



RETHINK MARLBORO STREET

A Complete Streets Demonstration Event



Saturday, September 19, 2015

Keene, New Hampshire

Acknowledgements

In 2015, the City of Keene worked with the Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) to develop a Complete Streets policy for the City. In order to increase awareness within the community of the need for safer streets, SWRPC worked with the City to put on a Complete Streets demonstration event to show how space within the public right-of-way can be re-allocated to promote safety for all users while also enhancing sense of place. This demonstration project, called “Rethink Marlboro Street,” took place on September 19, 2015 on Marlboro Street in Keene. A host of individuals and organizations helped out with this event and made it possible by volunteering, lending or donating materials, and donating space for storage and meetings. SWRPC and the City of Keene are very grateful for the contributions of these individuals and organizations, who are listed on the next page.

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Rethink Marlboro Street Volunteers

The following individuals helped with set-up and break-down of the event, and also helped with planning, outreach, and event logistics.

Michael Acerno
Rebecca Baldwin
Johnny Bolster
Georgia Cassimatis
Michele Chalice
Matt Collins
Dave Curran
Chris Cusack
Beverly Doolan
Anne Francisco
Yves Gakunde
Samantha Gaudette
Tara Germond
Susan Hansmeier
Peter Hartz
Kate Hickey
Chris Jackson
Chris Kessler

Dawn Kopczynski
Darryl Masterson
Nevada Millen
Megan Pietrowski
Kelsey Plifka
Greg Pregent
Jen Risley
Rowland Russell
Jenna Schifflbein
Ben Schifflbein
Will Schoefmann
Susy Thielen
Bruce Thielen
Todd Tousley
Matt Waitkins
Erik Willis
Kat Wood
Tim Zinn

Rethink Marlboro Street Sponsors

The following organizations helped with event planning, outreach, logistics, donated or lent materials, donated space, or provided funding for Rethink Marlboro Street.

City of Keene
Healthy Monadnock 2020
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Hannah Grimes Center
310 Marlboro/Brehm Realty, LLC
Granite State Landscape Architects
Home Healthcare Hospice and Community Services (HCS)
Kat Wood Yoga
Keene Friends of Public Art (Keene FPA)
Keene State College Geography Club
Keene State College Green Bikes
Make it So: The Monadnock Makerspace
Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation
Monadnock Buy Local
Monadnock Cycling Club
Monadnock Food Co-op

Monadnock Healthy Eating Active Living (MHEAL)
Pedals4People
Pellettieri Associates
Penuche's Ale House
Savings Bank of Walpole
Southeast Keene Neighborhood Group
The Peak Radio 101.9/100.7
WKBK Radio 107.5
3M Manufacturing
Achille Agway
Amicci's Italian Style Pizza
Brewbakers Cafe
Landscape Forms
Maple Hill Nursery
Pexco
Ramunto's Brick Oven Pizza
Tuckahoe Turf

Introduction

Rethink Marlboro Street was a live, on-street demonstration of what Marlboro Street in Keene could look like as a “Complete Street.” It took place in Keene, NH on Saturday, September 19, 2015. The goal of this event was to give the Keene community a chance to experience first-hand how space within the public right-of-way could be reallocated to promote safety and enhance sense of place. Volunteers installed pop-up crosswalks, pop-up protected bike lanes, temporary curb extensions, a pedestrian island, a “parklet” (i.e. a pop-up mini park in an on-street parking space), and more to help spark conversations (and imaginations!) around how we can build better streets that will contribute to a vibrant community. In addition to streetscape improvements, there were several activities and food trucks to help draw people in and create an enjoyable experience for everyone.



The demonstration project was located on Marlboro Street in Keene, stretching from the corner of Grove Street to the end of the Savings Bank of Walpole property, or approximately one block.

Complete Streets – Designed with Everyone in Mind

Complete Streets are streets that are designed and built for all users, not just motorists. For many years, traffic engineers focused primarily on moving as many cars as possible, as quickly as possible. This approach to road design resulted in roads that move cars fairly well but often are not safe for seniors, youth, people with disabilities, and others walking, biking, or taking transit. Because many people don’t feel safe, they drive to their destinations rather than use other options, which increases the amount of traffic on roads and leads to other problems, such as congestion, air pollution, and decreased road safety.

