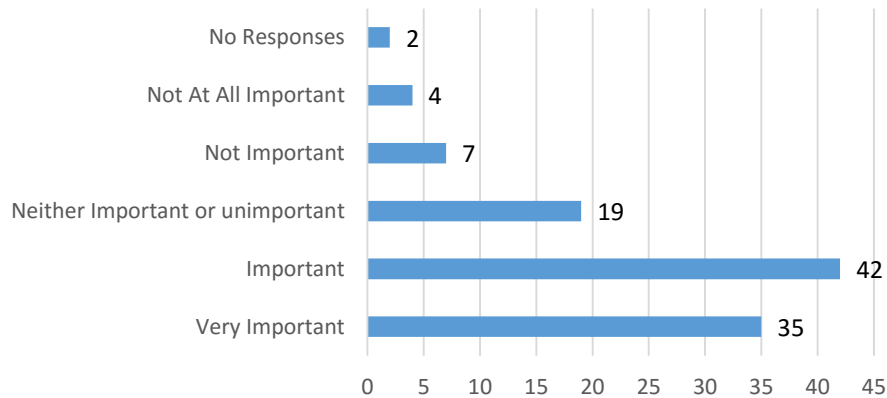
- + "Great work, amazing that it's done entirely by volunteers." (4)
- + "Plans for SwampWalk repairs?" (2)
- + "Absolutely thrilled with the flashing light button installed at Holten Street. Makes a huge difference." (1)
- "As a well used linear park, the town should spend money on it just like they do on other parks." (1)

Count of similar comments referred to in parenthesis.

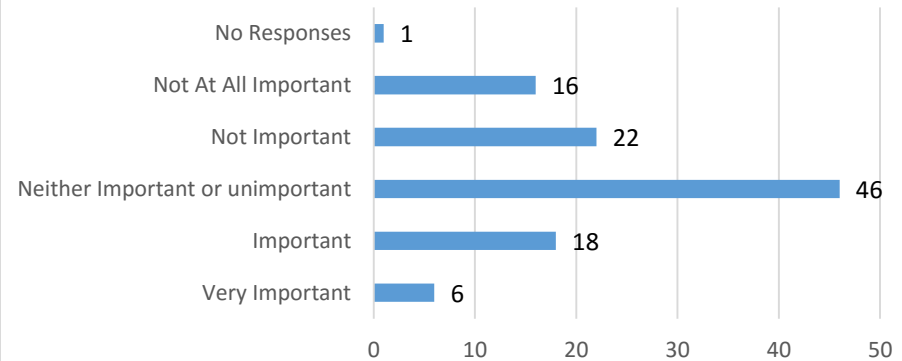


# Seasonal toilets and extending the trail top the list of requested amenities.

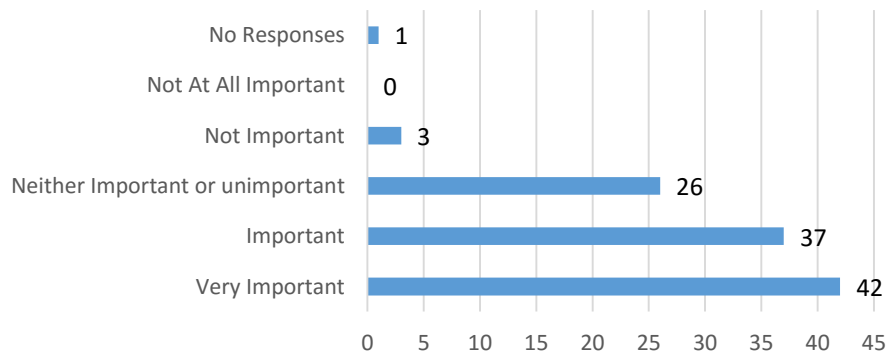
13. Maintain seasonal toilet facilities in one or two locations on the trail Number of Response(s)



14. Add exercise equipment (e.g. sit-up bench, balance beams) along the trail Number of Response(s)



15. Extend the trail from the Hobart St lot north towards Middleton via Greenleaf and Fox Hill Open Space. Number of Response(s)



