



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Construction on Phase 2A Making Visible Progress

Construction of Phase 2A, which starts at Rte. 225 and Rte. 27 in Westford and continues through Carlisle and most of Acton, continues to be on schedule. Early project work included marking the limits of the work area, installing erosion controls and silt filters, removing rails and ties and starting bridge rehabilitation work.

The first phase includes seven bridges, six of which are historic. Each of them requires several steps: removing old surface hardware, removing and storing the top course of native granite blocks, cleaning and repairing the main steel beams, installing an additional support beam parallel to the historic beams, painting all steel with a long-lasting protective multilayer coating, resetting the top course of stone and casting an 8-inch-thick reinforced concrete deck on the surface. These, along with the new Rte. 2A (Great Road) bridge, constitute the major work of the project. Acton is fortunate to have preserved the historic stone abutments of this section of the railroad.

As work continues, the contractor, SPS New England, typically has 10 to 20 staff workers on site every day for much of the two-year duration of the project. Project Manager Brad Lubenau also manages subcontractors who complete specialized work: tree work, erosion controls, track removals and bridge painting.

SPS New England has substantial experience with bridge work. Recent related projects include bridgework on the Blackstone River Greenway completed for DCR and bridge rehabilitation underway on a rail trail in Amesbury.

As with any project that involves excavation, there have been some surprises. One of these was the extra effort required to replace the 100-year-old 16-inch-diameter cast iron pipe that is part of the Concord water system and runs under the right of way near Rte. 2A.

The removed rails have been transferred to Massachusetts Coastal Railroad ownership, as required by the State contract. Some of them will be reused and others recycled. Ties have been sent to a licensed facility in Maine, which will use them for fuel.

Major project work planned for this fall includes completing the Mechanically Stabilized Earth precast walls for the Rte. 2A bridge crossing, completing the supporting substructure for this overhead bridge, starting the surface leveling needed to set the trail width and matching the trail surface to the bridge surfaces at each end of each small bridge.

Construction will continue through the building season of 2017, with the top structure work to be done on the Rte. 2A crossing, street crossing safety markings, final sub-surface preparation and trail surface finishing. The contract calls for substantial completion for the fall of 2017 with punchlist item completion through early 2018.

Sudbury Design Progresses

The engineering design firm VHB, which has been hired by Sudbury to design Phase 2D of the BFRT, has set December 2016 as the goal for submitting the 25% design to MassHighway. This phase will run from the Concord/Sudbury line to Rte. 20 and add 4.6 miles to the trail.

Sudbury held an informal planning session (design charette) on August 25 to give residents an opportunity to register their suggestions. Town officials, representatives from VHB and about 20 residents attended the meeting. The goal of the session was to give VHB input on what the portion of the trail in Sudbury should look like including viewing areas, benches, kiosks, maps, historical markers and parking. In response to concerns expressed about the effect of the trail on wetlands, VHB representative Traci Lenhardt said the firm will be working closely with the Town Conservation Commission.

A 40B housing development has been proposed for a site abutting the BFRT and just north of Hudson Road. This controversial project is opposed by Town officials who have hired a lawyer to represent the Town. A well-organized citizens group has been vocal in opposition to the project too. A major concern for BFRT users crossing Hudson Road would be the addition of project traffic to an already congested and dangerous intersection.

