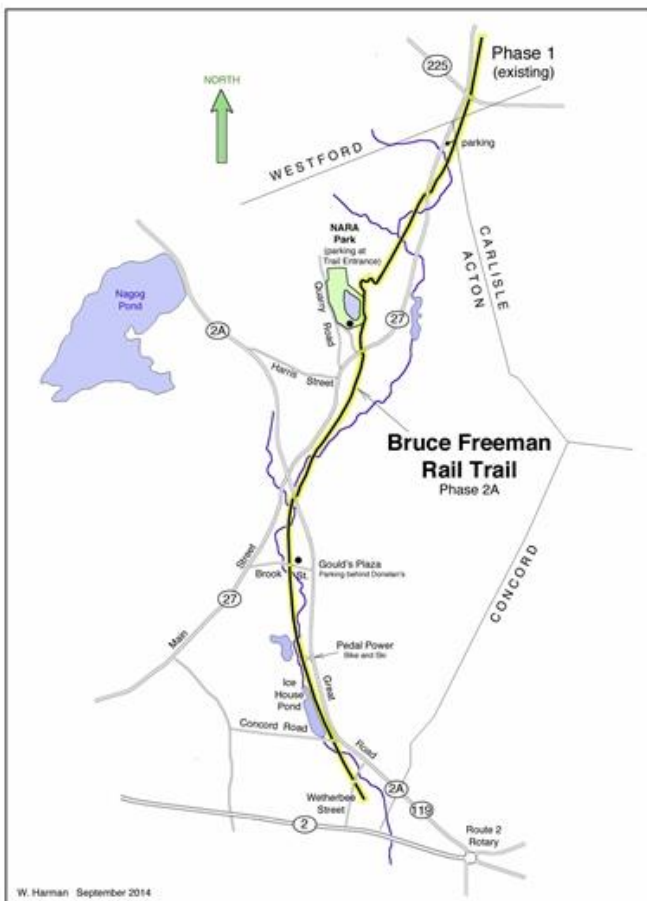




FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

2A Advertised for Construction!

In mid-September, MassDOT advertised Phase 2A for a construction bid with an estimated project cost of \$9,515,000. Phase 2A is the 4.9 miles continuation of Phase 1 from Routes 225 & 27 in Westford, south through Carlisle into Acton and ending in East Acton at Teamworks. Bids are due January 13, 2015. MassDOT expects a construction start in spring 2015 and completion in late summer or fall 2016. Among other specifications, the project includes six bridge refurbishments and a new overpass over Great Road / Route 2A in Acton.



The cost of the project construction will be borne by state (~10%) and federal funds (~90%) since the BFRT project qualifies as a federal transportation project. While federal support means local taxes are not affected, it does come with more stringent requirements. These include higher bridge loading specifications to allow for heavy emergency vehicles, stringent environmental protection design requirements during construction and handicap accessibility for the completed trail, including moderate grades on bridges.

In late October, Becky Williamson of GPI (the Phase 2A consultant) spoke at Acton Town Hall to discuss the process of getting Phase 2A to bid advertisement and the lessons learned on the way. This session was quite relevant for the remaining phases of the BFRT.

In addition to Becky Williamson and her team at GPI, special thanks go to Roland Bartl, Planning Director, and Kristen Domurad-Guichard, Assistant Town Planner, of Acton, Chris Kluchman, Director of Land Use Planning and Paul Starratt, Town Engineer, of Westford, and Tim Goddard, Carlisle Town Administrator, and all town staff who have worked hard on getting the project over hurdles. Roland and Kristen had the lion's share of the burden as (appropriately) Acton was the lead town.

Particular thanks are due to Dave Shedd, project manager of MassDOT, for moving Phase 2A through the labyrinth of approvals and bureaucracy at MassDOT and the Federal Highway Administration. Dave's patience and perseverance were of the highest order. Dave provided continued assurance that the project would be advertised prior to the end of the federal fiscal year (September 30th) as required for federal funding. The Friends greatly thank him.

