



A dirt trail winds through a dense forest of green trees and bushes, serving as the background for the title text.

# Trail Management Advisory Committee (TMAC) Public Forum

11/13/24



# Agenda

<b>7:00 PM</b>	Welcome & Opening Exercise
<b>7:15 PM</b>	TMAC Presentation
<b>7:45 PM</b>	Q & A / Discussion
<b>8:15 PM</b>	Conclusion
<b>8:30 PM</b>	Adjourn

## Stratham Hill Park Trail Network



## Legend

## Stratham Hill Trails



# Questions to be Addressed

- What is the TMAC mandate?
- How were recommendations developed?
- What have we accomplished?
- How has our work has evolved?
- What are the ongoing issues?



# TMAC Mandate

- Make **policy & general recommendations** related to e-bikes, off leash dogs, leaf blowing of trails and any other user issues that may arise.
- **Develop strategies for necessary improvements** & submit recommendations to the Select Board.
- Serve as a **public forum** for obtaining input about the Stratham Hill Park Trail System.

# How We Work

01

A group of residents appointed by Select Board with the desire to improve the visitor experience at Stratham Hill Park & trail system

- Monthly meetings - open to the public
- Guided by Parks and Recreation Department
- Seek support and guidance from Select Board

02

Make recommendations to the town around management decisions at SHP & trail system, based on research & experience

- Trail work days to improve trail flow and passage
- Uses at the park
- Changes to rules & regulations around use at SHP

03

Identify, research and explore policies to address ongoing concerns and challenges identified in the TMAC recommendations

- Policies related to dogs, e-bikes and leaf blowing
- Signage & navigation
- Managing land that is town-owned and privately held

# TMAC Community Engagement

From our inception in 2021 to current, our process has always included garnering public input.

All our meetings are open to the public.

- **Four public forums**
- **Community Survey**
- **6-8 Community Trail Work days**