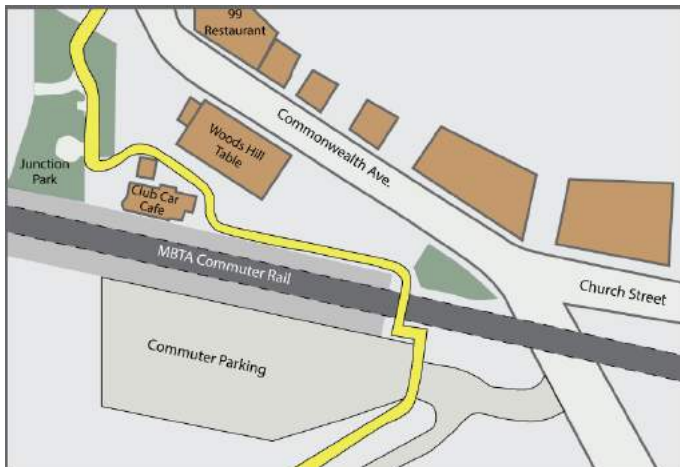


Concord's Phase 2C Up Next

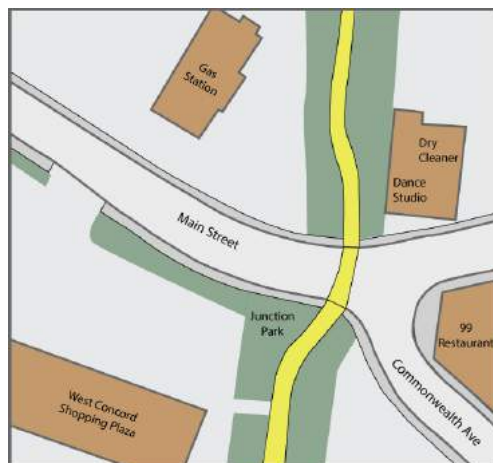
Phase 2C in Concord is moving forward! The project has been advertised for construction as of August 27th. Bid proposals on this 2.8-mile section are expected to be opened this November with the contract finalized over the winter to allow construction to begin in the spring/summer of 2017. Many thanks to Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning in Concord, for her diligence in completing the myriad details that led to issuance of the Certificate of Right-of-Way (ROW) and the timely bid submission.

In August the Metropolitan Planning Organization voted to amend the Transportation Improvement Plan to include full funding for Phase 2C of the BFRT; additional funds were required to cover increased costs due to changes in the design (which include a new crossing of the Fitchburg commuter rail and redesign of the Main Street/Commonwealth Ave. intersection with new traffic signals) as well as inflation from the original estimate.

Some ROW items remain. A Town Meeting vote, expected in December, will be required for an easement over the Powder Mill Road (ROW) for a guard rail. The final transfer of State Department of Corrections land to the Town for the parking area off Commonwealth Avenue opposite MCI-Concord still needs to be completed by the Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance. Although legislation was passed at the end of July and signed by the Governor in early August, the state still needs to complete the process for transfer.



The new trail alignment across the MBTA Fitchburg Commuter Rail line near the existing mini-high platforms. After crossing the tracks, the trail will run between the new Woods Hill Table restaurant and the West Concord Depot and then continue through Junction Park to Main Street.



The new alignment for the Commonwealth Avenue and Main Street intersection, which creates a "T-shaped" intersection that will enhance safety for trail users and pedestrians as well as facilitate traffic flow.

Phase 2B: The Long & Winding Road

Dear Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail,

MassDOT is managing the very complex 25% design of Phase 2B, which includes the bridge over Rte. 2 and connects the trail between Acton and Concord. It started on the project with submittal of a Project Information Form for Project 606223 bit.ly/madot2b in July 2010. By October 2011 (or earlier, see October 2011 meeting agenda bit.ly/2Bagenda2011 and article from the Friends Fall 2011 newsletter, bit.ly/fallnews2011) the pre-25% design work had commenced. The pace of the 25% design process has not been a huge issue for much of the six years because Phase 2C construction was not impending and Phase 2B was not kicked off the TIP for a lack of 25% design. We thought the public hearing that follows the submission would actually happen by now as the 25% design package was received by MassDOT from their contractors on February 26, 2016, and ROW plans were submitted on May 9, 2016. This should be unmitigated good news, but it isn't.

The 25% design plans were all set to be released for a public meeting, except for one last hiccup related to the State Police horse stables off Wetherbee Street in Acton. The State Police corrals are located on the right-of-way and were built there without permission/license from the Rail Division of the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT). The Acton paddock is where all the State Police horses are stabled, and the State Police are justifiably concerned about interactions between the horses and the public.

On September 29th there was a meeting to discuss the issue with representatives from the State Police, MassDOT, EOT, Town of Concord (who is the Town lead for the Phase 2B design), AECOM (consulting engineer) and the FBFRT attending. All were in agreement on a course of action: move the trail as far to the east as possible on the 66' ROW to allow the corral to stay in place and for the Phase 2B to stay within the ROW. The State Police will have to make a formal request for a license to use the ROW, but that can be done in parallel to the 25% design process.

MassDOT directed AECOM to make the design modifications, and the 25% Design Public Hearing has been scheduled for November 17th at 7 p.m. at the Harvey Wheeler Community Center, 1276 Main St., Concord.

