



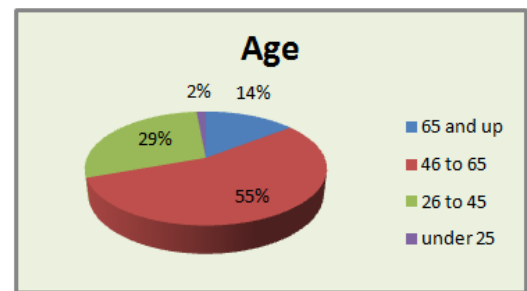
## LHT Community Survey Fall 2017 Summary Report

The LHT Community Survey was developed and launched in August 2017 to collect current information and demographics from LHT users and to collect information and feedback about how the community feels about the LHT, its priorities and future.

To date, 352 people have responded (290 complete and 62 partial). This paper presents a summary of the results.

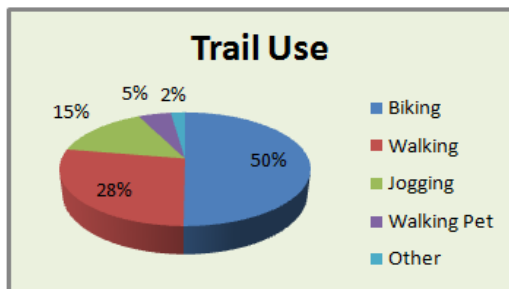
### **LHT: Who uses the trail?**

- Survey participants are from a wide geographic area, with over 25 towns represented in the responses. However, local communities constituted the majority of responses (76%).
- There was a near even split between gender in the survey responses.
- Over half of survey respondents report themselves as 46 – 65; 15% are 65 and older. The 26 – 45 age group represents 22% of responses, while the 25 and under age group was only 2%.
- Survey data shows that household make-up is varied with significant percentages of middle-aged household members (ages 45 – 65 and 31 – 45).



There were also considerable percentages in the 18 and under group. While not conclusive, the data suggests that many individuals responding to the survey are from middle-aged households with children still living at home.

### **LHT: How, When, Why & Where?**



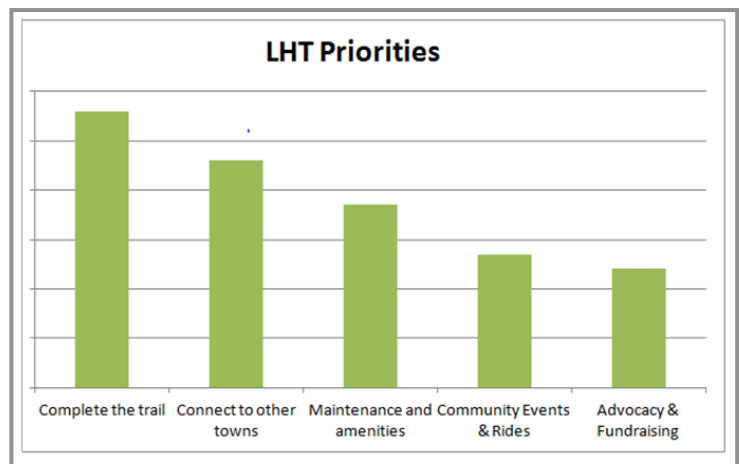
- Half of survey participants report biking as their primary activity on the trail. (Interestingly, trail counter data has recorded a higher percentage of walkers and joggers.)
- Health/exercise, recreation, time in nature, and to relax are reasons respondents use the LHT.
- Responses indicate use of the trail all the times, though weekend use is greater than weekday (70% greater). People report using the trail at all times during the day, though morning hours ranked highest.
- 77% of survey participants report using the trail a few times a month or more. Almost 30% report using the LHT weekly.
- Time spent on the trail varies among participants. 45% of survey respondents report spending less than 1 hour, while 42% report spending between 1 to 2+ hours.

### **LHT: Favorite Areas**

- About half of survey participants report driving to the trail from home, parking, and then using the trail, while 50% report biking, jogging, or walking from their home to a nearby segment of the LHT.
- Participants access the LHT from all points, though most common locations include Rosedale Park, Village Park, and Mercer Meadows.
- Similarly, participants enjoy all areas of the LHT, though favorite areas include: Mercer Meadows, Pole Farm, Rosedale Park, Carson Road Woods, Hunt House, Mount Rose, and Maidenhead Meadows.

### **LHT Condition and Priorities**

- When asked about the quality of certain features of the trail, Trail Quality and Safety was consistently ranked highest by survey participants. Access & Parking and Maintenance were ranked strongly, but not as high. Survey participants indicated that Signage and Trail Amenities (benches, picnic tables) were more moderate to fair in quality.
- In terms of priorities, survey participants strongly believe that completing the original LHT loop is most important. Other priorities are shown in chart.



### **LHT Support**

- Participants enjoy attending local events. The most attended events are Pennington Day, Full Moon Ride, Hopewell Harvest Day, and Lawrence Community Day.
- Support of the LHT can be categorized as direct or indirect. Direct support includes active engagement as a donor or volunteer for LHT activities and events. Indirect support includes introducing others to the LHT and attending events. Survey data shows that survey respondents were more than twice as likely to be indirect supporters.

### **LHT: Next Steps**

A final component of the LHT Community Survey was an open-ended question, which prompted more than 115 open-ended comments. While suggestions were wide-ranging, the comments can be categorized by theme, including: amenities, general compliments, trail connections, public relations, overall route, and maintenance.



Taken as a whole, the response to the survey could be summarized as *“Thank You. Keep up the good work. Complete the trail. Focus on maintenance and signage issues. Connect to other towns. Continue to promote the LHT.”* This is a heartening message from the community as it strongly supports and highlights many of the goals stated in the LHT’s Strategic Plan. This suggests awareness and motivation of the LHT Board are in alignment with the interest of the community, as represented by the survey.

Respondents want the LHT to continue its years of solid community work by continuing to provide the well-respected and enjoyed resource that is the trail. They indicated that the LHT should maintain a solid presence at local and regional community events. With 90% of the trail finished, the collective message could be characterized as charging the LHT Board to remain focused on its completion, while also providing high quality maintenance and enhancement of public amenities that support users.

The LHT has found great success in community partnership development to build the original loop. A commitment to connecting the LHT with spur trails to other communities using similar solutions could result in similar success and outcomes.

The LHT is a physical resource, yet through the grass-roots effort to build it, the LHT has also worked to grow as a model and voice for community development, public-private partnership, recreation, conservation, and alternative transportation. The Board believes continued participation in regional trail-based initiatives is important.

The LHT exists for the community. It would be nothing if it weren’t for those who use, enjoy, and support the trail. The Board will continue working to achieve success, sustainability, and growth through continued and authentic engagement with the community, recognizing that a community will support what it cares for.