Complete Streets seek to change this way of thinking so that pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accommodations are no longer seen as amenities to be included when possible, but rather as core elements of street design, left out only if there is a truly compelling reason. Complete Streets will look different depending on where they are and what they are used for, but they all have one thing in common: they are designed with everyone in mind.



Examples of “Complete Streets.” Left: rural road with paved shoulder for bicyclists and walkers. Middle: neighborhood road with sidewalk, green buffer, and street trees. Right: downtown Main Street in Keene with a wide sidewalk, street trees/green buffer, street furniture, on-street parking, and outdoor café seating (not visible in picture).

Planning Process

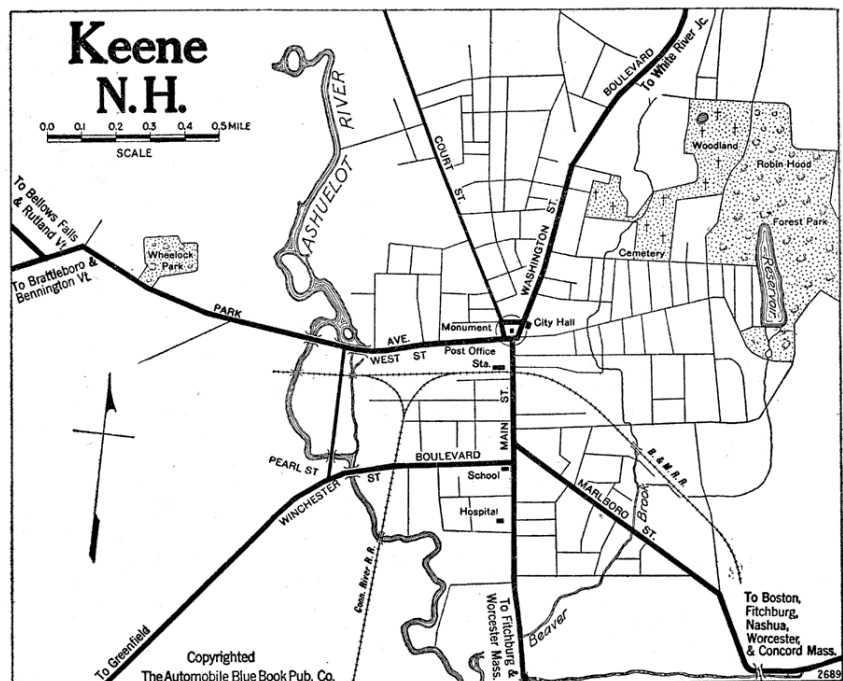
Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) began working with the City of Keene Planning and Public Works departments to plan a Complete Street demonstration event in the late spring/early summer of 2015. There were several steps to the planning process, which included:

- 1) Determine the event location, date, and time;
- 2) Get the local community involved;
- 3) Make the event fun;
- 4) Recruit help; and
- 5) Advertise the event.

Why Marlboro Street?

Marlboro Street in Keene, NH has historically been a gateway into the City's center. It was the route people took to get to Boston, Nashua, Worcester, and Concord, MA. The close proximity of the B&M Railroad and the presence of Beaver Brook attracted industrial companies such as Kingsbury Corporation, which provided over 1,000 well-paying jobs during the heyday of the industrial era. Over time, however, the area declined, and in 2011 the Kingsbury Corporation declared bankruptcy.

In 2012, The City of Keene was awarded a Community Planning Grant by the NH Housing Finance Authority which allowed the City to conduct a study that looked at revising local land use regulations to revitalize surrounding neighborhoods. The resulting [report](#) included not only zoning recommendations, but also redevelopment design guidelines, a flood risk management strategy, a stormwater management strategy, and a transportation strategy. Recommendations within the transportation strategy included making Marlboro Street a Complete Street.



