



## **MAD RIVER MOVES ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

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### **APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS**

#### **Introduction**

The MRV Moves Community Survey is an integral part of the overall public engagement process for the MRV Moves Active Transportation Plan, which also includes a series of Advisory Committee and community meetings, stakeholder interviews, social and digital media outreach, and engagement at local events such as the Waitsfield Farmer's Market and Sugarbush Community Day. The Community Survey was focused primarily on understanding the community vision related to active transportation, but also touched on several important issues pertaining to developing, maintaining, and promoting non-motorized transportation facilities in the MRV.

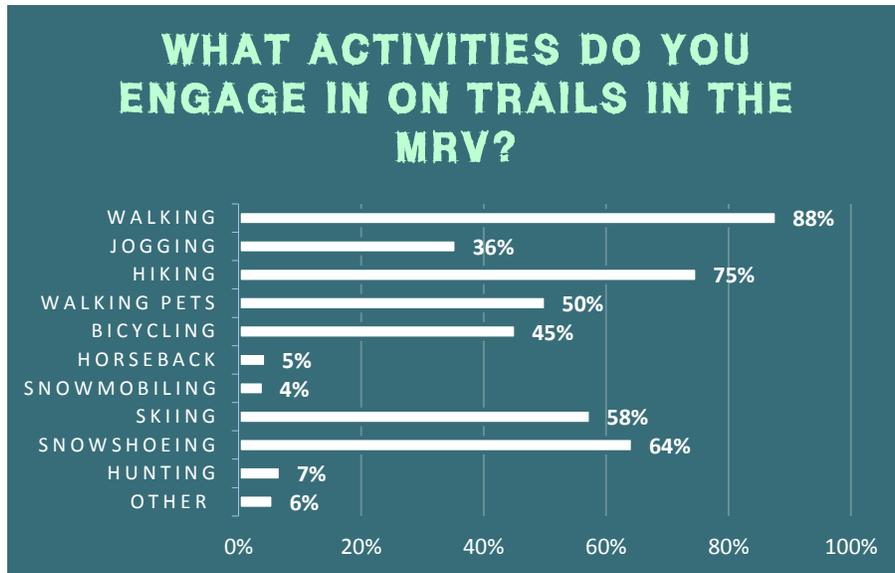
The community was made aware of the survey through a variety of methods, including postcards distributed around the valley and booths at the Waitsfield Farmer's Market and Sugarbush Community Day, but the most effective method were the gracious efforts of the Advisory Committee members and partner organizations that helped spread the word. Social media and email blasts by the Mad River Planning District, the Mad River Path Association, and others drove a lot traffic to the survey. In total, the survey received over 350 responses in the six weeks it was open in October and November 2015. 87 percent of the responses were from MRV locals, while 10 percent came in from second home owners and three percent were from visitors to the valley.

#### **Major Findings**

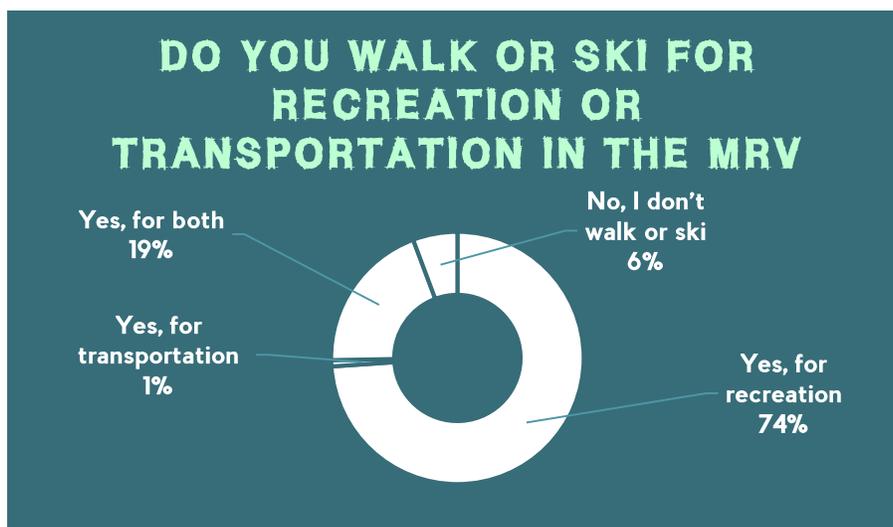
- **An off road path along RT 100/Mad River/Valley Floor is the most desired new facility**
- **Physical constraints, such as topography and distance, should be addressed in the plan**
- **Connected and close to home opportunities are important**
- **New walking and biking infrastructure should be designed and built to serve all ages and all abilities to meet transportation goals**
- **Access to nature, scenic views and the outdoors are extremely important for recreational opportunities**
- **Dogs are an important management and use consideration for trails in the MRV**
- **Trail tourism is an extremely important economic consideration for the valley**

