

How was the current Northern Scenic Greenway (NSG) route selected?

From 2018- 2021, the state's regional planning agency, SRPEDD, in conjunction with the SCBA and adjacent municipalities, conducted a feasibility study to assess the possible routes. See the final report here: [Closing the Gap](#). This assessment process included input from community members and city/town officials. Consensus was achieved based on geographic feasibility, cost, safety, user preferences, and timeline. In 2024, New Bedford, Dartmouth, and Westport jointly endorsed the proposed NSG route, north of Route 195.

Why were other routes not selected?

South Dartmouth has too many obstacles - wetland, bridge, and right-of-way - for a separated path. Cyclists currently benefit from its relatively low traffic and on-road markings.

Route 6 is a heavily trafficked regional artery, unattractive to pedestrians and cyclists, even though it is currently used by them. As Route 6 safety and infrastructure improvements are made, protected lanes will be incorporated, and the South Coast Bikeway Alliance will advocate for them. The NSG will offer a safe, non-commercial alternative.

The railroad that runs parallel to Route 195 traverses significant wetlands, and environmental mitigation would be cost-prohibitive. The rail is currently in use and not available for development as a rail trail. Additionally, public safety is a concern given the route's isolated nature.

When will the NSG be completed?

The timeline for this project is uncertain, given the remaining steps in the public infrastructure planning and implementation processes. The goal of the current step (preliminary design) is to understand the opportunities and challenges, then prepare to address them. Once this is complete, each municipality will take responsibility for final design and construction.

What are the objectives and criteria for this “preliminary design” phase?

Consultant engineers are instructed to preserve and enhance the historic, scenic, and rural character of the route while addressing the safety of residents, commuters, and recreational users who walk, run, and bicycle.

Who will benefit?

The project is a public infrastructure project dedicated to safer transportation and recreation. While those who live nearby have the easiest access, proximity to South Coast rail should increase regional use. Property values typically increase with off-road trails.