Above: A 1919 road map of Keene, New Hampshire, from the Official Automobile Blue Book, showing the Ashuelot River, major roads (including Marlboro Street), railroads and stations, bridges, cemeteries, and major landmarks.

These Complete Street recommendations, along with the wide width of the roadway and the City's plans to redesign the roadway, made Marlboro Street an ideal location for a live, on-street demonstration of a Complete Street. It was a chance for the City to try out some of the design recommendations included in the [Marlboro Street Zoning and Land Use Regulations report](#) and get feedback from the public. The roadway is wide enough to include various different streetscape elements, which are shown later on in this report in the "Demonstration Design" section. And finally, it was an area in need of attention, and this project was a way to reach a wider audience about the possibilities for a redesign of Marlboro Street.

Get the Local Community Involved

Once Marlboro Street was chosen as the location for the Complete Streets demonstration event, it was time to involve the local community. SWRPC staff attended various organization/group meetings to let community groups know about the project and invite them to take part. In addition to these meetings, SWRPC held four public meetings over the summer of 2015 to plan and organize the demonstration event. These were held on July 8, 2015, July 23, 2015, August 4, 2015, and August 20, 2015.

Include Food & Activities – Make the Event Fun!

Early on, a decision had to be made about whether the demonstration project would simply consist of temporary changes to the streetscape, or whether it would also include food and activities in order to make it an event that would draw people in. While the former option would be a more realistic representation of what the street would look like if the design recommendations were implemented, SWRPC and the City decided that it was more important to ensure that people came to the event and got a chance to see the streetscape changes before they were removed.

Two food trucks came to the event, along with a local yoga instructor and a local musician. Friends of Public Art organized a Bike Art Exhibition, Pedals4People had a free tune-up station, and the Monadnock Cycling Club led bicycle tours to bicycle friendly businesses in Keene that participate in a program called [Bicycle Benefits](#). There were mini-golf courses, built by Make it So: the Monadnock Makerspace, and a checkers board provided by the Southeast Keene Neighborhood Group. The full schedule of events is shown below.



The banner features a yellow background with silhouettes of people on a bicycle, a person in a wheelchair, a person pushing a stroller, and a person sitting on a bench. The text 'RETHINK MARLBORO STREET' is in large, bold, black letters, with 'Schedule of Events' in a white cursive font below it. There are white starburst graphics on the sides.

September 19 th , 11 am – 4 pm		
Music	11 am – 1 pm	Harry McKelvey will be playing guitar, banjo, and mandolin – <i>In front of Romy's Market</i>
City Express Bus Route	11 am – 1 pm	15-minute loops between Rethink Marlboro Street and Keene Farmer's Market – <i>In front of Savings Bank of Walpole parking lot</i>
Yoga	11 am – 1 pm	20-minute sessions – Relax and renew with Kat Wood, a locally certified yoga instructor – <i>Savings Bank of Walpole greenspace</i>
Bicycle Benefits Businesses Bike Tour	11:30 am 1:30 pm 3:30 pm	A guided city tour of local businesses who are participating members of the Bicycle Benefits Program – <i>Meet in the Savings Bank of Walpole parking lot</i>
Bicycle Tune-up Station	11 am – 4 pm	Free basic tune-ups available courtesy of Pedals4People – <i>Savings Bank of Walpole parking lot</i>
Food	11 am – 4 pm	Elliott's Place Food Truck – <i>Adams Street</i> Charlie's Olde Tyme Creamery – <i>Adams Street</i>
Mini Golf	11 am – 4 pm	1-2 hole mini golf course, courtesy of Monadnock Makerspace – <i>Marlboro Street in front of Consignment Shop</i>
Bicycle Art/Kinetic Sculpture Exhibition	11 am – 4 pm	Adults and kids are encouraged to decorate their bikes to show them off in the bike art exhibition. Prizes are available for the winners! – <i>Savings Bank of Walpole parking lot</i>

Above: The schedule of events for Rethink Marlboro Street.