Phase 2B is on the 2018 TIP and requires 100% design completed and advertisement of construction by September 30, 2018. So as long as Phase 2B 25% design and public meeting are completed by the end of the year, all should be good. MassDOT is very aware of the TIP funding schedule and has been very responsive, including reaching out to me and discussing the status in detail, as well as providing a plan to keep the Friends apprised if there any other additional hiccups that need to be addressed (and that the FBFRT can potentially advocate for).

I look forward to seeing many of you at the 25% Design Public Hearing on November 17.

Sincerely,

Tom Michelman
President, Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail

Lowell: Making a Connection



This view looks at the Rogers Street Bridge from a recently completed section of the Concord River Greenway Park in Lowell. Design work has progressed on the remaining sections of the CRG, and a portion of the remaining work should go out to bid in 2017. The long range vision of the greenway includes a link to the BFRT at Showcase Cinemas in Lowell.

Thanks Again for Your Support:

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

Unobtrusive Progress in Framingham

Framingham has been working on the BFRT in a relatively low-profile manner, but progress is being made.

On July 19th, an informal working group convened by Framingham Town Manager Bob Halpin met to discuss how the BFRT could become a reality in Framingham. Attendees included Marianne Iarossi, Senior Planner - Town of Framingham; Chris Walsh - State Representative (Framingham); Kerry Reed - Framingham DPW; Laurie Lee - Framingham Board of Selectmen; Bill Hanson - Framingham Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee; and Tom Michelman - FBFRT.

The big hurdle for the Framingham portion of the trail is acquisition of the dormant right-of-way (ROW) from CSX, the railroad company that owns the ROW. In April 2015 representatives for Sudbury, Framingham, MassDOT and CSX met to walk the Phase 3 dormant (i.e., tracks and ties removed) ROW and re-start discussion on potential acquisition of the ROW from CSX. An updated appraisal was required and was performed by Colliers International. Colliers used as a basis an “across the fence” property value and then a 1.2 multiplier for the “plus corridor factor” (apparently a standard methodology for valuing ROWs) for the 3.37 miles / 31.32-acre Framingham corridor. This resulted in a sticker shock appraisal of \$4,020,000 for the Framingham portion of the trail.

Since the July stakeholder meeting, Framingham has coordinated with the Trust for Public Land and the Town of Sudbury on next steps which include beginning negotiations with CSX perhaps as early as this fall. Given the steep acquisition costs, Framingham is investigating resources to help fund this effort. The Town has explored re-allocating some unused federal earmarks, but has not made substantial progress and is negotiating a lower acquisition cost than the appraised value. Framingham is also partially hamstrung by the lack of passing Community Preservation Act implementation, which other towns have utilized to pay for a portion of their trails.

While the FBFRT is financially sound, \$4 million dollars of fund raising is a couple orders of magnitude more than our most successful fund-raising campaign, which was to kick-start the 25% design in Sudbury. If anyone has any suggestions of how to fundraise such a large hunk of money or better yet has a few million dollars burning a hole in their pocket, then please do reach out to us. In the interim, the FBFRT stands ready to fundraise tens of thousands of dollars (e.g., for feasibility studies, offsetting design costs) and advocate for state procurement of the ROW.

Westford Gets New Trail Kiosk



The Friends thank **Circle Health/Lowell General Hospital** for their generous donation that enabled us to order an informational kiosk near the Routes 27/225 intersection. We also very much appreciate the **Westford Parks and Recreation staff and workers** who did a fantastic job of making the area around the kiosk trail-user friendly and installing the kiosk itself! Visit our website later this fall to see the two benches they will install on either side of this kiosk as well as two more benches further north on the BFRT!

Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail

PO Box 1192

Concord, MA 01742

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Come See the New Construction

at the **Friends' Annual Meeting**
Sunday, 11/20, 1 p.m., Pedal Power Bike & Ski,
176 Great Road (Rte. 2A), Acton

Come Support The Trail

at the 25% **Design Public Hearing for Phase 2B** on
Thursday, November 17, 7 p.m., Harvey Wheeler
Community Center, 1276 Main St., Concord

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.

Send my newsletter via email (include email address above).

Send via postal mail.

I would like to receive email updates from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

I am willing to receive phone calls from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

I am a trail abutter.