## MRV Trail & Active Transportation Participation

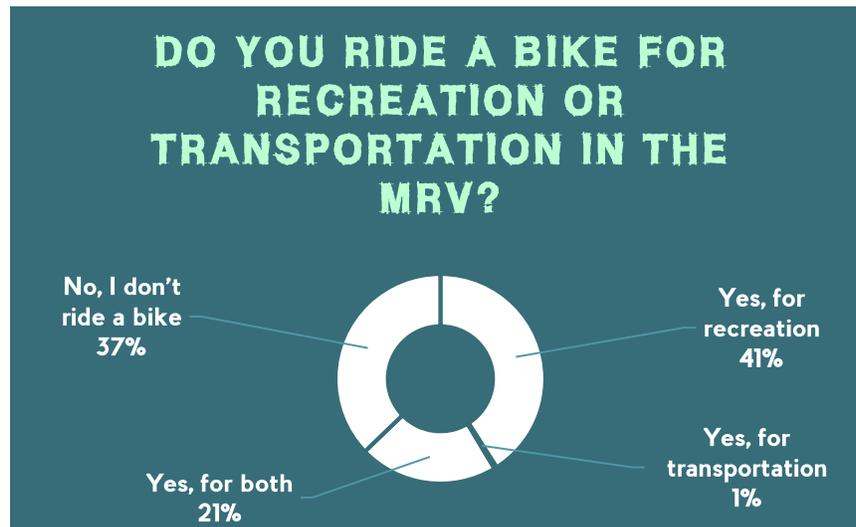
Walking and hiking dominated the activities respondents reported engaging in on trails in the MRV, with 88 percent of respondents reporting walking on trails and 75 percent reporting hiking. 45 percent of survey respondents used trails for bicycling. Winter use was also significant, with 64 percent of respondents reporting snowshoeing and 58 percent reporting skiing. Common “other” responses were birding, wildlife viewing and foraging.



The vast majority of survey respondents walk or ski in the valley. In total, 94 percent of respondents reported engaging in walking activities in the MRV. 74 percent of respondents reported walking and skiing for recreation, while 19 percent reported walking for both recreation and transportation and one percent reported walking for transportation only.



In terms of bicycling, 63 percent of respondents said they ride – 41 percent for recreation, 21 percent for both recreation and transportation, and one percent for transportation only. According to the 2015 U.S. Bicycling Participation Benchmarking Report, approximately 34 percent of Americans ride a bike, indicating the value and importance of bicycling for the Mad River Valley communities.<sup>1</sup>

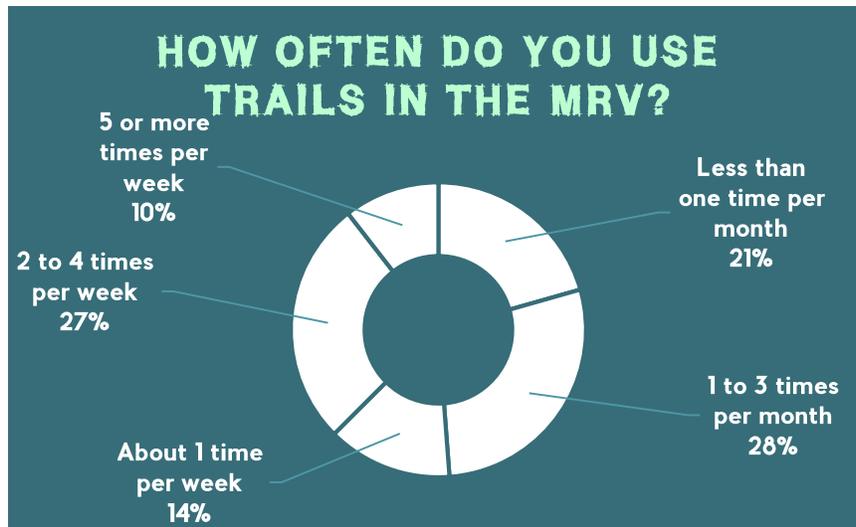


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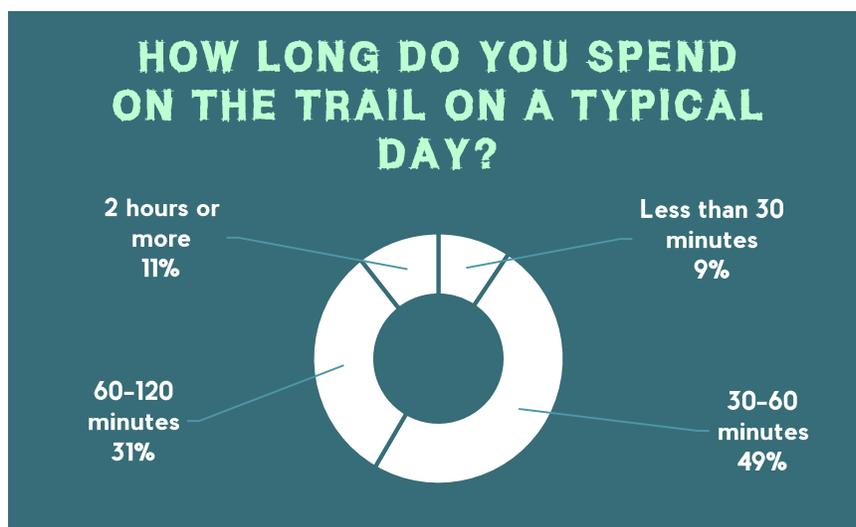
<sup>1</sup> People for Bikes, 2015. U.S. Bicycling Participation Benchmarking Report.  
<http://www.peopleforbikes.org/pages/u.s.-bicycling-participation-benchmarking-report>



Most survey respondents (79 percent) reported using trails in the MRV at least once a month, and just over half (51 percent) reported using trails at least once a week.