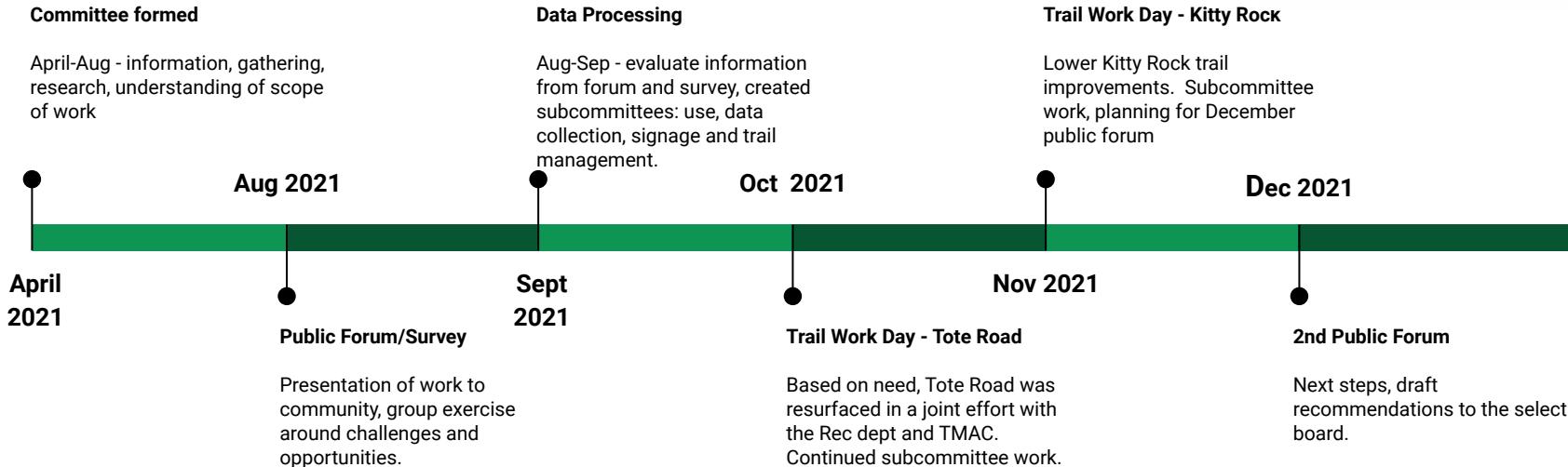


# Trail Work Projects

- Top of Lovell Road Trail: Seacoast NEMBA
- Soggy Dollar Reroute: Seacoast NEMBA
- Tote Road tread improvement
- Barker Trail tread improvement (bottom of Barker)
- Barker trail lower field connector bridge replacement
- Kitty Rock water bar fix and material added (twice)
- Bridge replacement between Barker & fields
- Bridge replacement on Fire Pit
- Trail closure/reroute Lower Father & Son
- Scamman Road Connector improvement
- Lower Dead Fish resurfacing



# TMAC Timeline 2021



# Results from 2021 Survey

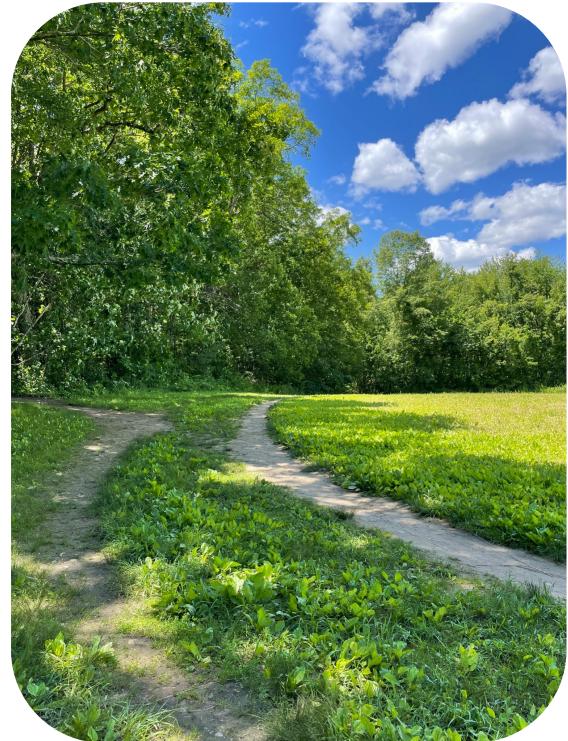
~280 responses

Highlights include:

Need **regulations** related to dogs on & off leash.

Lack of **signage** and difficult to navigate trail system.

Increased use = more **erosion** & damage to trails and increased **user conflicts**.



# Public Forum August 2021

Presented information gathered:

Rules & Regulations are **unclear and misleading**

The SHP Trail Network is composed of both **town owned and private land** which have varying rules and regulations

There are parcels within the trail network that remain **unprotected** (privately owned with no permanent conservation status)

