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Comments: As a resident of Gorham, I was initially thrilled to learn of the Peabody West connectivity plan, whereby a multi-use trail would be developed, thereby linking our downtown to recreational facilities to the south. In particular, the idea that a person could bike or cross country ski from downtown Gorham all the way to Great Glen was an extremely exciting concept for a number of reasons. Firstly, this would provide safe, non-motorized connectivity to Dolly Copp and Great Glen--a feature many residents of Gorham, Shelburne, Randolph and Berlin would love to enjoy. Secondly, tying our village core to Dolly Copp and Great Glen via Peabody West would prove a huge economic boon to our community. Not only would this connectivity draw visitors from the Dolly Copp (the largest campground within the White Mountains) and from Great Glen to our shops, restaurants and lodging facilities, it would also create new business opportunities such as guided nature tours, shuttle services, etc. Additionally, this would create an attraction for human-powered recreational events, drawing even more positive attention to Gorham's growing recreation economy. In short, having a year-round, multi-use trail connecting Gorham to Great Glen (and possibly extending beyond to AMC at some point) was/is a tremendously appealing feature, and is a key element to Gorham's human-powered recreation economy revitalization efforts.

However, it appears that the current proposal, as set forth by the Forest Service, has the trail stopping at Dolly Copp, with no mention of a second phase extending the trail to Great Glen. Obviously, this is not what many residents and businesses have envisioned. So many of us would like safe, non-motorized access to Great Glen, as we use the Great Glen area for hiking, cycling and skiing. As noted in the preceding paragraph, the economic impact this channels into town is also critical to our revitalization efforts in developing/marketing Gorham as a year-round, non-motorized Trail Town Hub. Essential to this "hub" vision is connectivity to the southerly recreational resources found at Great Glen.

Further, the proposal also appears to limit the Peabody West trail to summer use. My understanding is that almost everyone has been envisioning this trail as a cross-country skiing and fat-biking conduit from downtown Gorham to Great Glen in the winter, just as much as the trail is envisioned as a summer cycling route. Again, winter accessibility not only improves quality of life for locals, it is also a huge economic feature to our area's revitalization plans. Having direct winter access from our village to the resort area of Great Glen would be huge for us. There is a significant economy to our south that our restaurants, lodging facilities and recreational service industries could benefit from with better connectivity. There is the Appalachian Mountain Club, Wildcat Mountain Ski Resort, Great Glen Trails Outdoor Center, Glen House Hotel and of course Dolly Copp. With a year-round multi-use trail, skiers and fat-bikers could come from these areas into town to eat, shop, maybe stay a night before skiing/biking back to Great Glen or Dolly Copp. They might spend an afternoon glade skiing in town or exploring our miles of fat biking trails. New opportunities for new businesses--such as the aforementioned shuttle services or guided tours--evolve from just such scenarios.

In short, year-round connectivity from Gorham's village core to Great Glen--and hopefully beyond--is critical to the quality of life and economic success of our community. Please amend this plan to extend the Peabody West trail to Great Glen during this phase or within a second phase (and possibly extend Peabody West beyond Great Glen to AMC at a later phase). Please also amend this plan to allow for winter maintenance that accommodates cross-country skiers (and hopefully fat bikers). If it is not feasible for winter maintenance to be provided by the Forest Service, then please amend the plan to allow maintenance by third parties who are willing to take on that responsibility.