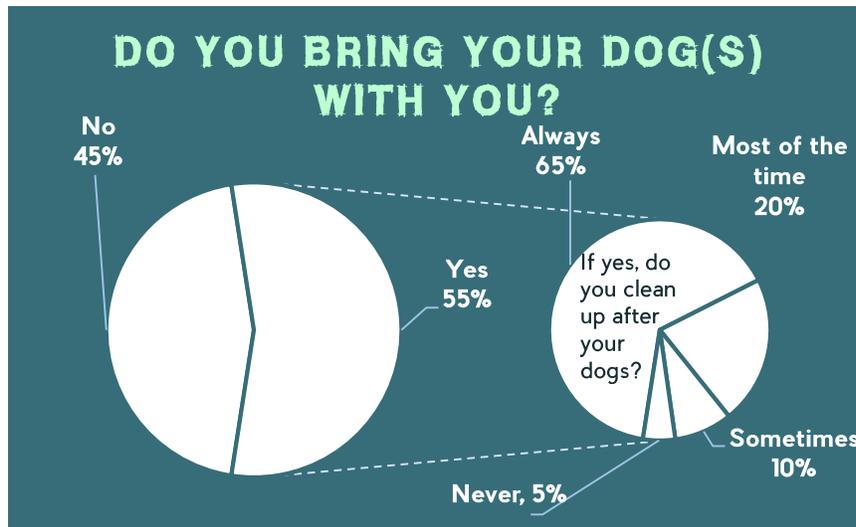


Approximately 91 percent of survey respondents indicated they use trails for more than 30 minutes during a visit, and 42 percent reported using trails for more than an hour at a time, indicating relatively long trail visits in the MRV. The US Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion’s Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that adults do at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity physical activity, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity physical activity.<sup>2</sup> The frequency and length of trail use in the MRV suggest that trails are likely a significant source of physical activity for survey respondents.



<sup>2</sup> US Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2008. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. <http://health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/>

The majority (55 percent) of survey respondents reported bringing a dog with them on trails in the MRV, indicating that furry friends are an important component of trail use in the valley. When asked if they clean up after their dogs while on the trail, most dog owners (65 percent) said they always do, but 35 percent indicated they did not always clean up after their dogs. This suggests there may be some opportunity for better self-management of dog waste through encouragement, education, or additional amenities.

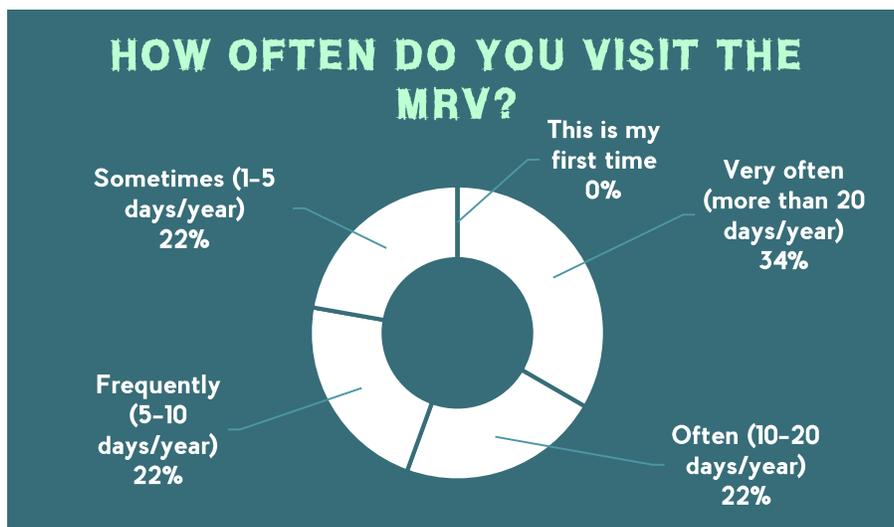


## Visitors to the Mad River Valley

Visitors from 14 states, primarily in the northeast, and Quebec responded to the survey. 75% of these visitors reported staying overnight, and 89 percent of overnight visitors stay at least 2 nights; 44% stay 4 or more nights. This length of stay is higher than the state average of 2.53 nights.<sup>3</sup>



Visitors were fairly evenly split in terms of how often they visit the MRV, but none reported never having visited the MRV before.



<sup>3</sup> Agency for Commerce & Community Development, 2011. Benchmark Study of the Economic Impact of Visitor Spending on the Vermont Economy.

<http://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accd/files/Documents/travel/Vermont%20Tourism%202011.pdf>

Confirming findings from the Mad River Valley Economic Study and Economic Vitality Series Meetings, the community survey suggests trails are a critical component of recreational tourism in the Mad River Valley. 78 percent of survey visitors reported the “the availability of recreation trails and opportunities to hike, bike, walk, ski and snowshoe” were important for their decision to visit the MRV. A full 34 percent of visitors reported these opportunities as the deciding factor in their destination choice.



The economic value of trails in the MRV is clearly evident from the survey results. Survey visitors spent an average of \$174.87 on a typical day visiting the MRV. This spending value is significant because respondents were asked to “include only the amount you would spend on a single day and for yourself only.” The value represents the average spending of one trail tourist for one day, and is higher than average spending *per trip* of the average Vermont tourist of \$123.20.<sup>4</sup> Second home owners are also an important component of the MRV economy. Second home trail users spend an average of \$104.07 a day while in the valley.

