

STAFF REPORT

To: Council
From: Adam Dedrick, Director of Recreation & Parks
Approved by: Warren MacLeod, Chief Administrative Officer
Date: December 10, 2025
Subject: Roseway River Trail Options



Origin

It was requested to review options for the Roseway River Trail that would ensure trail connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, and OHV use.

Recommendation

For information purposes and future decision making.

Background

The Municipality has a letter of authority (LOA) with the Department of Natural Resources & Renewal (DNRR) to operate and maintain the Roseway River Trail. The trail is approximately 700m long and is designated for pedestrians and cycling but not off highway vehicles (OHVs). It has two bridges, a bailey bridge (142 feet) and a small trail bridge (26 feet), both located at the eastern end of the trail. The bailey bridge is about 15 years old, the trail bridge is over 100 years old and is due for long term rehabilitation within 2-3 years. The trail connects to the Town of Shelburne rail trail at its eastern end and to the undeveloped rail trail at its southern end, at Islands Park Road. The undeveloped trail is managed by the Department of Natural Resources & Renewal (DNRR) and does not have any OHV restrictions and travels through Hartz Point to Birchtown. It should be noted that even if the Municipality did not have the LOA for the trail, there is an existing OHV restriction in place on the trail by DNRR.

Being that OHVs are not permitted on the Roseway River Trail it creates a few challenges. One is keeping OHVs off the trail as it is nearly impossible despite signage and barriers. There are numerous entry points including driveways, paths in the woods, and routes around some of the barriers. To keep OHVs off the trail would require an excessive number of barriers which would be unreasonable for such a short trail. As well, trail counts were conducted in 2020 and indicated there was significant OHV use on the trail.

Another challenge is enabling connectivity within the local trail system. One way this has been addressed on a province wide scale is with road trails. The Road Trails Act enables the operation of off-highway vehicles on designated parts of highways to allow for trail and amenity connectivity. It allows off-highway vehicles to access the shoulders of roadways, and the roadway itself where necessary, to safely travel from one trail to another or to access facilities (like gas stations) in designated areas. Road trails help provide solutions to problematic areas and trail connectivity.

There are now road trails in place in the area that are intended to connect the trail system from Queen's County to Barrington. The Town of Shelburne road trail enables OHVs to travel through the town on their main roads and connect to trails in the Municipality at both the east and west ends. However, on the west end, the Town road trail connects to the Roseway River Trail, which

does not allow OHVs so there is a gap in connectivity. As a result, riders are either illegally travelling on the trail or on sections of roads that are not designated as road trails (i.e. Falls Lane, Islands Park Road).

The Municipality is responsible for five trail bridges and three require major rehabilitation within the next 2-3 years. The Jordan River Trail bridge is currently in the process of a planned replacement for 2026 at a budget of \$3,000,000 with the Municipality contributing \$525,000. As per the last engineering inspection completed in the fall of 2023, the Tom Tigney Bridge rehabilitation is estimated at a cost of \$2,000,000 and the Roseway River Trail Bridge at \$800,000-\$1,200,000. The Municipality is responsible for two other bridges, including the Sable River Footbridge and the Roseway River Trail Bailey Bridge, which is the larger of the two bridges located on the Roseway River trail. Neither of those bridges are not in need of any immediate or short-term repairs.

Discussion

To address the above challenges the following options could be considered.

1) Open the Roseway River Trail to OHVs

This would require changing the LOA to include OHVs. OHVs travelling west on the Town of Shelburne road trail would connect to the Roseway River Trail at McGill's Point Lane. Riders could then proceed through Hartz Point on the undeveloped trail (DNRR trail) to the road trail in Birchtown. Those travelling west (towards Town of Shelburne) from Hartz Point would connect to the trail at Islands Park Road.

Potential outcomes:

- This would provide connectivity for all users: pedestrians, cyclists, and OHVs.
- It would eliminate the need to enforce an OHV restriction, which due to the location of the trail is not achievable without an excessive increase in barriers at numerous entry points.
- It would require a public consultation process to change the letter of authority (LOA) to include OHVs.
- The Municipality would continue to be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the trail and the two bridges. The smaller trail bridge is due for repairs within the next 2-3 years as per the last inspection from 2023.
- The trail would require resurfacing and additional signage to bring it up to a shared-multi-use trail standard.
- All other Municipal operated trails with LOAs are open to OHVs and this trail is part of the same trail system so it would provide consistency.