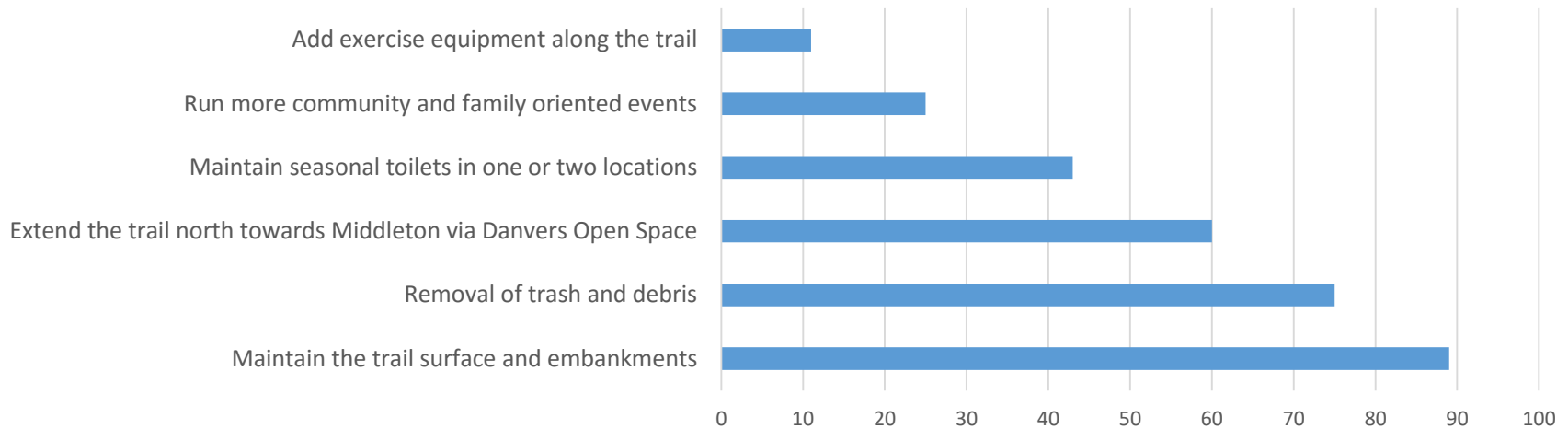
## Representative Comments - 28 total

- + Potty: "We with antique internal plumbing would greatly appreciate this." (4)
- + Potty: "Important for neighbors and businesses near the trail... to not view people relieving themselves" (1).
- + Exercise: "I don't expect to use it, but I wouldn't complain if I saw it." (5)
- + Extend: "It would be awesome, but there is already plenty of trail, so it's not essential (would be cool though!) (5)

Count of similar comments referred to in parenthesis.

# Trail maintenance most important area for RTAC followed by improvements and events

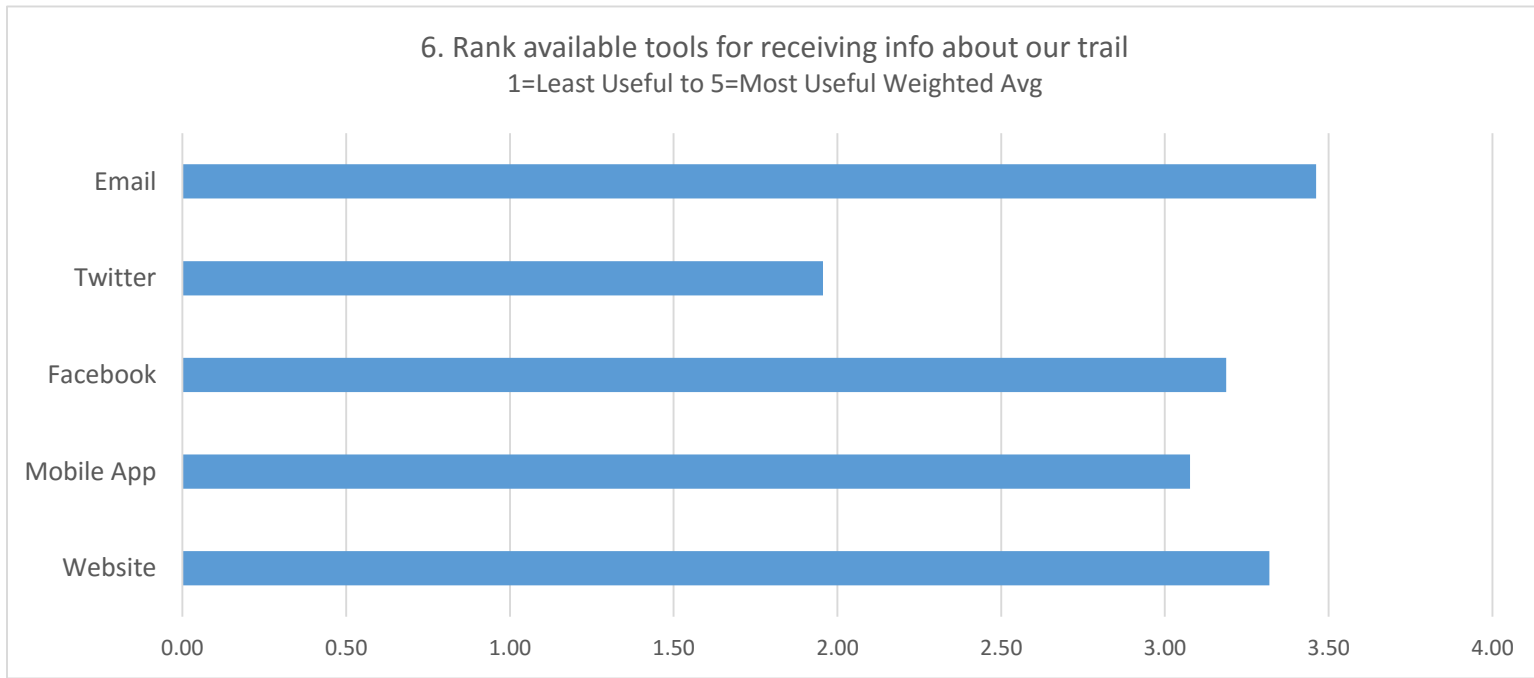
17.Three items you feel are most important the RTAC to focus on: Number of Response(s)