Recruit Help

Rethink Marlboro Street would not have been possible without the help of volunteers to plan, organize, advertise, and set-up the event. Working with community partners was key to getting a group of engaged volunteers. Many of the volunteers came from the Southeast Keene Neighborhood Group (SEKNG), Friends of Public Art (FPA), and the Keene State College Geography Club.

Volunteers were split up into four “crews”: the Friday night set-up crew was in charge of laying down the traffic tape on the roadway the night before the event; the Saturday morning set-up crew was in charge of installing the curb extensions, pedestrian island, pop-up bus stop, street furniture, tables, etc. the morning of the event; the Saturday event crew helped to answer questions during the event, encouraged people to fill out comment cards, and directed people on Main Street to the event; and the Saturday evening clean-up crew was in charge of cleaning up the event.

Advertise the Event

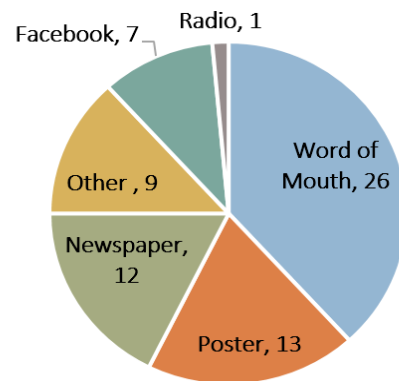
Rethink Marlboro Street was advertised on the Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation website as well as the Healthy Monadnock 2020 calendar and the Cheshire TV Community Calendar. Posters/flyers were posted around downtown Keene, and flyers were delivered to all residents living in or near the demonstration area. Further outreach efforts included:

- **Radio:** Two local radio stations, WKBK and The Peak, had guest speakers who talked about the event on their shows.
- **Local Newspaper:** An advertisement and editorial pieces ran for the three weeks leading up to the event in the Monadnock Shopper News.
- **Partner Newsletters:** The Monadnock Food Co-op, Monadnock Buy Local, and Healthy Monadnock 2020 advertised the event in their newsletters.
- **Facebook:** The MAST Facebook page was used to advertise the event.
- **Word of Mouth:** Over 1/3 of the people who came to the event reported hearing about it through word-of-mouth.
- **Roadside Sign:** An 8-foot tall roadside sign in front of the Keene Post Office advertised Rethink Marlboro Street for the two weeks leading up to the event.



Above: Volunteers take a break to get lunch from Elliot's Place, a food truck at Rethink Marlboro Street.

Responses to "How did you hear about us?"



At the event, we asked people how they heard about us. A total of 68 people shared responses, shown above.

Public Input

A major goal of the Complete Streets demonstration event was to gather public input on the proposed design changes for Marlboro Street, as well as to get public input on the Complete Streets concept more generally. There were four comment boxes placed throughout the demonstration area, and 40 written comments were gathered this way. An example comment card is shown at the right.

There were 36 people who responded to the first question, “How do you think Complete Streets could benefit your community?” Nineteen people noted that Complete Streets made the road safer and slowed down traffic; 18 people noted that aesthetics were improved, 7 of whom voiced support for more green space; 15 people voiced support for protected bike lanes; 10 people noted that Complete Streets help foster community and promote wellness/social connection; 10 people remarked that Complete Streets promote walking and biking; 5 people voiced support for the crosswalks, and 5 people voiced support for a bus stop or transit route on Marlboro Street. Respondents also mentioned environmental benefits, economic benefits, need for public art, need to keep on-street parking, need for more public gathering/hang-out spaces, and need for more/better sidewalks. Two people thought that money could be better spent on other projects.

Thirty-five out of forty respondents answered “Yes” to the second question on the comment card, “Do you think any of the temporary changes we made for this event should be made permanent? Why or why not?” Four people chose not to answer this question, and one person said no.

Of the 40 people who responded, 32 noted that they live in the area. Six people chose not to answer, and two people work in the area but do not live in the area. The chart below shows the breakdown of responses to this question.

We Want to Hear from You!