2) Keep the Roseway River Trail as is and establish a road trail for OHVs

A road trail could potentially start at Fall's Lane where the Town of Shelburne road trail ends, go over the bridge and along Island's Park Road to where the undeveloped trail begins, across the road from the end of the Roseway River Trail.

Potential outcomes

- This would provide a solution for all trail users to ensure connectivity as the road trail would provide a separate dedicated route for OHVs and the trail would remain open to pedestrians and cyclists as per the LOA.
- Some OHV use on the trail would likely continue as there are numerous entry points including driveways and paths in the wooded areas that surround the trail. To keep OHVs off the trail would require numerous barriers to be installed.
- The Municipality would continue to be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the trail and the two bridges.

3) Terminate the Letter of Authority (LOA)

The Municipality could terminate the LOA and no longer be responsible for the trail and the two bridges. To provide connectivity pedestrians and cyclists could still use the trail, it would just be managed by DNRR. For OHVs, a request could be made to DNRR to lift the OHV restriction on the trail, or a road trail could be established.

Potential outcomes:

- By terminating the LOA, the Municipality would be relieved of all responsibilities associated with the operation and maintenance of the trail and the two bridges, which would reduce the financial obligation for the short term and long term.
- Pedestrians and cyclists could still use the trail and OHVs would be accommodated by the road trail or the trail itself if the restrictions on the trail were lifted.
- The ongoing and long term maintenance of the trail and two bridges would be unknown under DNRR's responsibility.

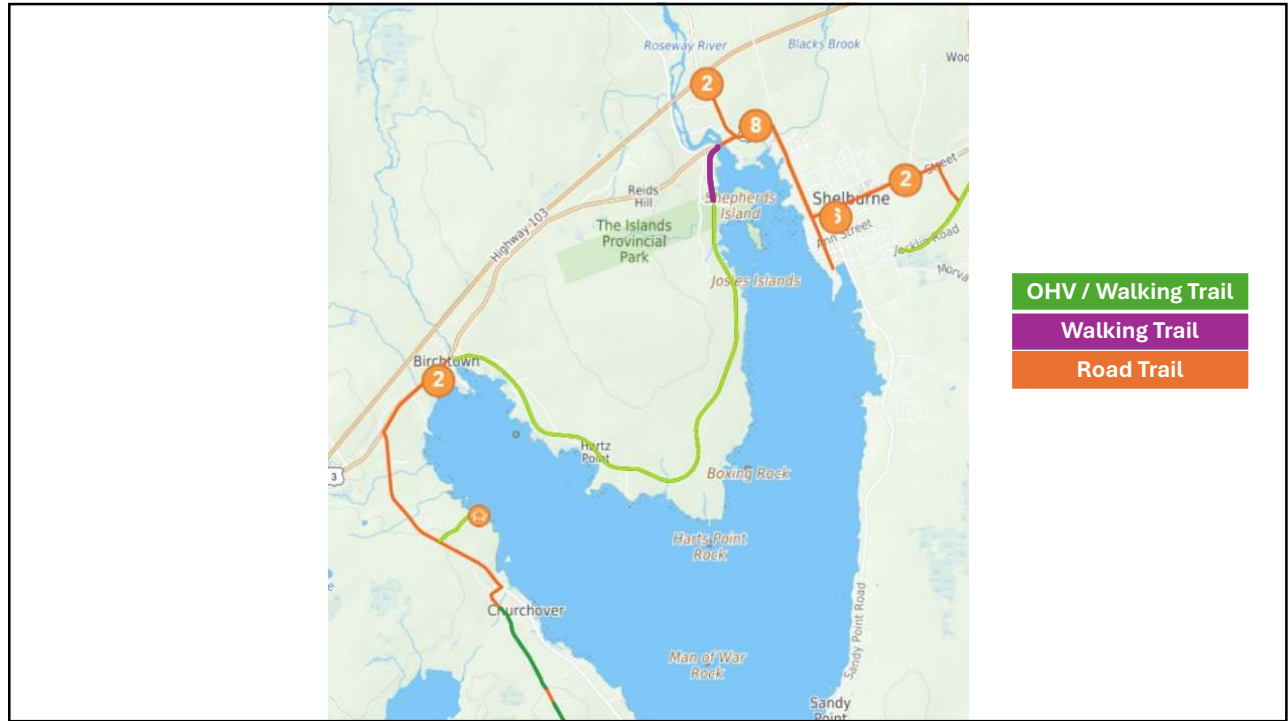
This all poses some questions for Council to think about in their consideration of the options:

1. What are they willing to put into trails resource wise? And for how long?
2. Where do trails fit within the overall scope of recreation infrastructure and how does that affect other recreation infrastructure, both existing and potential new projects?

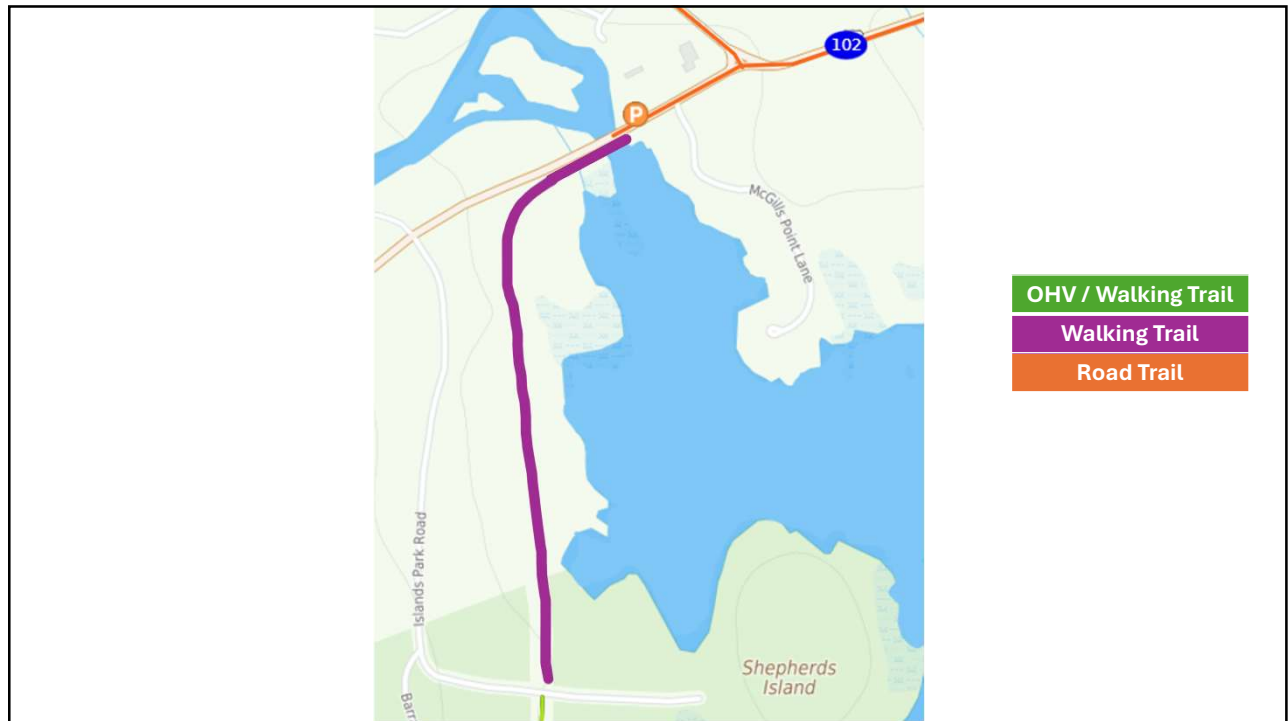
In considering the options and the associated challenges of each, there are several things to keep in mind. One is the big picture for trails locally, how they connect to surrounding areas and the benefits they bring such as social, recreational and economical. Another is the financial impact on the Municipality when it comes to costs for the ongoing and long-term operation and maintenance of all Municipal trails, especially the potential costs for repairs to numerous trail bridges. Also, it needs to be considered where trails fit within the overall scope of recreation infrastructure and how that affects other recreation infrastructure, both existing and potential new projects.