Finally, in coordination with MassDOT and the towns, the Friends will be planning a spring ground-breaking event for Phase 2A (think a beautiful Friday in April). If you would like to volunteer for planning, please contact Tom Michelman at tmichelman@gmail.com or 978-580-6190.



A view from the trail of the sun starting to set over Heart Pond, Chelmsford. (Photo by Sharon Galpin)

Sudbury Chooses Contractor to Begin Rail Trail Design

At its meeting on October 14, the Sudbury Board of Selectmen (BOS) chose the design firm Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc. to perform the initial (25%) design of the BFRT in Sudbury. The design will encompass the 4.4-mile rail bed from the Concord/Sudbury town line south to the crossing of the Mass. Central Rail Trail near Chiswick Park.

This decision is the latest step in a process that began with an overwhelming vote by the Sudbury Annual Town Meeting in May 2014 to provide \$260,000 to pay for the design. That total included a donation of \$58,700 from the Friends of the BFRT to design the northernmost half mile from Concord south to Rte. 117/North Road. The BOS concluded that it would be best to combine that donation with Town funds to design the trail on the entire part of rail bed owned by the Commonwealth.

The Department of Community Planning and Development was primarily responsible for determining the process for selecting the design firm. During a series of meetings with the BOS over the summer, it was decided that the planners would survey three firms to assess their qualifications, get their comments on the statement of work, and obtain estimates of design costs. Town Planner Jody Kablack and Asst. Planner Jim Kupfer, with the Conservation Coordinator and Director of Public Works, made the final recommendation.

Trail Events

A number of walking, riding and running events were held on the trail in 2014. Most started and ended at the Byam School, though some events used other portions of the trail near Chelmsford Center. A sampling of groups having events on the trail this year include: the PMC Kids Ride, Finley's Fighters, Live for Liv, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Summer Solstice Ride, PAWs New England and the Chelmsford Dog Association.



The Live for Liv Ride/Run included bike rides along the BFRT. The 344 participants raised over \$30,000 to honor the memory of Olivia Marchand and raise awareness of domestic violence. (Photo by Emily Teller)

The Chelmsford Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee works with all groups to ensure that they use the trail safely and respect the property of abutters and obtain the required permission to use the Byam School property to stage events on the trail. To register an event on the trail please sign up on the BFRT website, <http://bit.ly/1o9CLD9>, at least 45 days prior to the event.

Chelmsford: Focus on Safety

The Chelmsford Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) is currently working with the Chelmsford Police Department, Town Engineer and DPW Superintendent to address safety concerns at several locations where the trail crosses busy streets. This action was precipitated by an accident where a cyclist failed to heed a trail stop sign, rode out into the street and hit a passing motor vehicle. The cyclist was injured and transported by ambulance to a local hospital. The Police Department also has been receiving more complaints about similar actions by cyclists at several intersections of the trail at busy streets in Chelmsford. Improvements to signals at some intersections and signage instructing cyclists to walk their bicycles across roadways are being investigated.

BPAC continues to hear reports of people walking and running on the trail and not maintaining awareness of other trail users, creating safety issues. In one incident, a parent was inattentive to a small child on a bicycle who darted out in front of passing cyclist, causing him to fall. He suffered road rash and a possible concussion and had to go to the hospital. All trail users need to be aware that they are not alone on the trail and that they share the trail with fellow walkers, runners and cyclists.

As the trail in Chelmsford has now been open for more than five years, the BPAC is working with the Chelmsford Town Manager, Town Engineer and DPW Superintendent to assess the condition of the trail and related features and amenities so that maintenance needs can be identified and prioritized for the near future. Such items include in part: pavement condition and cracks, root intrusion from trees and invasive plants, signage, railings and selective tree pruning or removal. Routine maintenance such as mowing and sweeping will also be addressed.

The Chelmsford BPAC conducted a user count at the Chelmsford Artwalk/Cushing Place on Saturday, September 13. While the day started off sunny and cool, conditions transitioned to cloudy and rain showers starting around 4 p.m. followed by rainy conditions. The count was terminated at 5:30 p.m. as the total count of 735 trail users was lower than in 2013. Bicyclists comprised about 57% of trail users while walkers and runners represented about 40% of users. The number of cyclists not wearing helmets was approximately 26%, consistent with past results. All cyclists are encouraged to wear a helmet when riding on the trail and on roads.