#### Visitor Spending Profile

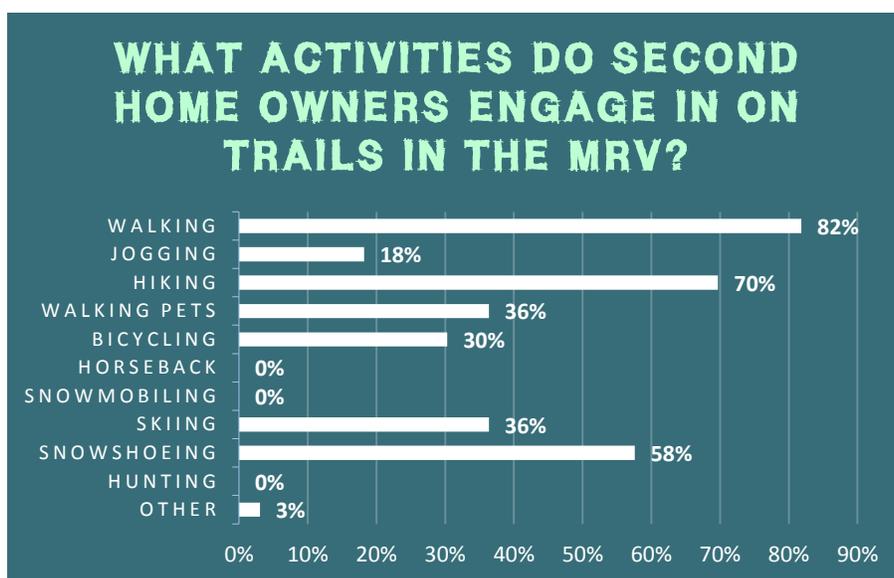
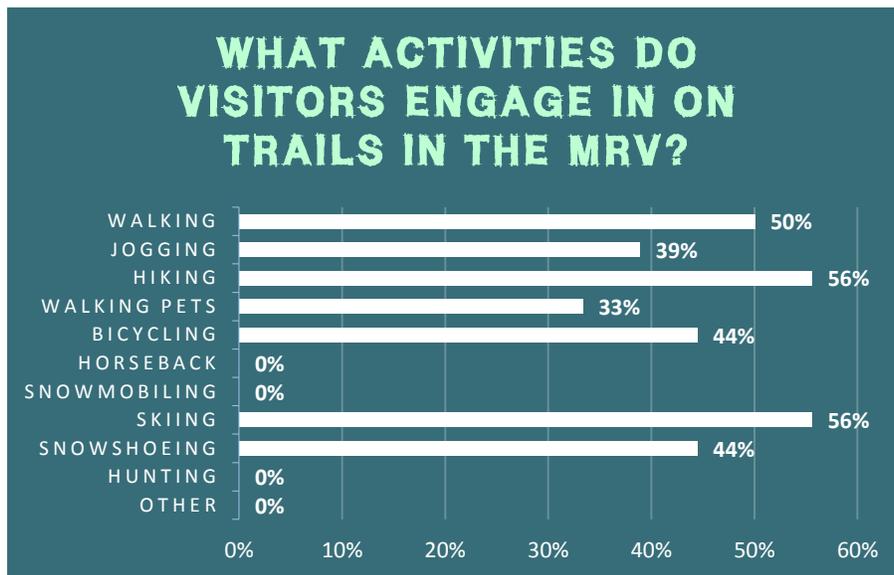
Lodging (Motel, hotel, inn, cabin or B&B or rental)	Restaurants & bars	Groceries, take-out food/drinks	Gas and other transportation	Clothing	Sporting goods	Souvenirs and other expenses	Total
\$70.63	\$36.11	\$17.50	\$10.63	\$20.00	\$12.50	\$7.50	\$174.87

#### Second Home Owner Spending Profile

Lodging (Motel, hotel, inn, cabin or B&B or rental)	Restaurants & bars	Groceries, take-out food/drinks	Gas and other transportation	Clothing	Sporting goods	Souvenirs and other expenses	Total
\$0.00	\$36.05	\$30.75	\$17.56	\$0.00	\$1.71	\$18.00	\$104.07

<sup>4</sup> Agency for Commerce & Community Development, 2011. Benchmark Study of the Economic Impact of Visitor Spending on the Vermont Economy. <http://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accd/files/Documents/travel/Vermont%20Tourism%202011.pdf>

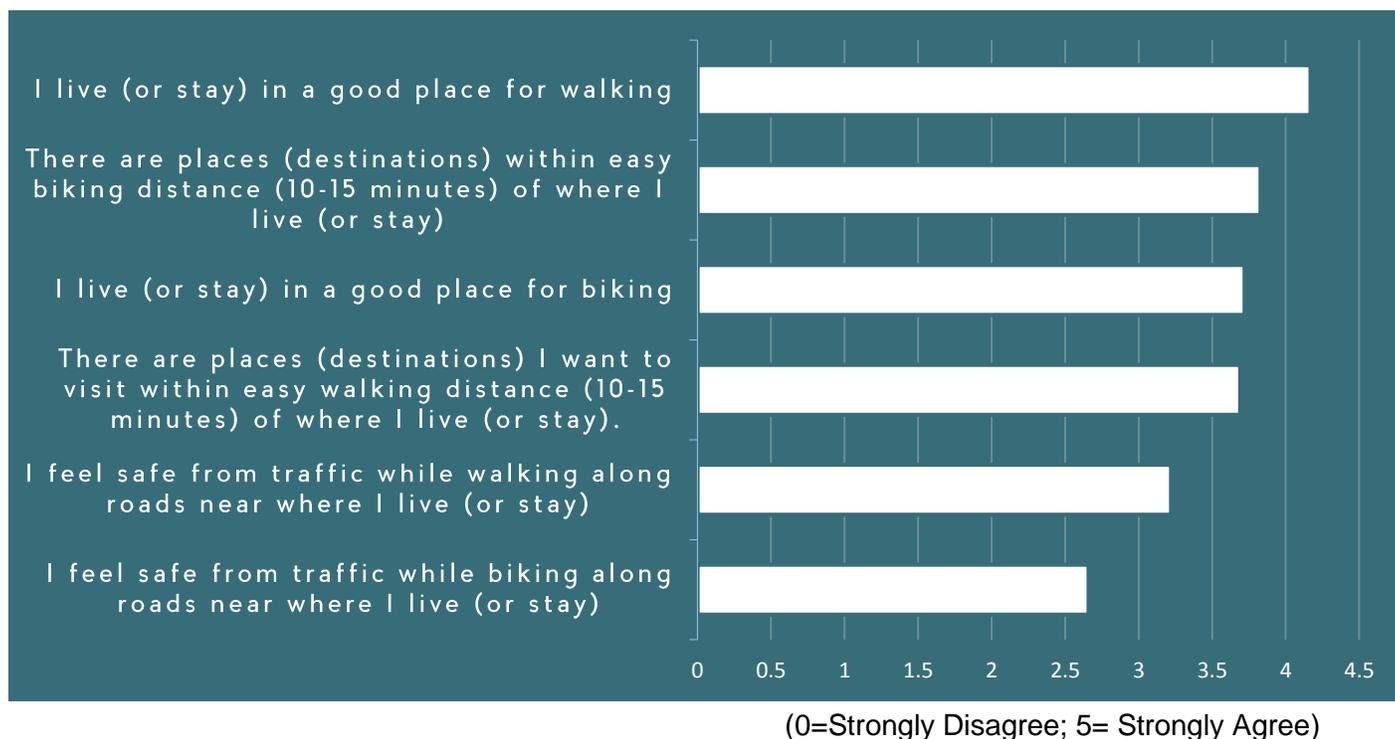
Second home owner trail use percentages were fairly similar to that of the overall survey respondents, with a large percent using the trails for walking purposes, but visitors to the valley seemed to favor walking, hiking, bicycling, skiing and snowshoeing relatively equally, with each use receiving a fair amount of responses. This suggests foot, bicycle and winter use of trails are all important in a tourism context. Horseback riding and snowmobiling appear to be less important in this regard, but this could be due in part to the survey being conducted in the fall when neither of these activities are in full swing. In general, more visitors reported using trails in the MRV for a single activity, while overall trail users and second home owners reported multiple uses of the trails.



