

Bluffside Bike Path

BLACK RIVER DESIGN  
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## A Path to a Better Economic Future for Newport

**Imagine a recreation path that connects Newport City to bike paths in Canada.** With Lake Memphremagog to the west and farms and forestland to the east, this seven-mile trail would be a major attraction for visitors and bring their business to local shops, hotels, and restaurants.

In the wake of the EB5 scandal, Newport has had to reimagine itself. One of the things coming out of this process is the **importance of the lake to the city's future.** Improving lake access and making the lake more central to activities that locals and visitors can enjoy will build a more vibrant and resilient city.

In 2017, the Vermont Land Trust was awarded a \$425,000 grant from the Northern Border Regional Commission to build a section of trail across Bluffside Farm, a 129-acre farm the land trust bought in 2015. With work already underway on a section of trail downtown, this last stretch of trail would be the **final connection needed to create a seven-mile, car-free recreation path.**

**The grant must be matched in full by September 2018, or the money will be lost.**

If successful, this project will result in more tourism and downtown business growth, access to safe, accessible recreation, and, better walkability will benefit all those who live in the region.

*"Newport has a dearth of lakeside opportunities and yet this lake is the single most valuable resource of this community. This development at Bluffside Farm would expand and enhance access to the lake for all."*

— Ruth Sproull,  
Little Gnesta B&B, Newport

*"As a tenant and investor in the Northeast Kingdom Tasting Center in downtown Newport, I can tell that this is just the kind of investment we need to increase traffic and access to downtown by tourists. And as a business owner in Johnson and Morrisville, I can attest through firsthand experience to the positive impacts of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail on local establishments."*

— David Marvin,  
Butternut Mountain Farm

*"As a small shop owner in a small town we rely heavily on out-of-town tourism...The enhancement of our current trail system would have a positive effect on my business. Often times a path user will need repair, and with more cyclists, more repairs! Additional cyclists in the area will mean an expansion of our rentals."*

— Jeffrey Manning,  
The Village Bike Shop, Derby

### How did this opportunity come about?

In 2015, the Vermont Land Trust bought Bluffside Farm, a former dairy located on the lake. It has farmland, woodland, and a large natural sand beach. The land trust then held a community-visioning process. Three priorities emerged: recreation, farming, and nature.

A trail through the farm would eliminate the need for path users to use traveled roads between downtown Newport and the Beebe Spur Trail, which lies north of downtown and connects to Canada. A car-free, seven-mile trail addresses the community's recreation priority.

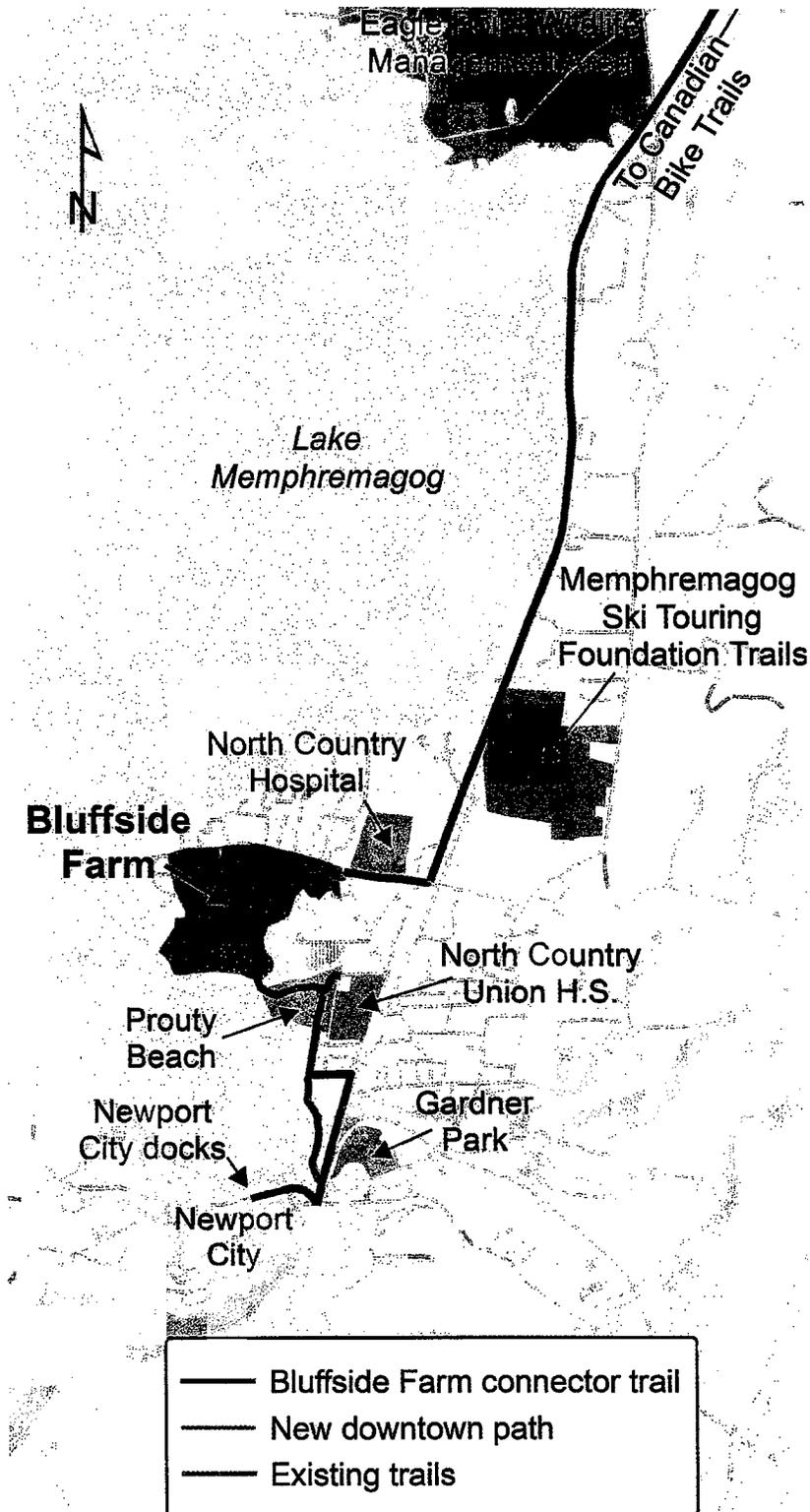
### How much will it cost?

The total cost of the trail through the farm, which will involve construction of a pedestrian bridge, will be about \$1,125,000. Nearly 75% of this could come from federal funding, but local match is critical to remain eligible for these funds.

### How would this help Newport?

Preliminary analysis using a model generated in Vermont, shows that over \$1.5 million of annual economic activity and 25 jobs are generated by the traffic to the existing Beebe Spur Rail Trail, which currently connects to downtown Newport on regular, trafficked roads. A 2006 Quebec study demonstrated \$134 million in annual spending related to the Canadian network just over the border.

Newport's North Country Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment identified high rates of obesity and low rates of exercise as a key health challenge to overcome in the community. The hospital set a goal of increasing the percentage of adults who use community resources for physical activity by 2019, and to "improve infrastructure supporting safe walking and /or bicycling activities."



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