The BPAC is continuing its work on a detailed Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Town of Chelmsford as called for in the updated 2010 Chelmsford Master Plan. The plan will take into account on-road and off-road facilities, recreational facilities and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, as well as increasing safety for these users at intersections and crosswalks, installation of bicycle racks, pedestrian crossing signals and installing pavement markings and signage at key locations. A public hearing on the plan was scheduled for October to receive comments, concerns and contributions from Town residents and other interested parties.

Finally, the Chelmsford BPAC and the Town of Chelmsford wish to express their thanks to the Friends for their funding the placement of portable toilets along the trail at Cushing Place and at Pond Street/Heart Pond again this year.

WESTFORD

Not The Southern Terminus Anymore!

We are eagerly looking forward to the start of construction of Phase 2A this spring from the current southern terminus of the trail at the intersection of Routes 225/27!

In the meantime, maintaining Westford's mile and a half of rail trail has been a successful and positive cooperative effort between the Town and local volunteers. The Parks and Recreation Department, as well as Highway Department crews, have done a great job of mowing in the summer, sweeping to clear the trail of autumn's pine needles, acorns and leaves and clearing fallen debris after winter storms. The Westford volunteer BFRT Trail Stewards, working year round, keep the BFRT spruced up for all users. This group has expanded and now includes Linas Alinskas, Dave and Diane Earl, Ron and Mary Jo Johnson and Bob and Beth Shaw. We are also fortunate that the Westford Conservation Trust's Tuesday Trail Group periodically chooses the BFRT as a destination for their "trail" work.

We are grateful for the hard work done and active good will extended throughout the year by Town Staff, especially Pat Savage, Director of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery; Paul Starratt, Town Engineer and Chris Kluchman, Director of Land Use Management (& Westford liaisons for Phase 2A construction); Chip Barrett, Highway Superintendent; Jodi Ross, Town Manager, and the Westford Police Department. Kelly Ross, also a frequent dog walker on the BFRT, continues his essential service as liaison from the Board of Selectmen to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

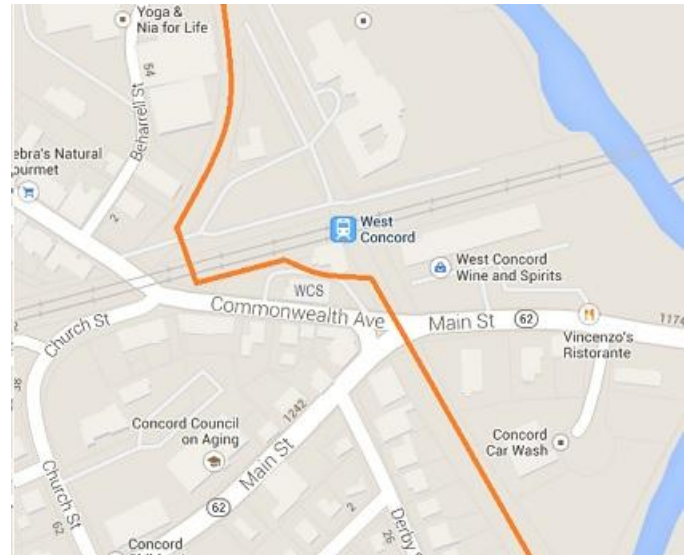
Chugging Along in Concord

Persistence paid off for future rail trail users in April 2014 when the Town of Concord finally heard from MassDOT/MBTA that an alternative crossing of the Fitchburg commuter line in West Concord was possible. Prior design plans had proposed that the trail follow the existing Commonwealth Avenue sidewalk, passing in front of the former West Concord Supermarket, requiring trail users to walk their bikes at this location.

