



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Sudbury to Move Forward with Design Of Trail

The BFRT took a major step forward at Sudbury's spring Town Meeting, which voted overwhelmingly to approve \$150,000 in Community Preservation Funds for the rail trail. When added to the \$58,700 contributed by the Friends of the BFRT and another \$50,000 already in place, the total is about \$250,000. It is expected that these funds will be sufficient to pay for the initial (so-called 25% design) of all 4.4 miles of the BFRT from the Sudbury/Concord line south to the Mass. Central crossing near Rte. 20.

Len Simon, a member of the Board of Selectmen and former member of the Friends of the BFRT, said that the vote shows that the town is supportive of designing the rail trail. "Residents know how valuable a paved trail that meets state Department of Transportation standards can be to a community", he said.

At Sudbury Town Meeting the Council on Aging endorsed the MassDOT standard rail trail with a paved surface for safety reasons, so that seniors would have a firm, stable surface when using the rail trail. *(Editor's note: The FBFRT Board has never taken a stance on trail surface. Nonetheless the Board supports a trail surface that meets ADA requirements, which both a paved trail and an appropriately compacted stone dust trail would do.)*

"A standard rail trail is probably the largest step forward that a town can take in the way of an amenity for its residents," said Simon. "A standard rail trail is a linear park which, besides being used for recreation and bike riding, connects different parts of town. It's a place to meet your neighbors, a place to exercise."

With an overwhelmingly favorable Town Meeting vote for CPA funding and the successful culmination of the Friends' "Bring the Trail to Sudbury" campaign, Sudbury can move forward on the design of this section of the trail. This is a momentous step for the Town.

"Bring the Trail to Sudbury"

In June 2011, recognizing that movement toward a rail trail in Sudbury was going at a snail's pace, the Friends of the BFRT proposed to raise the funds to pay for the 25% design of the northernmost half mile in Sudbury. This move started a chain of events that culminated in the favorable Town Meeting vote. After a series of overwhelmingly positive advisory votes by Sudbury residents in spring 2012, the Sudbury Board of Selectmen voted to accept the donation from the Friends. In a symbolic event that signified three months of fund-raising and three years of hard work, the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail presented a check for \$58,700 to Sudbury's Board of Selectmen in April 2014.

The money was raised to pay for initial "25 percent" design of the northernmost half-mile of trail in Sudbury from the Sudbury/Concord line, continuing south and crossing Rte. 117 near Davis Field.

"This felt really good," said Tom Michelman, president of the Friends about handing over the money. "It felt like, 'OK, the town has decided it really wants to do this.' We've educated them and they think it's a great idea too. So, let's move full speed ahead."

And indeed Sudbury did. The Board of Selectmen went a further step forward by recommending that the design should be done, not only for the first half mile, but rather for the entire 4.4-mile length of the state-owned rail bed.

The Friends started the "Bring the Trail to Sudbury" campaign to raise the money last September. With the help of letters to the editor in numerous local newspapers and a brochure sent to households in Sudbury, the majority of money came in by mid-December. In addition to donations from more than 300 individuals, grants were received from the Charles River Wheelmen, The Sudbury Foundation, and the Steinberg-Lalli Charitable Foundation.

Michelman said he knew Sudbury residents would be supportive, but he didn't realize it would happen so quickly. "We didn't do a lot of begging. We put it out there and asked and people responded," he said. "People were very generous. They get it." And the voters also got it.



Presenting the check to the Town of Sudbury after the successful "Bring the Trail to Sudbury" campaign. (left to right: Selectman John Drobinski, FBFRT President Tom Michelman, and Selectmen Len Simon, Larry O'Brien & Chuck Woodard).



State Senators Michael Barrett (3rd Middlesex) [Right] and Jamie Eldridge (Middlesex & Worcester) discuss rail trails and transportation issues at Sudbury Selectmen meeting March 11, 2014

Phase 2A - Design Complete, Advertising for Construction Next

The 100% Phase 2A design was submitted to MassDOT by engineering consultant GPI on behalf of Acton, Carlisle, and Westford in March 2014. That means the design is basically finished for Phase 2A, which is the 4.842-mile segment of the trail starting at the current southern terminus in Westford, and traveling south and east through Carlisle to Teamworks in East Acton. To put the 100% design submission into perspective, it is one of four design submissions MassDOT requires, which are 25% design, 75% design, 100% design, and Plans, Specification and Estimates (PS&E). Details about the project development design guidelines can be found here <http://bit.ly/1gXOMCx>.