## Walkability and Bikability in the MRV

Survey respondents generally agreed with the notion that they live in a good place for walking and biking, however respondents only slightly agreed with the idea that they feel safe while walking along roads near their home, and respondents slightly disagreed with the idea that they feel safe from traffic while biking along roads near their home. This, along with other survey results presented below, suggests that improving safety, making users feel more comfortable, and separating them from traffic could improve conditions for existing active transportation users and possibly encourage more walking and bicycling in the valley.

### Perceptions of Walkability and Bikability



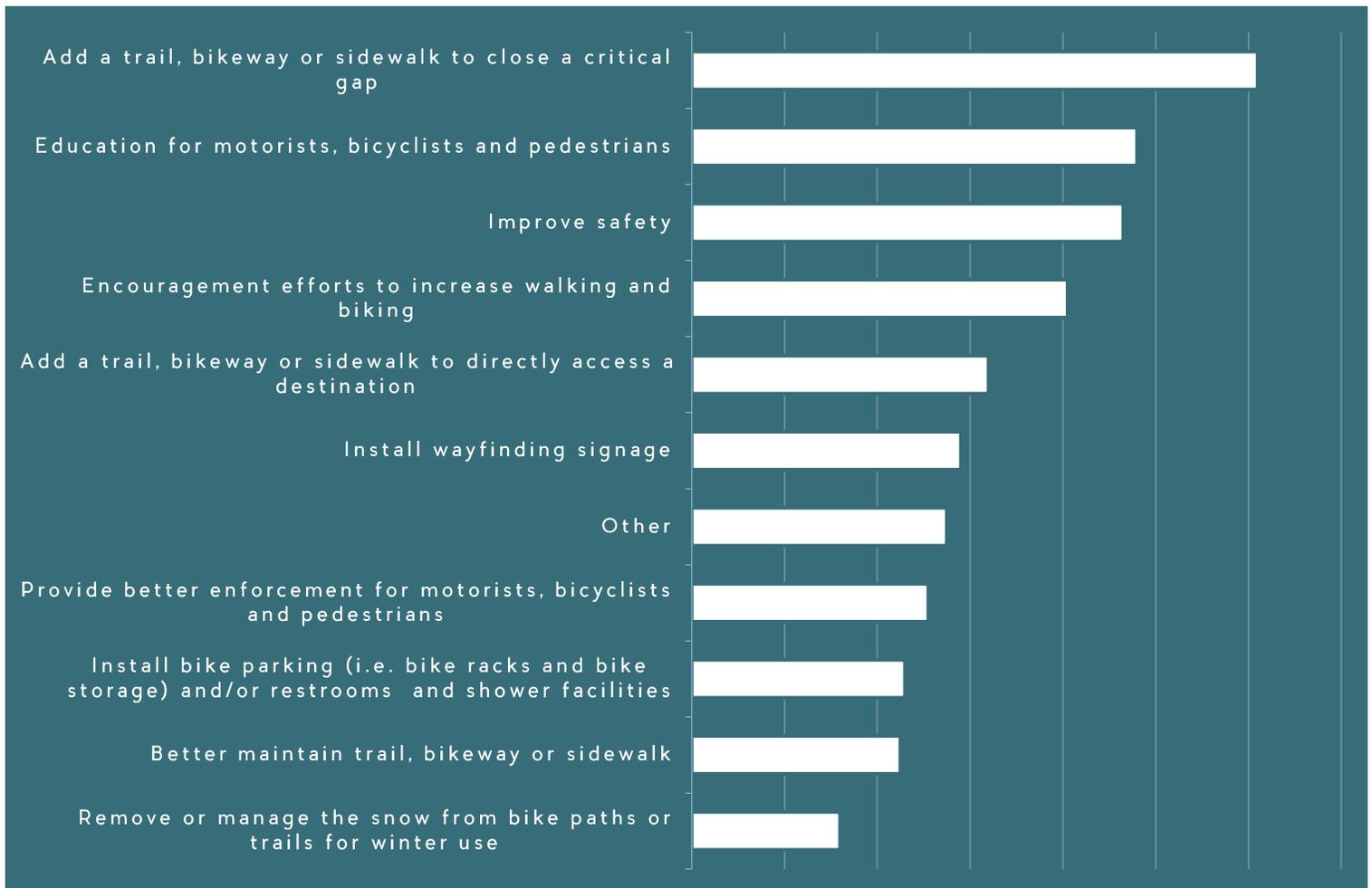
Survey respondents identified the following barriers to walking and biking in the valley. Hills and dangerous roads/traffic were by far the most common response, but safety along RT 100, opportunities close to home, and traveling with children were also listed by numerous respondents. Below is the full list of identified barriers:

- Destinations too far apart
- Sidewalks and/or bike paths not connected or in poor condition
- Difficult to cross street
- Traffic volume and speed (safety)
- Difficult to locate routes or lack of defined bike lanes
- Unfavorable weather
- Hills, Hills, Hills
- Commuting with young children
- No paths near us
- No place to safely leave bike
- Too much gear to carry

- Have had too many "close calls" on route 100
- "Too" far not to...
- Danger from cars on routes 100 and 17
- Dangerous traffic
- Don't want to leave bike-
- Going to a trail head would be no sweat but home would be uphill all the way.
- HILLS
- Hike/walk with my dog.
- Hills. I like to start ride with climb rather than end .
- I live at the top of a hill
- I live on a mountain
- I travel to MRV from another community - further than a bike ride (for me);
- I would have to walk on Route 100 to get there.
- MRV path unfortunately closed near us
- Need to bring the dog
- No sidewalks on Route 100.
- Route 100 where sidewalk ends
- Time. Some trails are driving distance and some can be accessed by bike.
- Too far away when traveling with kids.
- Unsafe auto traffic on roads.
- Unsafe with traffic
- Walking on East Warren Rd. where I live is not safe.
- can't bike with dog on road
- dangerous
- dangerous roads for walking,riding
- health
- i live up a steep hill from rec path
- lack of bike lanes
- no maps of trails; trails aren't marked well or maintain regularly
- nothing
- only a few loops can be done without riding back on the roads.
- roads dangerous
- roads too narrow
- rte 100 traffic
- safety
- safety of dog from traffic
- time
- too
- too hard to get to
- unsafe roads
- want the dog off the leash for the entire time i'm walking, so use time walking most effectively
- The shoulder is not wide enough and traffic moves too fast. People speed and there are no safe sidewalks.
- I live up on the hill so walk/bike to trails here or near Eurich pond but drive to all others in the valley
- Sometimes can't decide if I want to take on the level of difficulty that a different trail presents
- That's a great question that I don't have a good answer for. We really shouldn't need a vehicle to get to a place to ride a bike!

When asked “how can we best improve conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians?” respondents answered that adding a trail, bikeway, or sidewalk was by far the best method. This result is important because it demonstrates the perceived lack of adequate facilities for these critical gaps (see below for list of identified gaps). Beyond closing these gaps, survey respondents identified education for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians; improving safety; and encouragement efforts to increase walking and biking as some of the best methods.

### How can we improve conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians?



If respondents chose the option to add a trail, bikeway or sidewalk, they were asked a follow up question to define where this critical gap existed. An off road path either along the Route 100 corridor, along the Mad River, or connecting the villages (which all essentially amount to the same), was resoundingly the most common write-in response. Route 17, German Flats Road, Phen Basin/Big Basin, Meadow/Tremblay Road also received a lot of responses.

The full list of identified critical gaps is below:

- A mile from the covered bridge on Bridge Street, East Warren Rd. and Joslin Hill
- Access road
- Along RT 100
- Along route 100.
- Anywhere it's needed
- Between Chain Gang and Catamount
- Between Tremblay and Waitsfield
- Between center fayston and phen basin
- Bragg Hill, Stage Coach Rd, Phen Basin Rd
- Bridge St
- Center Fayston, Phen Basin to Big Basin
- Connect more of the mad river path in warren.
- Connect the whole downtown
- East side of Bridge Street in Waitsfield
- Extent MRP from Warren School to Riverside Park
- From Irasville to Lareau Swim Hole
- From Meadow Lane to Town
- From Warren to Waitsfield
- From Warren to waitsfield
- From the Waitsfield Common to the valley floor/covered bridge
- From tremb rd to town sidewalks
- Fully connect the Rt 100 corridor via off road trails
- German Flats
- German Flats needs better access for any form of transportation besides cars
- Get Elwin to cough up the path.
- Having trails with destinations, e.g. Warren to Waitsfield instead of just recreation walks
- Irasville to Bridge st.
- Irasville along Route 17 to German Flats
- It would be fantastic to have a safe bike loop -from waitsfield to warren
- Looking forward to Evolution trail up Dana Hill
- Mad River Glen /rt.17
- Mad River Path
- Meadow road to Tremblay rd, then Trembaly rd to Loop rd
- Middlesex \$ Waterbury to Warren
- Moretown
- Moretown to Waitsfield
- North road area
- On 17, from german flatts to 100
- On route 100 between Waitsfield and Warren
- Pines to Town
- River view rd to Loop rd
- Route 100 Waitsfield, Warren
- Route 100 between Lareau Swimming Hole and Farmer's Market
- Route 100 between Waitsfield and Warren
- Route 100 corridor, north and south of the town of aitsfield
- Route 17
- Route 17 (from German Flats to Route 100)
- Rt. 100 needs Real Bike Lane
- Rte 100, Tremblay Rd to Waits Elem School
- Sidewalks along lower Moretown Villager
- Snowmaking pond to warren village