Attachments

-Maps and photos of Roseway River Trail (numbered slides)



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Roseway River Bailey Bridge



Roseway River Trail Bridge



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Access Point #1
Trail Entrance (North End)



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Access Point #2



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Access Point #3



Access Point #4



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Access Point #5



Access Point #6



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Access Point #7
Trail Entrance (South End)



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Access Point #7
Trail Entrance (South End)

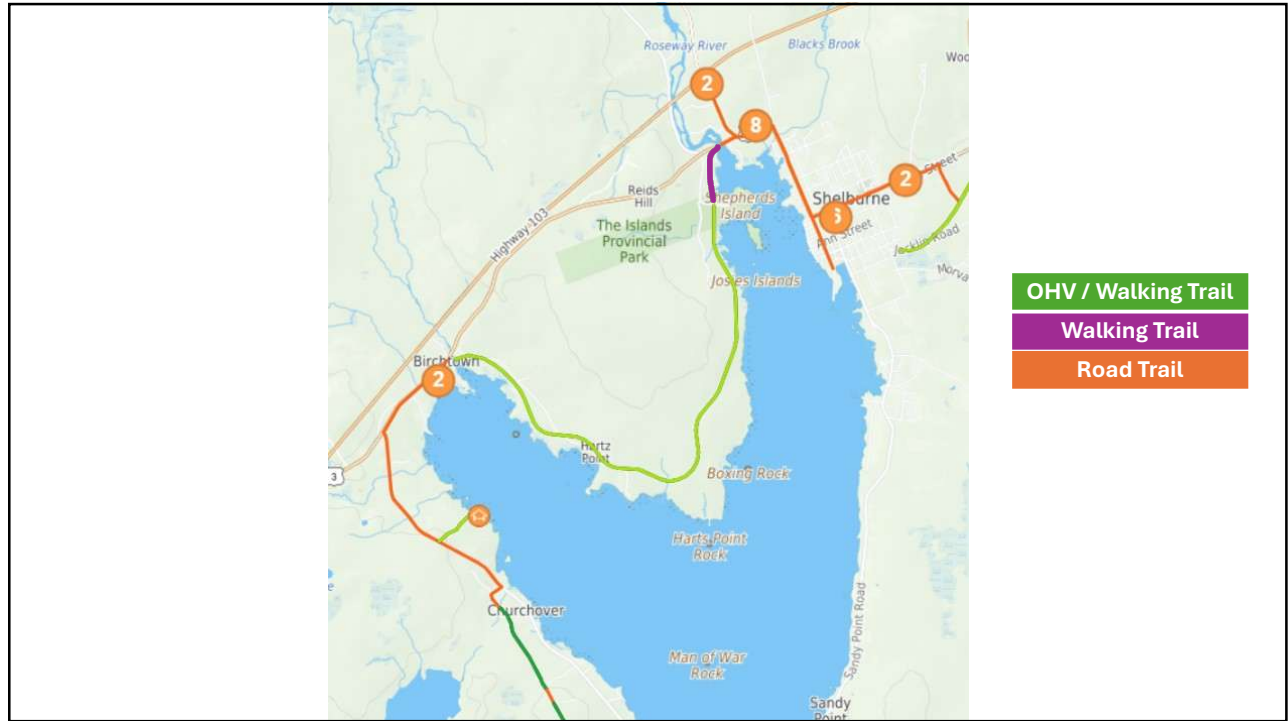


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Access Point #8



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Jordan River Bridge



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Tom Tigney Bridge



Roseway River Trail Bridge

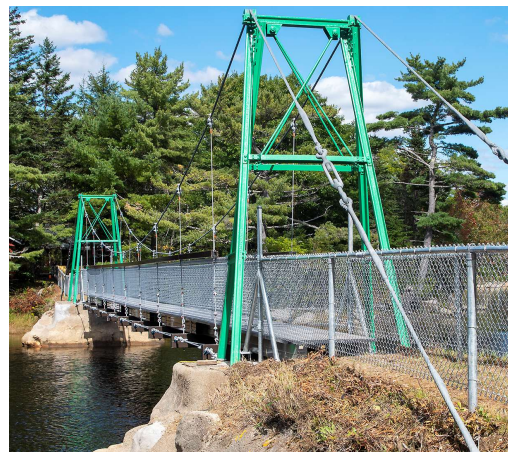


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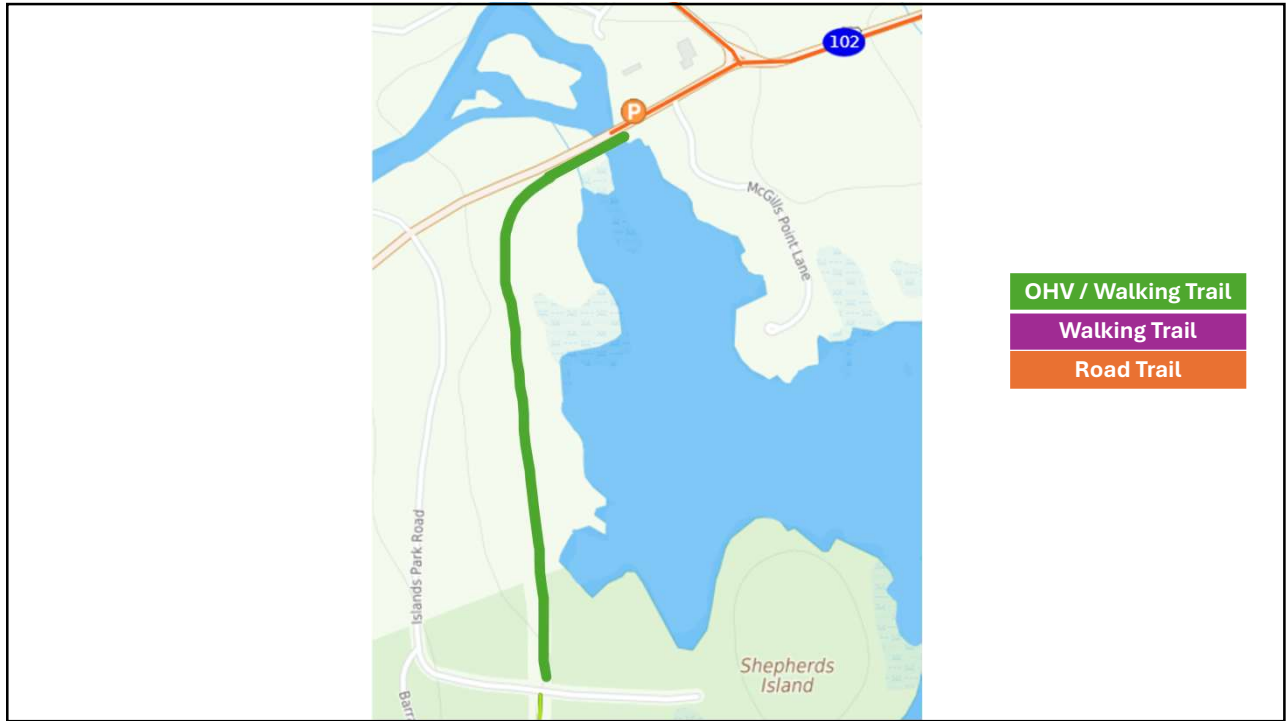
Roseway River Bailey Bridge