The Phase 2A design has a 12' wide asphalt surface, with 1' to 3' wide shoulders. Some parts of the trail will be narrower to provide more space for the local turtle population. Where it can be accommodated (East Acton) there will be a 6' wide stone dust parallel jogging path. Specifications have changed since Phase 1 was designed, so where timber rail fence is needed it will be lower, only 3.5'. Find the 100% design here: <http://bit.ly/1hYO1t2>. Now the goal is to start advertising for construction as soon as possible. However, a lot more needs to get done before that can happen.

Utility coordination was a particularly complicated issue where the bridge will be constructed over Great Road (Rte. 2A). In this location there are electric, gas, telephone, fire alarm, water lines and wetlands to deal with. In addition an agreement / license between MassDOT and the towns over rights and responsibilities for the right-of-way needs to be ironed out.

The state environmental review and local environmental permitting is very important. A MEPA site walk was held in Acton on May 7. After the walk, the state MEPA office asked for comments by May 13th. The FFBRT provided its comments as did several members and contacts. We thank those of you who took the time to write.

Local environmental permitting went quickly and smoothly in Carlisle and Westford. In both towns the trail is nothing but a straight shot in a section where trail construction is not complicated. The Acton portion crosses streams, goes over a long causeway, has the bridge over Great Road, and is nearby to wetlands for a good portion of its length (not surprising for a historic railroad route that preferred flat, low-lying stretches). The Acton Conservation Commission per its mission has closely scrutinized the design, and will issue a detailed Order of Conditions as part of the permitting process, which minimizes and mitigates environmental impacts.

Advertising Phase 2A for construction by September 30, 2014, the end of the federal fiscal year, is of utmost importance. Should this deadline be missed, Phase 2A will lose its funding allocation, and the project would have to reapply. The FFBRT will monitor and advocate as necessary, and when appropriate ask you as Friends of the BFRT to submit public comments. We all look forward to the groundbreaking ceremony in late 2014 or early 2015.

Phase 2B Inching Its Way Along

While Phase 2A is getting much attention as deadlines press upon it, Phase 2B (primarily a bridge over Rte. 2) is making slow progress, but progress nonetheless. The agreement with prime contractor AECOM had expired and was renegotiated. Further, because of MassDOT staff constraints, the review of the preliminary bridge design, which is generally done internally, has been assigned to the engineering consultant Boston Bridge.

A geotechnical review will take place within MassDOT and is expected to be completed at the end of May. After these tasks are done, the 25% design will be finished, and a public hearing will be held, keeping the project on track for 2017 construction. In addition, Concord has allocated \$250,000 in Community Preservation Funds for further design.

ROW & Benches in Westford

Westford officials continue to work hard to ensure that BFRT Phase 2A in Westford proceeds smoothly. They are working to finalize the town's lease with MassDOT. Over the past year, Westford staff, along with neighboring BFRT partners Carlisle and Acton, have negotiated right-of-way agreements with the state and are currently reviewing any potential impacts on the environment as the trail is constructed south into Acton from the current trail terminus at Routes 27 and 225 in Westford.

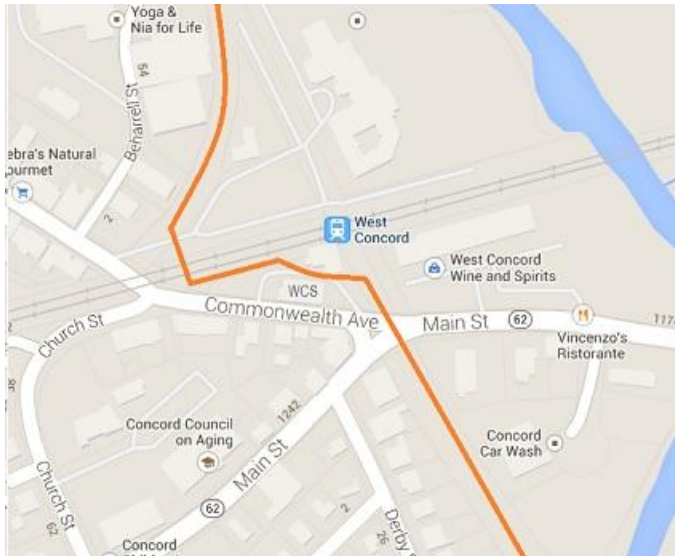
The progress of Westford's bench and kiosk project has been delayed at the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. MassDOT Rail Division is waiting to get a judgment from Massachusetts Outdoor Advertising Board about whether placing the sponsor's name on the kiosk would constitute advertising. If so, what would be the implications for receiving approval to install the kiosk in the BFRT's Right of Way? Hopefully this issue will be resolved and installation of the benches and kiosks can proceed this year.



A serious trail use problem is exposed. Hard core tricyclists, like the one shown here, are powering down the trail disregarding other trail users.

Forward Progress in Concord

After much persistence from the Town of Concord, in April MassDOT/MBTA agreed to allow a new crossing of the commuter rail tracks in West Concord. Previous design plans had called for the trail to follow the sidewalk in front of the former West Concord Supermarket, where trail users would have had to walk their bikes.