The new crossing will follow the former railroad spur located behind Beharrell Street businesses, cross the MBTA/Town commuter parking lot driveway, then cross the commuter rails just west of the mini-high platforms where new crossing gates will be installed for trail users. The trail will continue through the parking lot between the new Woods Hill Restaurant (former WC Supermarket) and the West Concord Depot/Club Car Café into Junction Park, then cross Main Street/Rte. 62 and continue toward the Assabet River.

Last September two meetings were held with State employees to view the new crossing location and receive additional input on the crossing design. The first meeting was with MassDOT staff, Project Manager David Shedd and Complete Streets Engineer Lou Rubito, and focused on accessibility for all and safety features of the alignment. The second meeting with MBTA personnel focused on maintaining access for the West Concord Depot/Club Car Café tenant and cross easements between the West Concord Depot site and Wood Hill Restaurant site. With this information, BFRT Design Engineer Greenman Pedersen Inc. (GPI) and sub-consultant TranSystems (railroad engineering specialists) have begun 25% design drawings of the commuter crossing. Once the 25% design plan has been reviewed and accepted by railroad operations engineers and MassDOT engineers, design of Phase 2C should proceed without further delay.

Also this fall, the Town of Concord submitted an application to the Community Preservation Committee requesting an additional \$250,000 to be used toward further design of Phase 2B as needed and design and/or construction of the historical/cultural interpretive elements of the railroad in West Concord. The early concept for this historical/cultural interpretation was developed in concert with local railroad historian Henry Keutmann and Historical Commission member Geoffrey Taylor along with GPI, MassDOT and staff from Concord's Dept. of Planning & Land Management. The Concord Board of Selectmen submitted a letter to MassDOT last July presenting this initial concept to confirm that existing rails identified as an important aspect of the concept could remain in place.



Town staff will be working with State representatives this fall to prepare legislation to transfer the land adjacent to the prison on Commonwealth Avenue to the Town, as authorized at the December 2013 Special Town Meeting. This parcel will be used for municipal purposes, including parking and other amenities for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

The BFRT Advisory Committee has been working diligently on addressing requests from trail neighbors for fencing and other amenities, identifying historic artifacts to preserve and interpret and finalizing other aspects such as bridge designs. The Advisory Committee has also been gathering information regarding the long-term monitoring and maintenance of the trail, providing that information to the Division of Natural Resources and Concord Public Works. Once 75% design plans have been prepared, it will work with MassDOT Project Manager David Shedd to conduct an additional public hearing to provide the community with an update, because the last hearing was held in 2008.

Phase 2B Borings Progressing

There has been some progress on Phase 2B, which is primarily the one-mile stretch that includes a 300-foot bridge over Rte. 2 and Nashoba Brook. Since construction of the bridge dominates the project, Phase 2B is being transferred to the MassDOT Bridge Project Management section. Currently, additional borings for bridge piers and abutments are being completed, and one can expect to see drill rigs on site this fall. Once borings are completed a bridge type study and the 25% design will continue. The cost estimate will be updated as well.

Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail

PO Box 1192

Concord, MA 01742

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Come Celebrate the Trail's 5th Anniversary at the Friends' Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 16, 2014, 2 p.m.

Pedal Power Bike and Ski, 176 Great Road (Rte. 2A)

Show your support by joining today!

Members will receive newsletters, notices of upcoming trail-related events and opportunities to actively promote the rail trail through a variety of volunteer activities. The Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Membership fees and donations are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Yes! Sign me up as a supporter of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

- Individual Membership \$10
- Family Membership \$25
- Sponsor \$50
- Conductor \$100
- Engineer \$250
- RR Tycoon \$500+

*Sponsor and above receive complimentary BFRT cap or T-shirt.