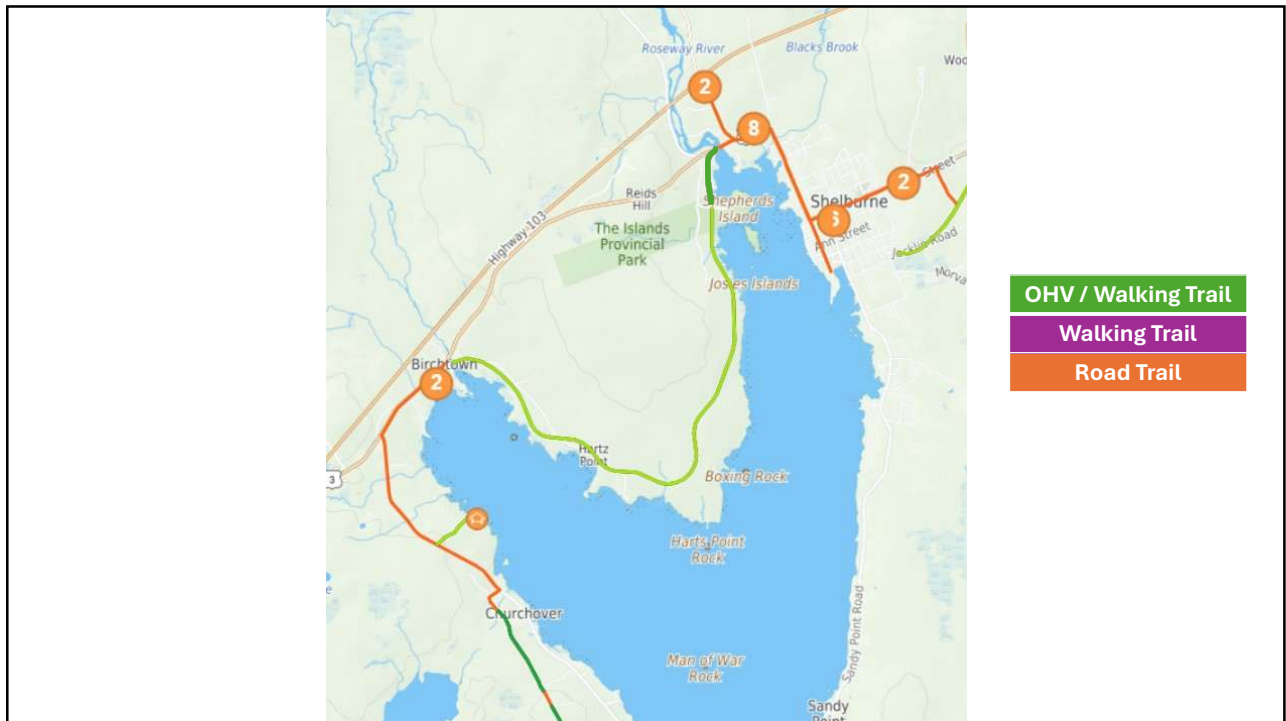
Sable River Footbridge



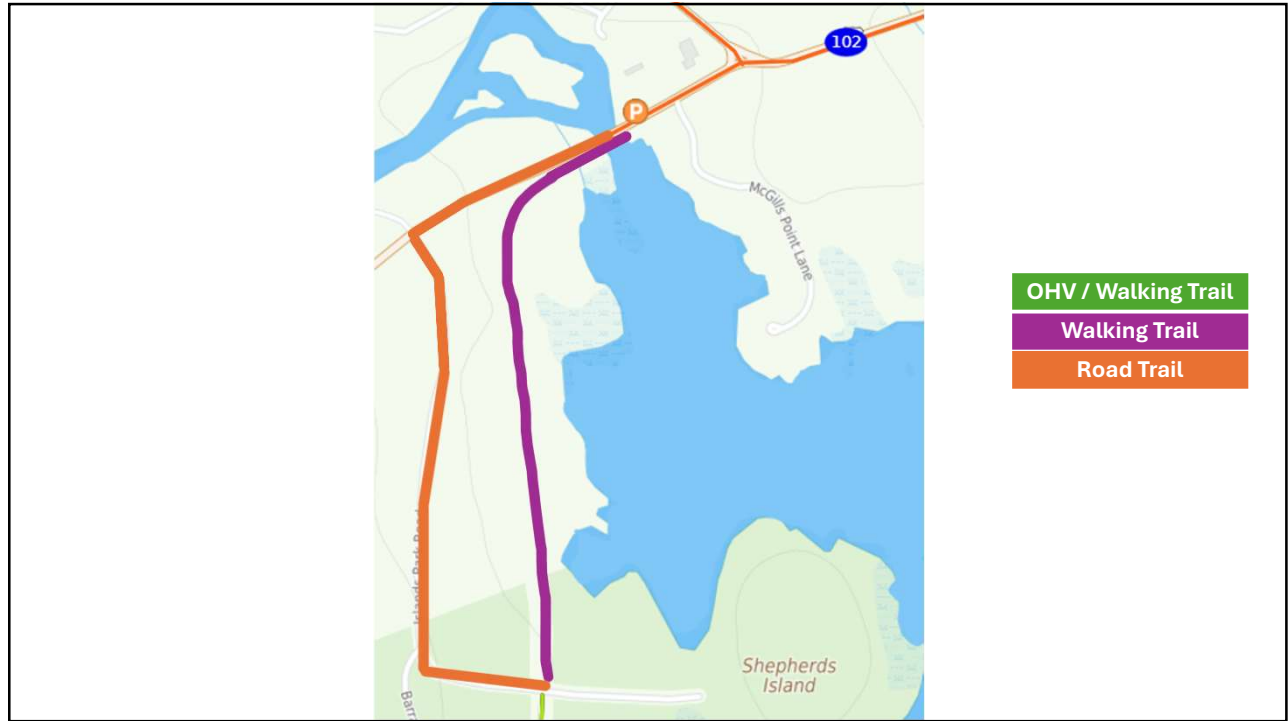