Exercise to gather public feedback using a **challenges/opportunities**

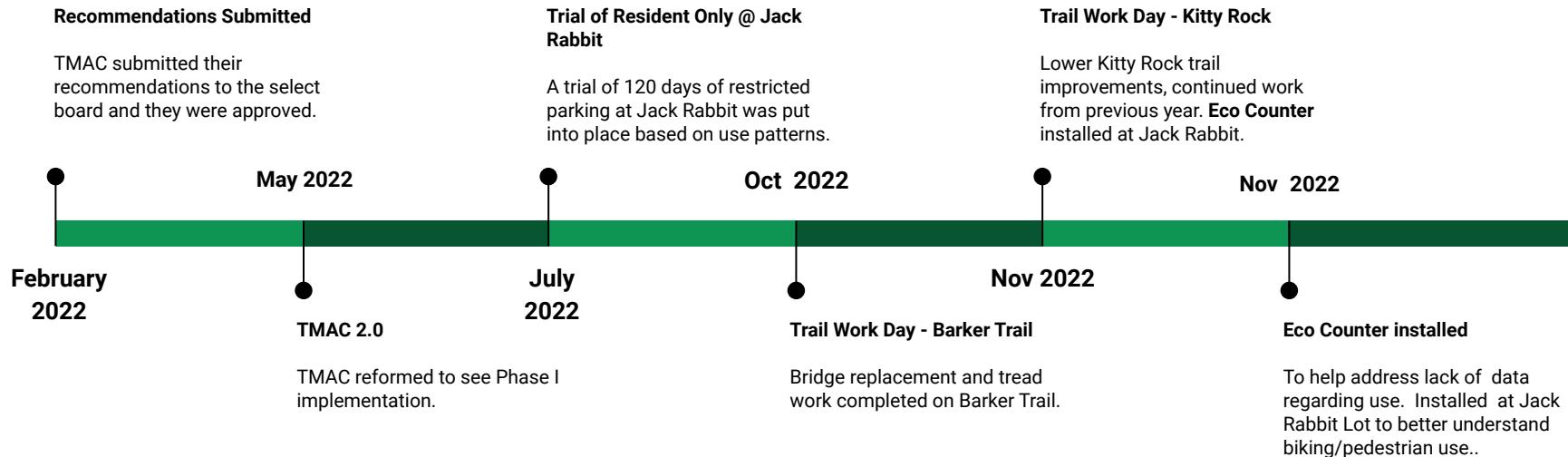
# Public Forum December 2021

Based on public input & research, shared the following areas of focus:

- **Visitor Experience and Use**
- **Trail Work and Planning**
- **Data Collection**
- **Signage**

Held a shared learning/mapping exercise to discuss Signage & Ordinances and Trail Maintenance and Management.

# TMAC Timeline 2022



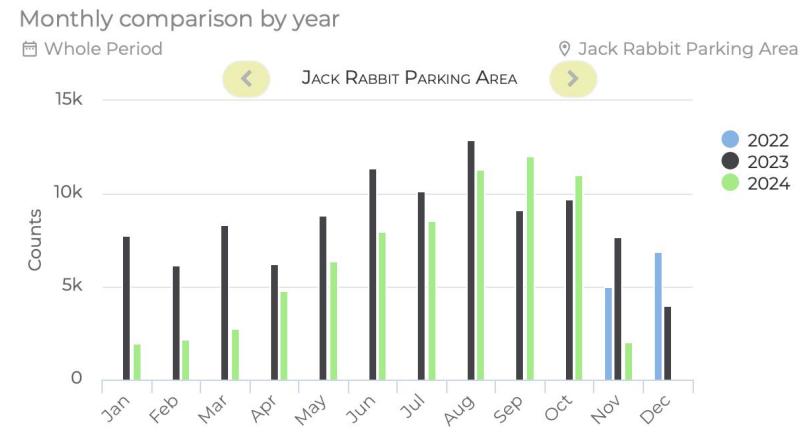
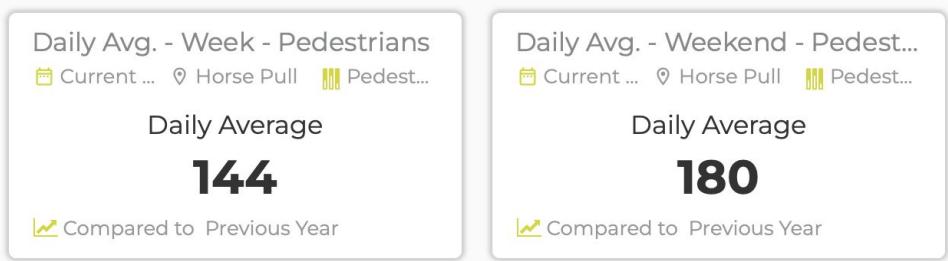
# Report Primary Recommendations:

- **Trail maintenance** and **signage** to help manage **user experience** within the trail network.
- **Protection of the trail network** is of essence.
- As outdoor recreation increases, it is imperative that we know the **use patterns** within the trail network.