First Name Last Name

Contact Name

Address 1 (Street Address, P.O. Box, company name, c/o)

Address 2 (Apartment, suite, unit, building, floor)

City State Zip

Daytime Phone Evening Phone

Email address

YES NO

I would like to receive the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail newsletter. YES NO

Send my newsletter via email (include email address above). YES NO

Send via postal mail. YES NO

I would like to receive email updates from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. YES NO

I am willing to receive phone calls from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. YES NO

I am a trail abutter. YES NO

I authorize the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail to use my name for promotional efforts to support the trail. YES NO

I would like to volunteer. YES NO

Gift: Cap T-Shirt (S / M / L / XL) No Thanks

Please enclose a check payable to Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and mail this form to:

Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
PO Box 1192
Concord, MA 01742

Or join on-line at www.BruceFreemanRailTrail.org



Letter From The President

Dear Friend of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail,

By now many of you are familiar with my asking you to provide written comments for the TIP* (the funding process for the BFRT) to support the BFRT. Since 2007 the Friends have been an active participant in the TIP process by attending meetings and advocating for the BFRT.

I believe that the combined impact of our consistent presence at meetings and the tsunami of positive public comments are among the most important reasons that Phases 2A, 2B and 2C have been placed on the TIP and scheduled for construction over the next three years. And Phase 2D can be placed on the TIP, too, when the initial design has been completed. For the most recent TIP 2014-2017, 109 comments regarding the BFRT were received: 103 supportive comments, 3 negative comments and 3 requests for information. All of these comments have been summarized and made part of the public record. To give you a flavor of the comments, I am sharing three of them with you.

"I'm so happy to read the news that you are funding construction of the BFRT through Concord (Phases 2A, 2B and 2C). Concord has many unpaved trails, most of them hilly, but it will be wonderful to have a trail for people who need a flat, even surface. Also, maybe I can use it to get around by bike, say, to Acton. I hope many people will use it to travel without cars, or for recreation... It's wonderful to see the state supporting transportation that has a lower carbon footprint!" Sue Felshin

"I have been riding and walking the Bruce Freeman Trail since it was constructed. I went from riding a hundred miles a year to 1000+. My health (physical and mental) has been improved tremendously. Extending the BFRT can only help others realize the benefits that I have... I hope that you can make this happen as soon as possible." James Kelsey

"We need a continuation of the already established and very well used Bruce Freeman Bike Path and it is a great way for bikers to travel, especially as it is safe for family biking. Please hear our plea for funds to be made available for such a good cause as this. So many other areas have bike paths available to their community so why not us." Daphne G. Freeman (note: Daphne is the widow of Bruce Freeman).

To see the full TIP comments and a list of those who commented on the BFRT please go to <http://bit.ly/1w1qDur>.

We hope you will support the BFRT in the spring of 2015 with additional comments and meeting attendance. Thank you so much.

Best Regards,

Tom Michelman

President, Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

P.S. Getting Phase 2D in Sudbury on the TIP (at least the first northernmost 0.5 mile stretch) should be relatively easy, if Sudbury moves along promptly with its 25% design, which was paid for in advance by a donation from the FBFRT. See separate Sudbury story.

*Here's a Tip...

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (Boston MPO or MPO) is the annual planning process and document which sets out the tentative schedule for construction of the Boston region's state and federally funded transportation projects over the next four years. A project that is in the TIP is pretty likely to be built; conversely a project that is not in the TIP is very unlikely to get built. The TIP process is both objective and political. Projects are scored, but there is also lots of room for subjective recommendations!



A determined "Tri" athlete demonstrating that the BFRT is a trail suitable for all ages and abilities! (Photo by Emily Teller)

A Special Thanks to...

Pedal Power Bike and Ski, Acton,
for hosting the annual meeting and their on-going support
Jet Mail, Hudson,
for their assistance in printing and mailing this newsletter
United Site Service, Chelmsford,
for helping sponsor toilets on the trail
Reasons to Be Cheerful, Concord,
for sponsoring our summer ice cream membership special
Bill Harmon, Westford,
for creating the Phase 2A map

Celebrating the 5th Anniversary of the Opening of Phase 1 & Friends Annual Meeting

When: Sunday, November 16, 2 p.m.

Where: Pedal Power Bike and Ski
176 Great Road (Rte. 2A), Acton

What: A celebration of the 5th anniversary of the opening of the BFRT! And a recap of the events of another successful year.

Light refreshments will be served.