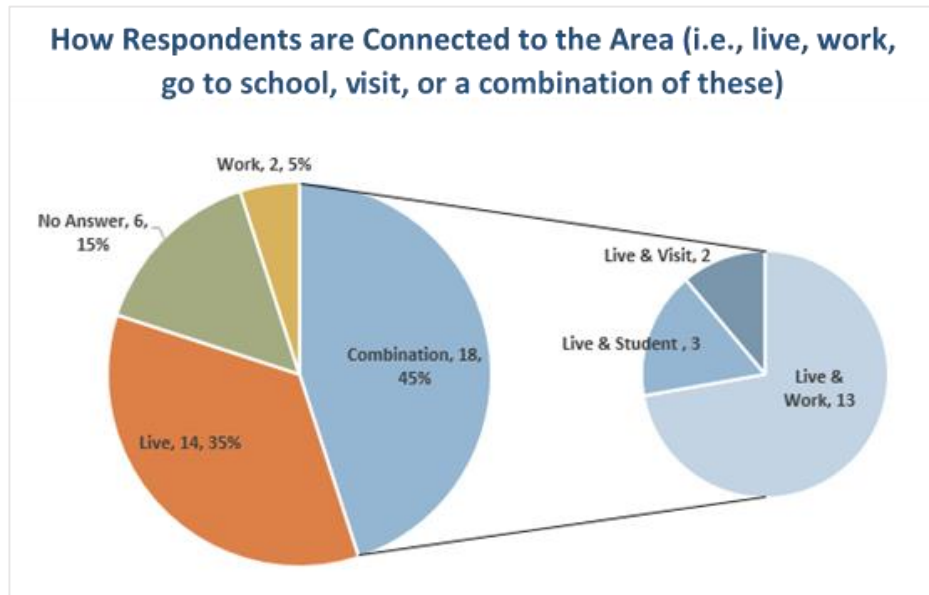
Complete Streets are streets that are accessible and safe for everyone to use.
How do you think Complete Streets could benefit your community?

Do you think any of the temporary changes we made for this event should be made permanent? Why or why not? (use back if needed)

I Live Work Visit or am a Student in this area. (circle all that apply)

Other comments?

An example comment card from the event.



Comment Card Responses

The table below displays the written comments that were collected at Rethink Marlboro Street. The third question on the comment card that asked whether people live, work, or go to school in the area (or visit) was omitted in order to fit the table in this document.



1. How do you think Complete Streets could benefit your community?	2. Do you think any of the temporary changes we made for this event should be made permanent? Why or why not?	4. Other comments?
Fantastic changes. I would make this area a destination if it were designed this way. It would greatly benefit the community.	Yes - all. It makes biking and walking safer and would be a significant draw for the surrounding community with the green spaces.	Fantastic work!!
Looks nice, provides community, slows traffic.	Gardens, food, people!	Nice display.
Bike lanes are needed. Green spaces, music, and art are lacking on this section of town. What took so long?	Yes - it makes the ties in community stronger. It's fun. More public art, please!	
no answer	Yes, will slow traffic down in the area. Need trees and nice medians to get rid of the eyesore (romies [sic] building)	
Bike lanes - all over the city - wider	Yes!!	
Attractive to businesses and home buyers.	Plants separating bike lane is great! Attractive and safer.	
Safer bike routes (I was recently hit by a car not to mention several close calls - and I follow the rules!) More kids/families walking to school.	Bike lane/street vendors and community. Plants moving into the road looks beautiful. Aesthetic cities captivate imagination.	Even those not here or aware of the benefits will benefit. In regards to West Street: Studies have shown that instead of 2 lanes in each direction having one lane each with a turning lane in the middle is much safer for cars AND bikes and doesn't really affect the traffic timing as much as one would think. PLEASE consider this for all, especially our cyclists and pedestrians. Front in parking on Main Street is also dangerous for cyclists.