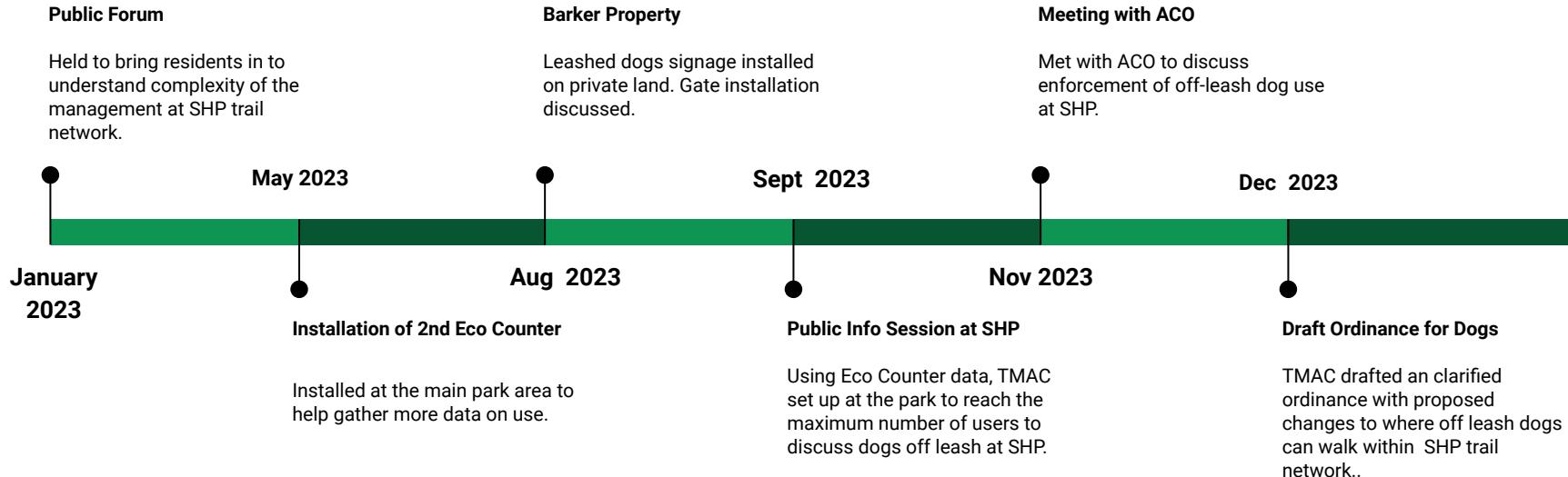
# Eco Counter Data

First installed November 2022

Second installed January 2024



# TMAC Timeline 2023



# Public Forum January 2023

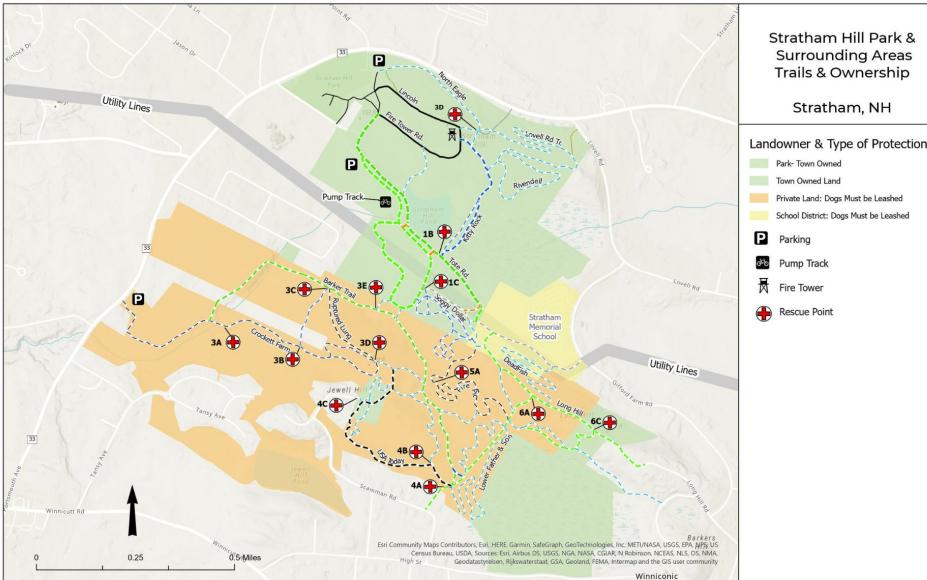
To inform community of TMAC progress we discussed:

- **Visitor Experience and Use - Jack Rabbit parking lot changes**
- **Trail Work and Planning - Trail Work completed**
- **New Data Collection tools - Eco Counters installed**
- **Signage - collaborative signage meeting with stakeholders**

Held a problem solving exercise to understand the complexity of the Trail Maintenance and Management.

# Public Information Session Sept 2023

## Public Information Session at SHP Jack Rabbit Lot



Currently, dogs are required to be on leash on all private parcels (see map on back), in the fields and in the open area around the fire tower based on the interpretation of the **Town of Stratham Ordinance**

**I-12-04 Running at Large Permitted: It shall not be unlawful for the owner of a dog to permit the dog to run at large within the wooded areas of the park or on the trails and trail system located within the wooded areas of the Park, provided that the dog shall be accompanied by the owner and be under the command and/or control of the owner.**

### How is this being enforced?

The Town of Stratham has an animal control officer that patrols trails and parking areas to ensure the rules are being followed and enforced. Additionally, Parks and Rec are working on putting together a volunteer Trail Patrol to help inform park users of the leash laws at the park.

### Why are you suddenly changing the rules at the Park?

No rules have been changed. Since COVID, all outdoor recreation areas have seen a big increase in use, Stratham Hill Park included. This has created a need to better clarify and enforce what the rules are related to the trail network as a result.

### Who has the right of way on the trails?

Cyclists yield to hikers, but hikers must let cyclists pass. On hills, cyclists yield to uphill riders. Cyclists must make their presence known to trail users by considerably alerting other trail users of their presence.

### Why did Jack Rabbit parking get restricted to residents only?

In response to the increase in use and the increase in off-leash dog walking on the trails at SHP, Parks and Rec (in conjunction with the Select Board and TMAC) agreed that keeping the Jack Rabbit lot a resident-only lot would reduce congestion in that area and encourage users to funnel through the front Portsmouth Ave parking area with their dogs on leash, per the Town Ordinance Chapter I-14, Regulation of Dogs.