The new crossing will follow the railroad spur, cross the MBTA parking lot driveway, and have a new crossing gate just west of the mini-high platforms. The trail will then follow an easement along the rear of the former West Concord Supermarket parking lot into Junction Park, cross Main Street (Rte. 62) at the existing pedestrian signal, and travel south toward the Assabet River. (See diagram.)

Receiving permission for this new crossing, a great improvement over the crossing included in the 25% design, is the culmination of months of work and negotiations by Town staff and state legislators. Design of Phase 2C of the trail was on hold pending this approval and now will proceed without further delay.

This spring Concord's Town Meeting approved \$250,000 in Community Preservation Act (CPA) Funds for use toward the design of Phase 2B, primarily the bridge over Rte. 2. Some of these CPA funds will be used to incorporate the new MBTA crossing into the design of Phase 2C. Town Meeting also rejected overwhelmingly an article submitted by citizen petition that would have required additional studies that would have duplicated those already completed or planned. Because passage of this article would have introduced unnecessary delays in the trail design, the Friends had recommended a "no" vote on this article. The Friends are very appreciative of all who came to Town Meeting to show their support for the rail trail.

Last December's Special Town Meeting authorized the Board of Selectmen to seek legislation to transfer land adjacent to the prison on Commonwealth Ave. to the Town. This parcel will be used for municipal purposes, including parking and amenities for the BFRT.

As Concord moves toward completion of the 75% design of Phase 2C through West Concord center, Town staff and the BFRT Advisory Committee have been focused 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 started a dialogue with the Natural Resources Division and Public Works Department regarding the long term monitoring and maintenance of the trail.

Our Own Little Arciological Dig...



This historic retaining wall next to the tracks in West Concord was likely built around 1900 when the nearby yard trackage was expanded.



A portion of the wall further down the track was recently excavated revealing the entire wall down to its foundation.

Friends Support Fenton Talk

Last fall the Friends of BFRT collaborated with Community Health Network Area 15 to present a program by public health and transportation consultant Mark Fenton, "*Creating Healthy Communities with Designs that Stick.*"

Fenton described the elements of healthy communities, including intentionally mixing land uses so residents can make more trips by foot or bicycle, a comprehensive network of



Friends Board member Barbara Pike and walkable communities expert Mark Fenton at the workshop.

facilities for walking, biking, and transit that connects to one another, designs that enhance walking, cycling and transit, and features such as signs and painted sidewalks that make all users, regardless of age and physical ability, feel and be safe from traffic.

He also issued a call to action, calling on citizens to speak up, embrace the vision of environmental changes, and participate in healthy planning and zoning in their community. One example he used was the need for new construction site designs to require a multi-modal transportation analysis, not just car traffic studies.

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



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US POSTAGE
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PERMIT NO.6
HUDSON, MA 01749

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Conductor \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineer \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> 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 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

You may also join on-line at:

www.BruceFreemanRailTrail.org

Chelmsford Keeps BPAC Busy

The Chelmsford Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) appreciates the Friends' sponsoring two portable toilets along the trail again this season. As in previous years, one unit is placed at Cushing Place near the kiosk and the other is at Pond Street in the parking lot. The BPAC also wishes to thank United Site Services for providing the units at a 50% discount from their standard rate.

The BPAC and the Town of Chelmsford express their deep appreciation to Tom Murphy and his staff at Landscaping Unlimited for the generous donation of time, staff and equipment to assist the Town with the spring sweeping of the rail trail. Tom and three staff members, together with a few volunteers, completed the sweeping of the Chelmsford section of the trail in mid-May. This section of the trail is now in great condition for all cycling and pedestrian activities.

BPAC is also working with the Town of Chelmsford and the Chelmsford DPW to address short-term trail maintenance needs such as sweeping and mowing of the trail shoulders. Long-term maintenance issues are also being assessed, in particular trail surface damage caused by root infiltration into the trail base and

ongoing work to remove dead and dangerous limbs and trees overhanging the trail.

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, town and recreational facilities and the BFRT. It will recommend locations for adding sidewalks and suggest bicycle routes to reach various town and recreational facilities in Chelmsford as well as attractions that are outside of the town's borders. The plan will focus on increasing safety at intersections and crosswalks, installing bicycle racks, evaluating pedestrian crossing signals, and installing pavement markings and signage at key locations.

With the completion of Phase I of the Underground Utility project in Chelmsford Center, wood utility poles were removed late last summer. In particular, the pole that had obscured the pedestrian crossing signal linking the trail on the north side heading to the Rte. 3 terminus is now gone. This will help pedestrians and trail users to see more clearly when it is safe to use the crosswalk. For the highest level of safety for all, trail users are requested to cross only on the direction of this signal, and cyclists should walk bicycles in the crosswalk.