1. How do you think Complete Streets could benefit your community?	2. Do you think any of the temporary changes we made for this event should be made permanent? Why or why not?	4. Other comments?
Cars need to share routes with bikers and walkers. It is forward thinking.	Opportunity for safe biking (commuting) is essential. Bike lanes!	
I think it is wonderful idea [sic].	Only if they allow for parking area.	Create a parking area for cars and bikes and take a bus.
Community building - user friendly.	ALL of it!	
no answer	All of them	Close the street to automobile traffic.
More pedestrian traffic and fewer cars! Less pollution and automobile noise pollution.	Absolutely - better for the town and spirit of Keene	Please close this and other streets to cars!!!!
Spend on north end Spring St. Bridge Beaver Brook walls by Beaver St. and Brook St [sic].	No spend on north end	Do not do this!!
It's a great idea I feel unsafe riding my bike [sic]	The City Express thing the protective bike lanes [sic]	This has been needed for a long time - this needs to happen
Walkability in Keene is [sic] to Main Street and the addition to Marb. Street would be a huge improvement and benefit for the community!	The Green Space is so lovely! Eye please [sic] and environmentally sound!	
New sidewalks and bike path	no answer	
As one of the gateways into Keene it would be gorgeous. It also encourages Ped and Bike use. I would ride more if I felt safer.	I think it is a great idea. I support its implementation.	Yes I am a tax payer
I think this is the best idea Keene has had in a long time! This is something that should have been done forever ago! This is AWESOME!!!!	Yes! It's so helpful and beautiful! And this is what we need! It could really help Keene become a better place which is what we want!!!!	LOVE THIS!!!!
Would look amazing, great idea	Yes, way safer	
It would encourage biking and walking more. Also it will be safer for everyone	Yes. All of them	

1. How do you think Complete Streets could benefit your community?	2. Do you think any of the temporary changes we made for this event should be made permanent? Why or why not?	4. Other comments?
They create more livable environments that draw more visitation (i.e. \$) and make people HAPPY! And isn't "happy" the point of living together?	Yes - it's more humane, pleasing and encouraging to community.	
I think (believe) more people would be drawn to getting out being social and riding their bike!	Yes! I love the idea of having more permanent places for the community to hang out, tables with games, etc.	Yes! Please keep going with this project. Love it!
I think there are more important things for the town to spend money on, beaver brook flooding issues - paving streets that already need it, cleaning		Up the homeless, + heroin [sic]
When the Savings Bank of Walpole came to Marlboro St - that was a huge improvement of the stretch. I'd like to see more.	Yes - the beautification of the St the bike lane - sidewalks	
Water St. Included? Fencing on Water St. Ugly? [sic] Restaurant near ice rink		
Would feel safer knowing my kids are not so close to the cars	the flowers by the crosswalk to make it more visible	
Marlboro St currently a runway - also solar glare in the AM horrendous - creates BLINDSPOT @ Wheelock School		
It would help with slowing cars, reducing car traffic, and increasing bikes and pedestrians	Yes!	
Bring more appealing atmosphere by planting grass, plants, etc	Yes - make it look nicer	
It would slow cars down and allow for cleaner and safer streets	Yes. I love the bike path that has lane dividers. Feels safer for me and kids.	

1. How do you think Complete Streets could benefit your community?	2. Do you think any of the temporary changes we made for this event should be made permanent? Why or why not?	4. Other comments?
Safer, more friendly environment to foster a healthy community	Yes! Bike lanes and crosswalks	How do we get involved? How do we show support?
Alternatives to driving safe bikeways more space to socialize w/ community [sic]	Yes! Bike lanes more crosswalks outdoor seating	lets make it happen!
Safer for residents for walking and biking	The small parks and bike paths	
Greatly. Public education about "rules of the road" for DRIVERS would make things safer for pedestrians and bicyclists.	Yes. Visual cues help everyone	Complete Streets ideas seem to bring the community together in a good way
no answer	More bus stops	
I think having more people get around by foot or bike will make our community more healthy, relaxed, and connected. It will also cut down on air pollution.	YES, especially the ped crossing. This is a scary place to cross the street! More bike lanes in Keene would be excellent.	I would love it if they could keep the North St. bridge plowed or snowblown in winter.
I think that it will slow traffic and rive traffic to the [sic]	love them all - made a great feel	
Encouraging more walking, biking, and other physical activity. Safety! Community-building!	Bike lanes - obviously they are being used! And bike racks.	Add recycling bins next year! Too much waste! :[
no answer	YES!	Please put a bus stop on Marlborough St. [sic], preferably close to KPD but anywhere will help.
Complete Streets encourage wellness in many ways: walking, biking, community gathering	OMG!! A covered bike rack with a bus stop!! Especially if said bus went to Brattleboro!	Marlboro Street REALLY could use these crosswalks!!