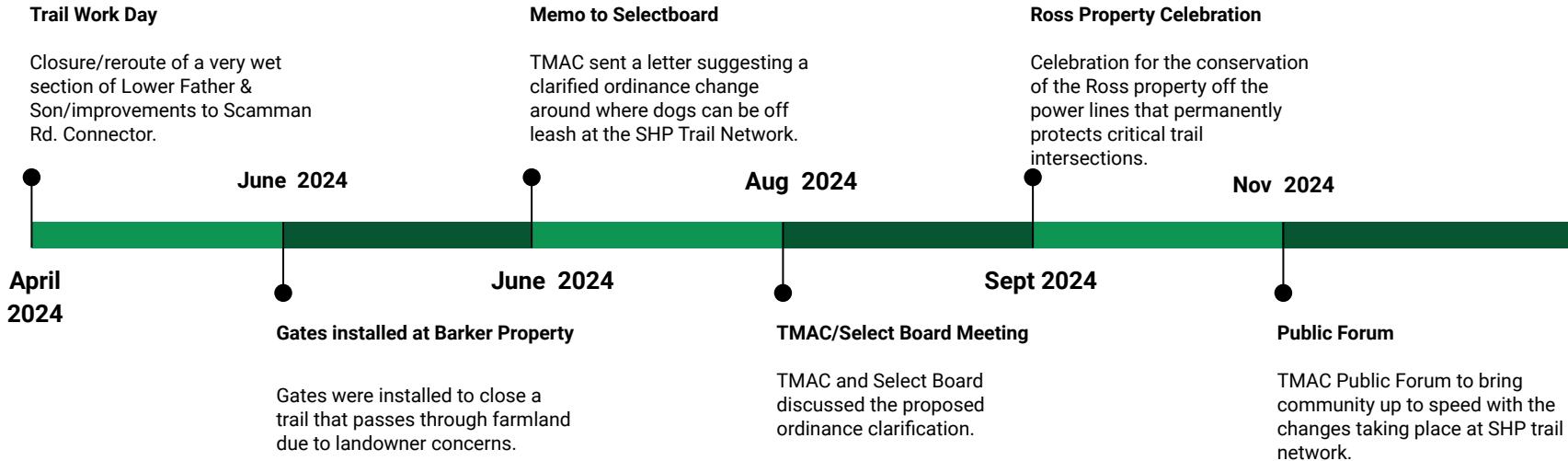
### Are dog walkers being singled out?

No, TMAC spent a year gathering information related to the trails of the Stratham Hill Park area and released a report detailing our recommendations for the management of the area. In all of our public forums and information sessions, dog walking at the park rose to the top in terms of immediate issues to address, along with trail maintenance and signage. Trail maintenance and signage are less sensitive subjects and typically happen without too much contention.

### Can I get involved or help out?

There are many ways you can get involved! You can join the TMAC - we meet monthly to discuss the trail network and management of the trails. You can come to a volunteer trail day - those happen a couple times a year! You can join our soon to be trail patrol to help inform trail users of the rules related to the trail network.

# TMAC Timeline 2024



# Rules & Regulations

**Current regulations** allowing for off leash dog walking are **unclear** and have inconsistent messaging as to **where** dogs can be off leash.