## Comments - All 9

- Get people to pickup dog excrement
- Removal of dog waste
- Posting that dogs must be on leashes and clean up after them.
- Expand and fix the swamp walk.
- More trash barrels
- Convert other town rail beds
- Extend the distance of the trail volunteer security patrol
- Awareness/courtesy
- Safety at crossings
- Making sure to have the trails policed often
- **NOTE:** General comments included 5 on adding crossing lights

Email and website are most preferred communication tools.  
About 10% of trail users prefer “non-digital”



# General Comments and Suggestion

## (All comments with some minor typo corrections)

- The Rail Trail is the BEST thing to happen to Danvers! I am a HUGE supporter and user of the trail. I am thankful that it's there and it has enhanced my exercise regime. My husband and I use it all year around. Thank you for all you do!
- Very impressed and pleased with this volunteer effort. Thank you for the continuing improvement of this long hidden gem.
- I think it's a wonderful place! We love the rail trail! (removed 5 similar)
- Kudos all around again - You have a very professional management team. This survey was very well designed to elicit the information being sought
- Thank you so much for all the work on the trail - perhaps having poop bags or a trash can at 97 or by the Agway to dispose of dog poop would be great!
- Love the trail! You're doing a great job...sincerely appreciated.
- Your efforts are highly commendable. I love the Rail Trail and try to support it financially when I can. Thank you.
- The volunteers are doing an amazing job and the public seems to generally appreciate and respect the trail. It is a good balance between public access and nature. My only concern would be encroaching too much on nature which I don't think is the case as of yet. I hope the trail stays as it is with no more development over its natural surroundings.
- Encourage the bikers to have a bell or horn that they have to use before they pass a walker.
- I enjoy receiving the rail trail news on email thank you for doing a great job
- Expand usability in winter activities...skating and skiing/snow-shoeing.
- I really like the tool stations, please keep an eye on them so they stay in good working order!
- My concerns are poison ivy, trash, toilets.
- Many bikers and runners do not make an "audible signal" when passing along the trail. The Trail Rules are posted, but I am not sure they are visible enough for trail users to read and follow.
- Restore the turn-table behind the fish market, restore all of the depots/stations/RR buildings/etc.
- Consider posting carved wooden educational boards along the trail that provide info on the types of wildlife that can be observed from the trail(e.g. ducks, turtles, various birds etc.)
- On the sides that are steep such as the area near the high school if there could be plans to install some kind of safety rails. Only a concern when there are a lot of people trying to go past each other. Otherwise the trail is perfect
- Handicap access to the high school and perhaps Rebecca Nurse site. Access to Rt. 114 from bridge area
- Please work on improving the intersection of where the trail crosses Maple St. in downtown Danvers. It is the most dangerous section of trail.
- Install pedestrian red-stop light at Poplar, Pine, and Collins Streets.
- The crossing options on Maple Street are tricky, especially with young children. Both crosswalks are a short walk away. Only one of the crosswalks has a crossing signal for pedestrians, and the waiting areas are very small. It is difficult to hold on to two small children and bicycles and wait patiently for our turn.
- I would like to see flashing lights at the Collins Street Crossing
- Some sort of emergency notification system for desolate areas
- The installation of call boxes, in case of an emergency and the trail user does not have communication equipment.
- Alert buttons every 1/4 mile. That have distinction sound for safety for emergencies or attacks.
- Ensuring trail maintenance of existing surfaces of AS is should be the first priority vs. expending additional funds.
- Choate Farm parking lot needs access via SIDEWALKS from nearby neighborhoods!
- Safety at culverts, bridges and narrow trail w/steep embankments.
- Extending the trail is very important to help serve more users