Lowell to Complete Concord River Gateway Park

The City of Lowell received \$1,350,000 in PARC and Gateway funds to complete the Concord River Gateway Park, which is Phase IIIA of the Concord River Greenway in Lowell. The long-range vision for the park is a link from the Greenway to the BFRT near Showcase Cinemas.

Construction of this phase, from Centennial Island to the end of Jollene Dubner Park alongside the Rogers Street Bridge, is scheduled to begin this fall. Construction of the remainder is scheduled for 2015.

A new bridge at the end of the Lawrence Street section will cross over the Concord River to Centennial Island. From there, this multi-use recreational trail will travel on the Lawrence Street side of the Concord River to Jollene Dubner Park at Rogers Street, then cross the river and travel down the eastern bank of the river to Andover/Church Street.

Updates on construction progress will be posted on the Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust website: <http://on.fb.me/1wcBF8z>.



Thank You Volunteers!

The Friends Board of Directors would like to thank all the volunteers who helped with the trail in so many ways this year.

Gerri and Ernie Abrams, Dianne McAulay, Ted Bially, Mike Carignan, Pierre deVillier, Connie Farb, The Farrows, Mike Garvin, Tom Gazda, Melinda Goodick, Bob Hall, Bill Harman, Scottie Hastings, Jim Kelsey, Tom James, Mike Koziel, Bob Morse, Jennifer Pincus, Bob Schneider, Gordon Taylor and Betsy Taylor-Kennedy, Lisa Underkoffler, Westford Trail Stewards, Bob Wilson and Bob Zuffante

We apologize for anyone we might have inadvertently overlooked.



Dignitaries cut the ribbon to open Phase 1 in 2009.

Can Framingham Connect Two Trails?

Trail enthusiasts in Framingham may one day be able to connect the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail to the Cochituate Rail Trail system if supporters and the state can figure out how to blaze the half-mile that separates them.

The Cochituate Rail Trail is a multi-use system that will extend from the Village of Saxonville in Framingham to Natick Center, a distance of about 4 miles. The Framingham section of trail is almost complete. Preliminary (25 %) design for the Natick section was recently submitted to MassDOT.

The 1.5 mile-long Framingham section starts in the Village of Saxonville near the Sudbury River and Framingham High School. It travels southeast following Cochituate Brook and crosses Old Connecticut Path with a pedestrian-operated traffic signal. After passing Cochituate Brook Reservation, the trail crosses under the Massachusetts Turnpike, then under the Exit 13 ramp and terminates at Rte. 30 near Home Depot and Cochituate State Park.

In Natick, the proposed 2.5-mile section will start at Rte. 30 near Home Depot and Cochituate State Park. It will travel southeast along the shore of Lake Cochituate, cross the lake using an embankment, and cross Rte. 9 on the present rail bridge. It will end at the commuter rail station in Natick Center.

Just about a half mile beyond the northern terminus of the Cochituate Rail Trail in Framingham is an abandoned MWRA aqueduct now open for public use. That aqueduct connects to what could some day be the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail as it travels along the Sudbury River.

If anyone is interested in pursuing this possible link as an advocate, please contact John Stasik at jhstasik@verizon.net.

For Further Information, Visit us at:

www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org

[Facebook.com/BruceFreemanRailTrail](https://www.facebook.com/BruceFreemanRailTrail)

[Twitter.com/FriendsofBFRT](https://twitter.com/FriendsofBFRT)

Call or Email local representatives:

Acton:	Tom Michelman	978-580-6190	tmichelman@gmail.com
Carlisle:	Alan Cameron	978-369-2223	alancameron@comcast.net
Chelmsford:	Tom Gazda	978-250-0012	tgazdap5tmr@comcast.net
Concord:	Barbara Pike	978-369-0437	bbpike@aol.com
Framingham:	John Stasik	508-877-6771	jhstasik@verizon.net
Lowell:	Sharon Galpin	978-446-8906	sgalpin99@gmail.com
Sudbury:	Dick Williamson	978-618-5475	williamson@alum.mit.edu
Westford:	Emily Teller	978-692-6968	eteller@earthlink.net

Attend: Friends meetings

Send Email: info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org