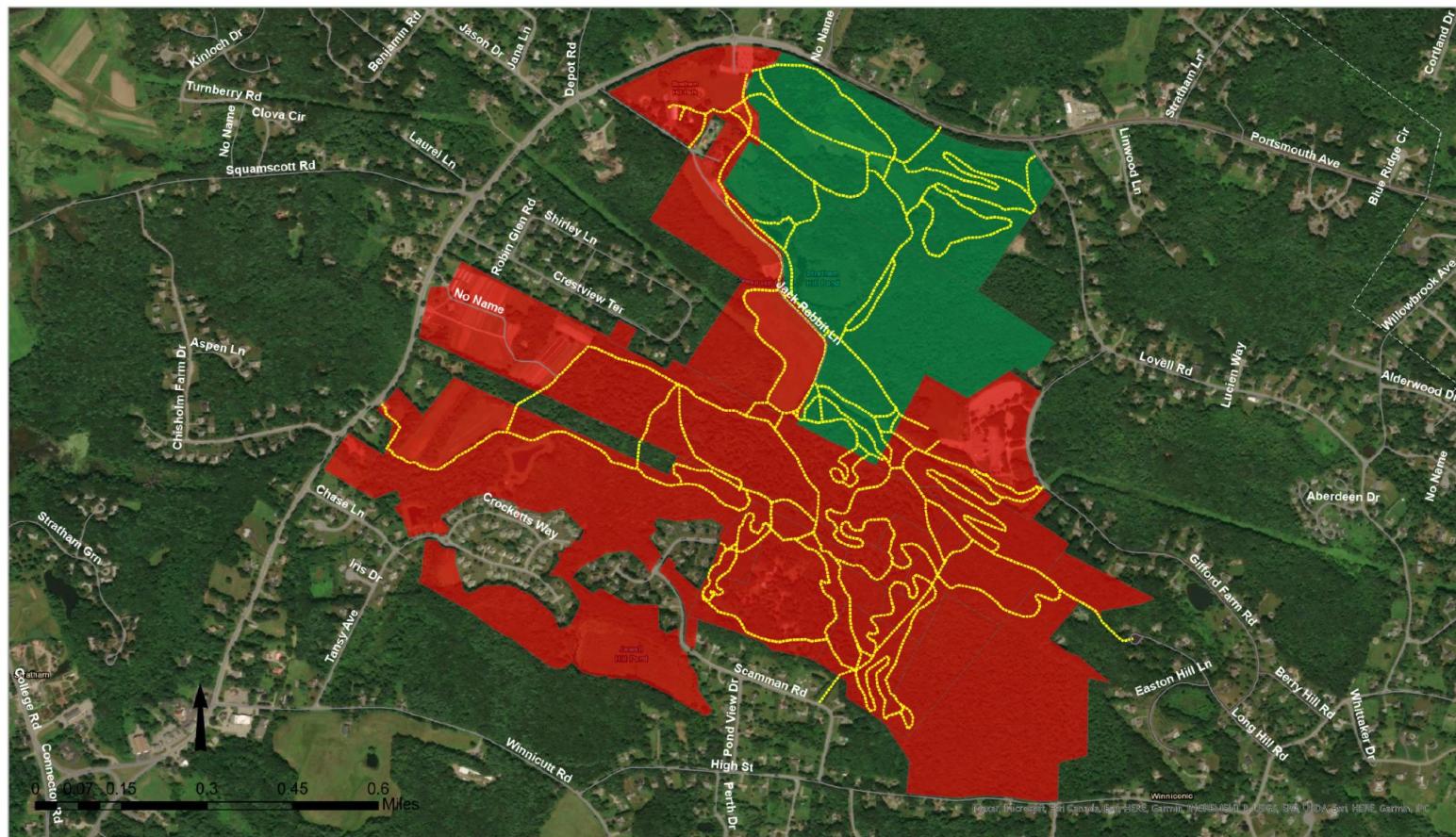
This leads to a **confusing** and often **upsetting** visitor experience.

Regulations **cannot be finalized and posted** until it is clarified where (and when) dogs are allowed off leash.

**The current Rules and Regulations** do not represent the **private landowner** wishes of dogs on leash.

Dogs are **required to be on leash everywhere** in Stratham EXCEPT the portion of SHP shown in the following map.