- Somehow get from Tremblay rd to downtown waitsfield sidewalks.
- Waitsfield School to Trembly Road
- Waitsfield Village to Meadow Rd. Waitsfield to Warren.
- Waitsfield Village to Tremblay Rd.
- Waitsfield in front of village grocery and north
- Waitsfield to Warren
- Warren Village/School to Kingsbury Farm
- Warren school trail
- Warren to Waitsfield
- Warren to Waitsfield
- Warren village to Waitsfield
- Warren village to access road
- along German Flats and the Sugarbush Access Road and along Route 100 from Waitsfield to Warren
- along rt 100
- along the valley bottom
- between warren and waitsfield
- complete Warren to Waitsfield
- connect MRP sections along the Mad River
- connect Warren to Waitsfield
- from center waitsfield to mad path
- from the trail behind the cemetery in Waitsfield to the Lareau swimming hole trails
- full bike/hiking path warren-moretown
- improve Millbrook trail along 17. Connect Old Center Fayston to Chaingain
- intersection of 100 & 17
- kingsbury bridge to lareaus
- link existing pathways/ sidewalks around downtown waitsfield
- mad river to Warren and Moretown
- route 100
- trail connecting all Valley towns
- warren school-riverside park
- west greenway to WES
- where there are gaps
- Sidewalk in Waitsfield Village west side of Main Street, Slow Road, Irasville, connections through shopping centers to Main Street sidewalk, Carroll Road to Big Picture, East Warren Rd from bridge to Joslin Hill Road. Bike path along Sugarbush Access Rd.
- moretown school to pony farm road, also around the narrow bridge just south of moretown village, also increase length of trails along river
- It would be nice to have designated lane for bicyclists on the major bike loops. \*route 17, route 100, german flats, sugarbush access, brook road east warren road.
- The northern side of the Valley lacks in safe access into Waitsfield, which I think of as the heart of the valley.
- getting safely from the Waitsfield Common/Joslin Hill area into the Village, preferably without having to walk on the roadway, which is unsafe
- Alongside major roads in the MRV: Sugarbush access road from route 100 to Sugarbush. Route 17 from route 100 to the App gap. Route 100 from Waitsfield Elementary school to Harwood.
- We need bike lanes on all our paved roads badly!! This should be a state priority since we are so dependent on tourism. Many (most) of our roads have little or no shoulders and are downright

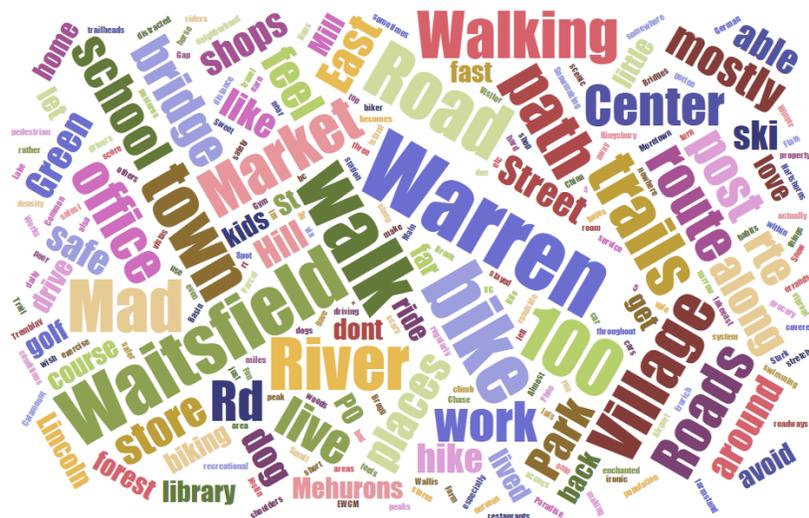
dangerous -- and visitors say so !  
 We do not need sidewalks which  
 are a danger to bicyclists -- with no  
 escape route

- Up and adjacent to Sugarbush  
 Access Road, Rte. 17 and where  
 needed along the Mad River Path

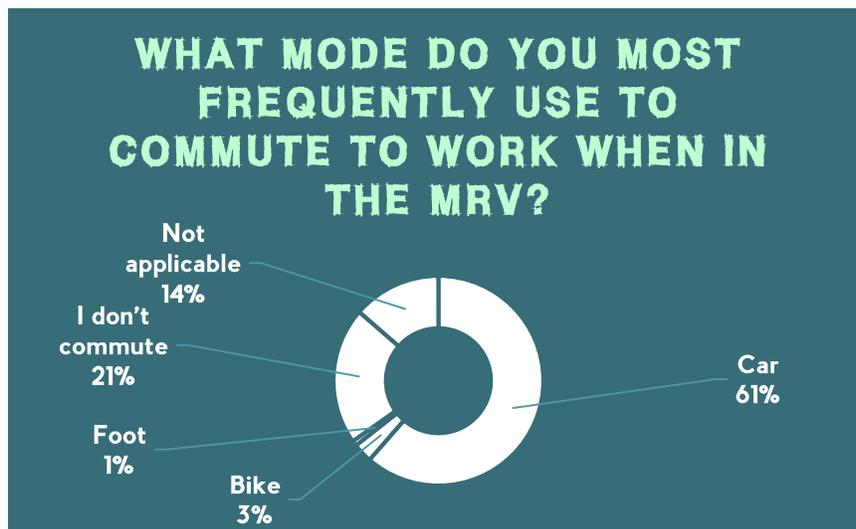
to have one long contiguous trail to  
 connect from Moretown to Warren

- Easy uphill switchback from eurich  
 pond. Evolution to top of cyclone.  
 Connect pusher man to plum line  
 other than high plum. Connect  
 Ridge to camels hump without all  
 those saplines