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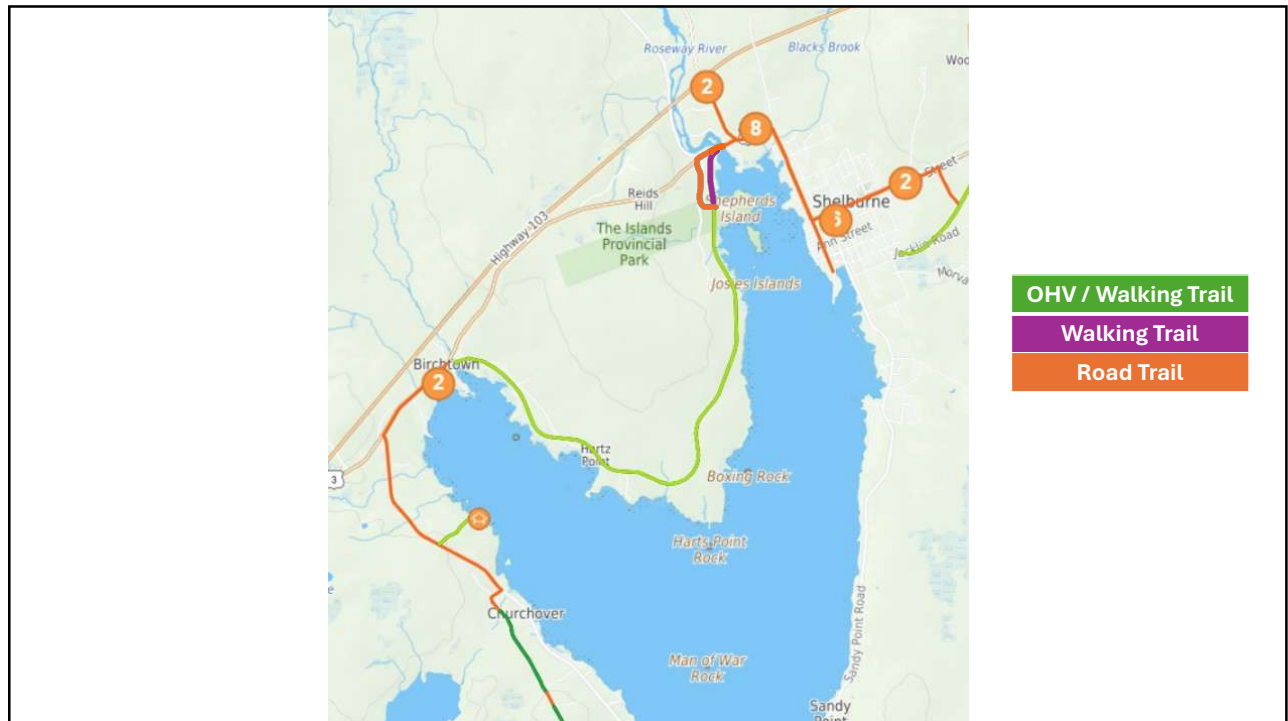
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