

Forward Sunapee - Riverwalk Committee
Meeting Minutes - August 2025

Attendance - In Person – Dave Hoffman (Facilitator), Jeff Kellner, Phil Schwarzkopf, Sharon Parsons, Doug Carey; Absent - Deb Marino, Wendy Nolin, John Bowers, Muriel Bergeron, Jan Harrison

Agenda - Walk the Riverwalk segment on Town owned property to discuss and prioritize routing and trail features.

Below are the results of the discussion, which represent draft priorities for further discussion among the Committee and with other stakeholders including the Town Select Board and Conservation Commission

Riverwalk on Town Owned Property
Description of Key Elements, Routing and Enhancements
August 2025

Background Notes

Please refer to the attached diagram of the Plan NH Charrette recommendations with reference notes for each of the elements described below. These elements are the recommendations of the Forward Sunapee Enhanced Riverwalk Committee (the Committee). These elements of the enhanced trail begin at the High Street bridge and parking lot and extend to the information center at Route 11. We understand that all the land for this section of the Riverwalk is owned by the Town of Sunapee. This document is meant to facilitate discussions of the recommended routing and enhancements to the trail to support Town decision making, permitting, cost estimating, and construction planning. This document may also be used for discussions around approvals and oversight of the changes by either the Conservation Commission or the Select Board.

Overall

The Committee recommends an 'easy' and a 'rustic' routing of the trail. The easy route would likely follow the parking lot and the Coffin Park meadow with access points into locations with better views of the water. The rustic route would follow along closely to the water and include a more challenging walking path. Elements and enhancements would be phased in over time based on priorities, permitting and cost. The Committee envisions limited signage to describe and 'celebrate' the factories and industry that existed historically along the Sugar River. The Committee also envisions the 'clean up' of debris, overgrowth, and invasive plants to enhance the views along the trail while maintaining the runoff prevention of existing vegetation.

Plaza

The plaza on the diagram is just below and abuts the High Street bridge. The Committee recommends a set of stairs along or near the bridge and then clear a better path along and near the river towards the falls and the overlook. Consider planting trees to reduce the ground level growth and consider railing along the water given the drop off.

Bridge 1

The Committee recommends a bridge across the river to enable access between the trail on the south side and Hames Park on the north side of the river. The exact location of the bridge would be based on recommendations from landscape architects, construction companies, and knowledgeable parties regarding permitting. The bridge would further serve as an observation area/deck up and down the river. The Committee will consider the trail path on the north side of the river by Hames Park to tie these two areas together.

Falls and Overlook

The Committee recommends construction of a small observation deck on the south side of the river near the 'swimming hole' as well as ongoing minor enhancements to trail navigation in the form of steps (wood or stone), railings, wood footpaths, walking bridges, and other common trail elements and features throughout the falls and overlook sections of the trail. In subsequent phases, the Committee will monitor and investigate additional footpaths on or near the two 'islands' just below the overlook area.

Bridge 2

The Committee recommends a change in the current routing of the trail to enable walking along the north side of the lower hydro plant and construct a bridge across the current outflow chute from the hydro plant. This route eliminates the need to go out and around the hydro plant which is less visually appealing than routing along closer to the river.

Other

The Committee will also consider limited 'offshoots' from the trail route in order to showcase some of the historical landmarks including other factories and industry along the river. Additionally, the Committee recommends creating targeted access points from the easy route into areas closer to the water at the bridges and the overlook and selected other flat access points which will be monitored and maintained as usage patterns emerge.