## Stratham Hill Park Dog Ordinance (current ordinance)



# **Suggested Clarification of Ordinance**

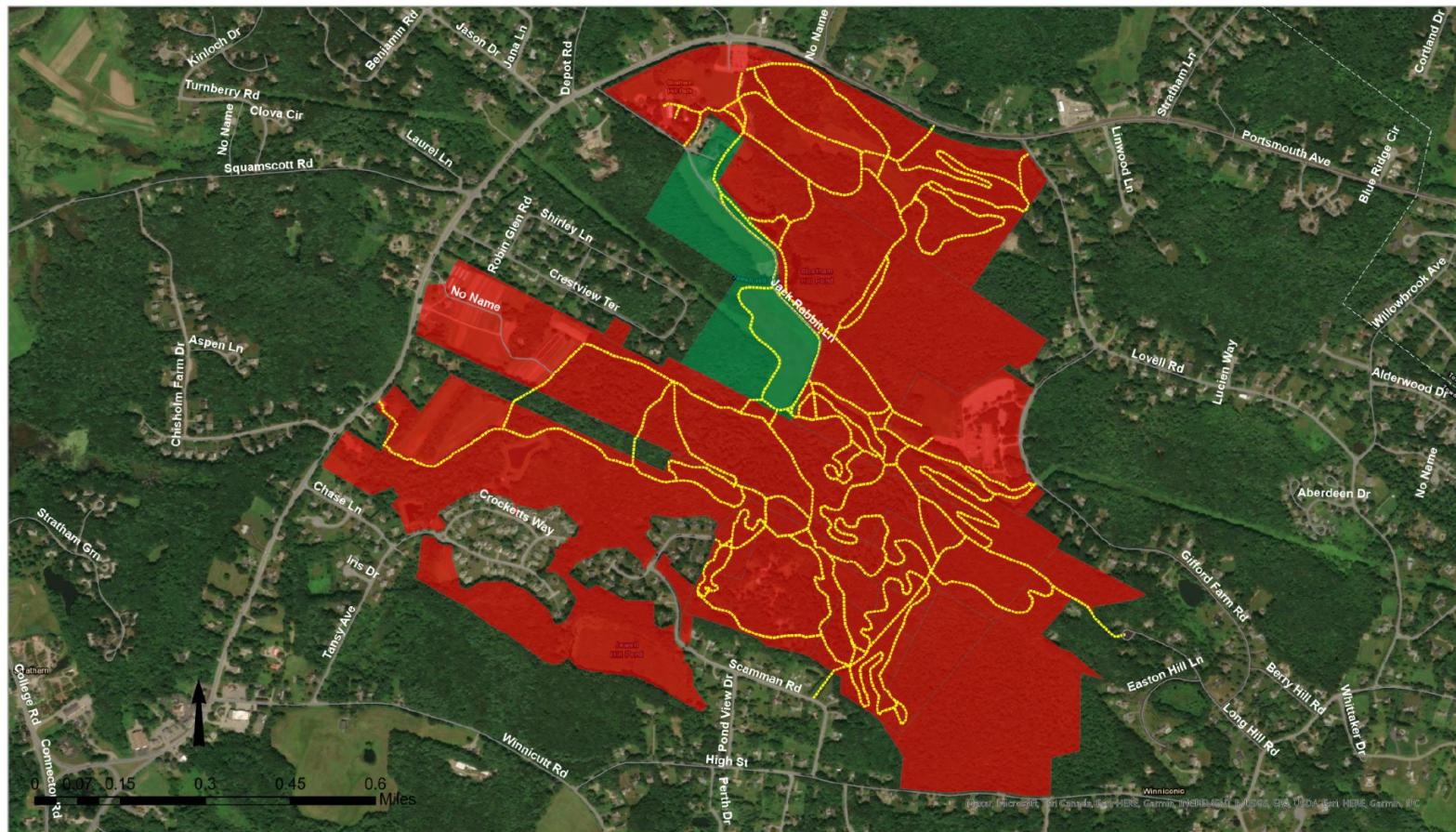
## **Existing ordinance:**

It shall not be unlawful for the owner of a dog to permit the dog to run at large within the **wooded areas of the park or on the trails and trail system located within the wooded areas of the Park**, provided that the dog shall be accompanied by the owner and be under the command and/or control of the owner.

## **Proposed ordinance clarification:**

It shall not be unlawful for the owner of a dog to permit the dog to run at large **during the hours of 6AM-10AM Monday through Friday within the two open fields beyond the Jack Rabbit parking area, formally known as Front Field and Back Field of the Gifford Property**, provided that the dog shall be accompanied by the owner and be under the command\* and/or control of the owner. \*Under command meaning recall on first call and/or on an e-collar.

## Stratham Hill Park Dog Ordinance (proposed ordinance)

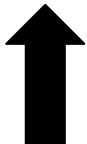


# Discussion Ground Rules

1. Treat each other with respect.
2. Minimize distractions (turn off cell phones, etc.)
3. Personal attacks will not be tolerated.
4. Speak honestly and constructively.



# Where to Find More Information



More Information on Town of  
Stratham Website