Event Picture Gallery

Below: Existing conditions on Marlboro Street.



Left: A view of the demonstration project after set-up was complete. Curb extensions, a crosswalk, and part of the buffered bike lane are visible in the foreground. In the background, the posts for the protected bike lane are visible.

Right: The protected bike lane helped make cyclists feel safer by putting a physical barrier between the bike lane and motorized traffic.





Left: The temporary crosswalk got a lot of use during the event. Motorists yielded to pedestrians in the crosswalk, making this area a much more walkable place.

Right: A pop-up bus stop, with a covered bench and bike rack, showcased what public transit on Marlboro Street might look like.

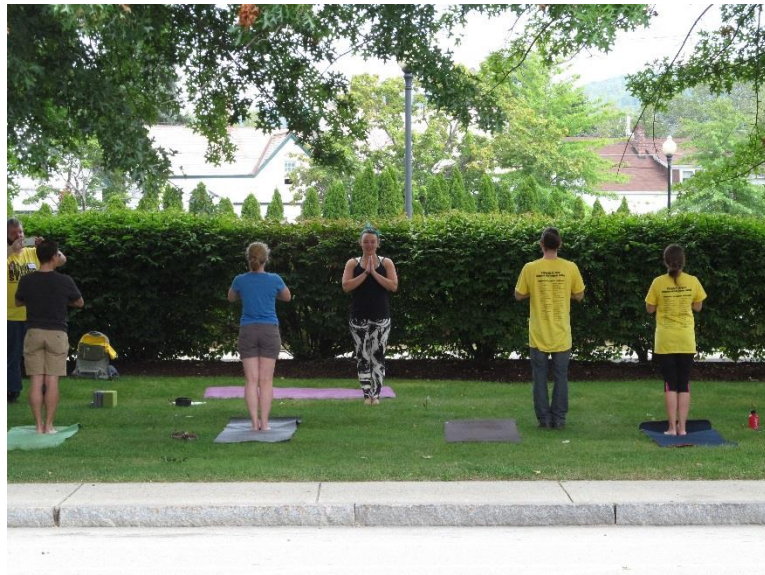


Left: The Bike Art and Kinetic Sculpture Exhibition, organized by Friends of Public Art, was a huge success. Three people won prizes, and Friends of Public Art plans to make this an annual event with two separate divisions, one for adults and one for children.



Left: Harry McKelvey (left) accompanied by Todd Tousley (right) provided musical entertainment during the event.

Right: Kat Wood, a local yoga instructor, led free, 20-minute yoga sessions on the lawn.



Left: The Southeast Keene Neighborhood Group (SEKNG) designed and built a parklet, or a mini-park that fits inside an on-street parking space. Several members built furniture out of recycled pallets and worked with a local nursery to borrow plants for the day.

Right: Make it So: The Monadnock Makerspace built a “Zen Art Putt-Putt” course that was very popular with children. The Makerspace plans to build a mini-golf course at its location on Eagle Court in Keene, NH.



Left: Friends of Public Art constructed a “bike art sculpture bench” made out of recycled bicycle parts which made its debut at Rethink Marlboro Street. The bench will be permanently installed along a bike path in Keene, NH.

Right: The Bike Station included green bikes, courtesy of the Keene State College Green Bikes program, which could be borrowed for free. It also featured a tune-up station which was operated by Chris Jackson from Pedals4People (shown in the background under the blue tent).



For More Information

To learn more about Rethink Marlboro Street, please visit the Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation website at www.monadnocktma.org or contact Mari Brunner, a Planner with Southwest Region Planning Commission, at mbrunner@swrpc.org or 603-357-0557.




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