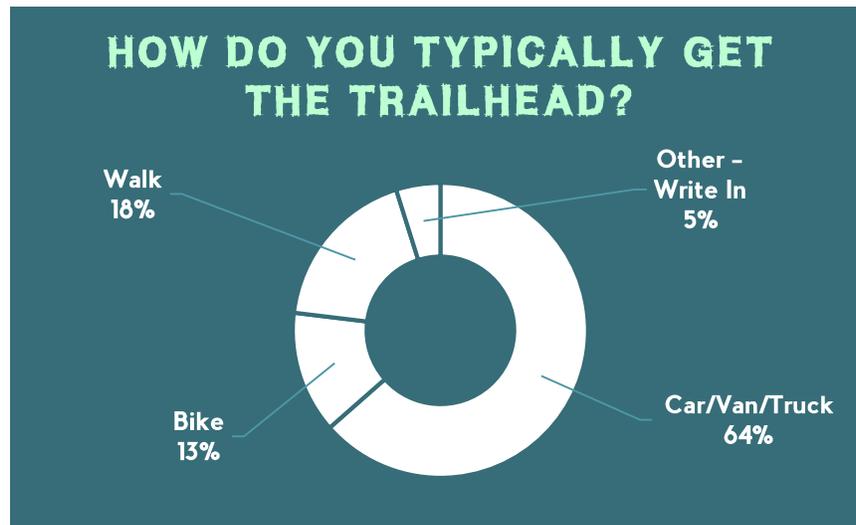
Respondents were also asked which destinations they most often bike or walk to. The most common destinations included the village centers, recreation areas, work and school.



Most survey respondents commute by car, with relatively low shares of bicycle and pedestrian commuting, but a large percent of respondents answered they don't commute/not applicable, which reflects the relatively high number of telecommuters and retired persons in the MRV.



Similarly, the majority (64 percent) of survey respondents indicated they drive to trailheads in the MRV. Most indicated they did this because the trailheads were far from their house (or there were challenging hills), they felt unsafe traveling on the roads, or because they were traveling with dogs and/or children.

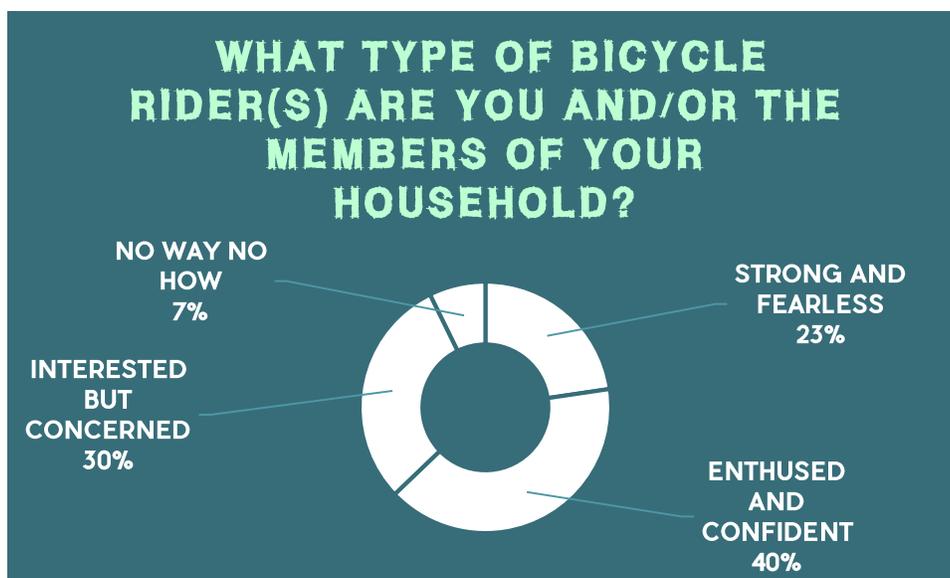


Following the methodology of many other active transportation surveys conducted throughout the US and Canada, respondents were also asked “What type of bicycle rider are you?” based on 4 pre-determined rider-types:

- **Strong and Fearless-** Bicycling is a strong part of your identity and you are generally undeterred by poor roadway conditions.
- **Enthusied and Confident-** You are comfortable sharing the roadway with automobile traffic, but prefer to do so operating on bicycle facilities such as bicycle lanes and secondary roads.
- **Interested but Concerned-** You are curious about bicycling and enjoy riding a bicycle, but do not want to ride in the presence of motor vehicles.
- **No Way No How-** You are currently not interested in bicycling at all due to inability or lack of interest, regardless of the facilities provided.

Only 7 percent of MRV respondents identified as “No Way No How,” compared to more than 35 percent of the US as a whole. 30 percent identified as “Interested but Concerned” and 40

percent identified as “Enthusied and Confident” in the MRV, while less than 10 percent identified as these two types in the US population as a whole.<sup>5</sup>



As noted in other analyses of these same groups, converting the “No Way No How” types is unlikely, but a lot of opportunity exists within the “Interested but Concerned (I-C)” group. The I-C type have been found to be the “most likely to change their habits in the right city setting. Of the three main riding groups (“No Way No How” excluded), for instance, the I-C type were the least likely to use their bike for reasons other than leisure, such as commuting or shopping trips. Some of the key factors in that decision included feeling unsafe in traffic, having few bike lanes nearby, or living too far away from key destinations.”<sup>6</sup>

“A closer look at the comfort preferences of I-C riders also shows a big gap in the types of streets they feel safe traveling. When it comes to using a major city street with a striped bike lane, for instance, nearly all “Strong and Fearless” or “Enthusied and Confident” riders felt “very” or “somewhat” comfortable, whereas only 32 percent of I-C felt “somewhat” comfortable and none felt “very.” But on more separated types of environments—such as protected lanes on major streets or bike boulevards—the clear majority of I-C riders feel good to go.”<sup>7</sup> The same analysis applies to the Mad River Valley, suggesting the creation of off-road and separated infrastructure may encourage more of this group to bicycle more often.

<sup>5</sup> Dill and McNiel, 2016. The 4 Types of Cyclists You'll Meet on U.S. City Streets. [http://www.citylab.com/commute/2016/01/the-4-types-of-cyclists-youll-meet-on-us-city-streets/422787/?utm\\_source=nl\\_link3\\_010716](http://www.citylab.com/commute/2016/01/the-4-types-of-cyclists-youll-meet-on-us-city-streets/422787/?utm_source=nl_link3_010716)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.