A Few Words from Our President

Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail,

It has been a very eventful last half year for the BFRT and for me. You can read about all our victories and progress in Sudbury, Concord, Acton, Carlisle and Westford elsewhere in this newsletter, and I will soon get back to this delightful news, but first about me.

My eventful half-year included starting a new job in December, becoming engaged for marriage in February, and finding a rental home in Arlington in April (where my fiancé Lisa and I will move in August). The obvious consequence is when the Phase 2A groundbreaking takes place and construction is completed, I will not be living in Acton and not be able to access the BFRT from my current abode a scant quarter mile away from the trail. This, not surprisingly, leads to reflection of why am I doing this? Why do I spend many hours volunteering for the BFRT, and will I continue to do so? To answer the latter, with what I hope is disappointing news to BFRT opponents, is I will continue to work on advancing the BFRT and am happy to continue in my capacity as president. But why?

I will be moving to Arlington, home of the Minuteman Bikeway. Did I have anything to do with this great amenity? No. On Mother's Day, I rode on the Nashua River Rail Trail, immersing myself in the most glorious weather of the spring. Did I have anything to do with the design and construction of this beautiful trail? No. The answer to "why" now became obvious. Unknown and countless others have paid it forward to advocate for a rail trail; I am paying forward with the BFRT. Just because I will not be living in Acton is irrelevant. I have adopted the BFRT, and it will always be first in my heart no matter where I reside.

Many of you also have volunteered, paid it forward, and adopted the BFRT. And for that your community should be grateful. I certainly am. I am grateful for all the volunteers writing letters, putting out signs, attending meetings, talking up neighbors, handing out literature that resulted in resounding victories at Concord and Sudbury Town Meetings. I am grateful for the thoughtful responses to my request for comments on the Acton ENF, which I made on Sunday night and were due on Tuesday. I am grateful to the dozen or so volunteers who created and implemented the Bring the Trail to Sudbury (BTTS) marketing campaign (e.g., mailing, websites, letters-to-the-editor, accounting, etc.) and for the hundreds of individuals who donated and three non-profits who wrote us large checks (Charles River Wheelman, The Sudbury Foundation, and the Steinberg-Lalli Charitable Foundation) for the BTTS, and thereby catalyzed Sudbury to move forward with design on 4.4 miles of the BFRT after years of frustrating delay.

I am grateful to all who have attended long, public meetings and showed their support by commenting on an issue, or just sitting in the crowd with a BFRT cap. I am grateful to our legislators yet again who worked successfully to include \$1,000,000 in design funding for Phase 2B (e.g., the Rte. 2 bridge) and \$700,000 for purchase of the CSX rail bed in Sudbury into the State Transportation Bond Bill. I am grateful to the Board and to members of BF_Execs (our insider listserv of hardcore supporters – contact me if you are interested in being a BF_Exec) for all of their hard work. Most of all I am grateful to the wonderful, thoughtful people I get to volunteer with and the lifelong friends I have made being a Friend of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

Sincerely,

Tom Michelman, President – Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail

Upcoming Community Events & Volunteer Opportunities

June

20th - Lowell Greenway tour. Meet at the entrance to the Lowell Cemetery (Lawrence Street entrance) at 9 a.m. Please RSVP to gwen@lowelllandtrust.org

21st - Summer Solstice Bike Ride, 6 p.m. Chelmsford Center for the Arts (formerly Old Town Hall), 4 North Road (Rte. 4)

July

4th - Concord Picnic in the Park (Emerson Playground)

4th - Sudbury 4th of July Parade

Sudbury Summer Concerts, 5 Mondays
starting July 7th, Haskell Field

**September 27th - Greater Lowell Community
Foundation Bike-a-Thon**

We hope you will join us and/or help us out at one or more of these events.

See www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/volunteer for up-to-date volunteer opportunities. Or contact your town's representative listed below and to the right.



It doesn't take much in the way of warm weather to get folks out on the trail! Users, on a rare nice day this early spring, are caught on camera enjoying themselves.



Thanks for your continued support!

Pedal Power Bike and Ski, Acton,
for hosting the annual meeting and the many other things you do to support the trail!

Jet Mail, Hudson,
for assisting in printing and mailing this newsletter

United Site Service, Chelmsford,
for helping sponsor toilets on the trail

A Tidbit Of Rail History...



Still standing guard over the intersection of the RR and the road to the Nashoba Sportsman's Club in Acton, this old Penn Central sign identified that particular crossing by the number shown. Penn Central took over the line in the 1960s.

For Further Information, Visit us at:

www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org

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

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

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Attend: Friends meetings

Send Email: info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org