I would like to volunteer.

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 Addresses Safety and Maintenance

The Chelmsford Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) has continued to work with the Chelmsford DPW, the Town Engineer and the Chelmsford Police Department to address safety and maintenance issues along the trail in Chelmsford.



Chelmsford DPW removing debris and small dead trees. BPAC appreciates the multi-day efforts of the DPW staff to maintain the trail in Chelmsford.

Last summer the BPAC purchased and installed signs at numerous locations along the trail instructing trail users on how to report non-emergency trail issues to the town. Chelmsford uses the “See Click Fix” app and a link on the town website home page at townofchelmsford.us to “Report a Concern” about the trail as well as other issues in the town. This feature has proved to be quite popular. The feature worked well early in September when a windstorm knocked down a few trees along the trail. The same day reports enabled the DPW to respond rapidly to remove the fallen trees and restore safe passage along the trail. The sign also includes a QR code that enables a person to access the link directly with their smartphone while on the trail to report an issue. In addition there is also an available app for mobile phones to enable reporting issues in real time.

A number of walking, riding and running events were held in 2016 on the trail. A sampling of groups having events on the trail this year included: the PMC Kids Ride, Live for Liv, the MS Ride and PAWs New England. The BPAC worked with all groups to ensure that they used the trail safely, respected the property of abutters and obtained the required permission to use the Byam School property to stage events.

Work is continuing on a memorial to Carol Clevon along the trail at Cushing Place at the Art Walk. One concept is to turn this into a park area along the trail with additional amenities and would include a memorial plaque with a tribute to Carol as well as an interpretive sign giving the history of the Framingham & Lowell railroads. The process is moving slowly due to a plan to redevelop the Cushing Place site into housing consistent with the Chelmsford Center Village Master Plan. If approved, major improvements to the area adjacent to the trail would improve parking and traffic flow as well as improve landscaping at the Art Walk grassy area along the trail. The project is pending approvals and permits.

The Chelmsford BPAC conducted the annual count at the Chelmsford Artwalk/Cushing Place on Saturday, September 10. The day started cloudy and weather conditions varied from clouds to brighter skies with only an occasional sprinkle before turning into a beautiful late summer day. The total count was 1,141 trail users. Bicyclists comprised about 57% of trail users while walkers

and runners represented about 39% of users, which is consistent with past results. The number of cyclists not wearing helmets was approximately 19%, slightly lower than in 2015 and an improvement from around 25% in 2014 and prior years. All cyclists are encouraged to wear a helmet when riding on the trail and on roads. Volunteer counters included Jim Kelsey, Sharon Galpin, Bob Morse, Dennis McNurland, Melinda Goodick, Bob Schneider and Tom Gazda.



Grist Mill Apartments At Beaver Brook, a new apartment building project, is being planned for this area near Cushing Place in Chelmsford Center. (View is from near the kiosk.) The project will include reconstruction of the BFRT parking lot with associated landscaping and lighting. The developers will also landscape and maintain the section of trail in front of the retaining wall with the Art Walk murals that separates the trail from Ginger Ale Plaza.

As recommended in the 2010 Chelmsford Master Plan, the development of a detailed Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Town is being undertaken by the BPAC. The committee solicited input from residents, bicyclists, walkers, runners, businesses and those working in and commuting into and through Chelmsford. The plan has been completed and a link will be available on the Town BPAC webpage. Comments and suggestions for future updates may be emailed to Chelmsford.bpac@gmail.com.

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 in 2016.

AART Groundbreaking



Tom Kelleher, President of the Assabet River Rail Trail (left) with local and state government representatives at the groundbreaking in Maynard. This new section of the ARRT is 3.5 miles, running from the South Acton MBTA station, through downtown Maynard, ending at the Stow town line.

Carlisle: "It's About Time"

Over 50 people stopped by the Friends' booth at Carlisle's Old Home Day at the end of June. With all of the interest in the construction schedule, FBFRT Board Member Alan Cameron reported that the most heard comment was, "It's about time!"



This photo was taken from a point on the trail a few feet from the access path in Acton, looking north toward Carlisle's beautiful 847.2 feet of tree lined trail.

Friends Annual Meeting

Come see Phase 2A progress!

Sunday, November 20, 2016

1 p.m. Walk to view progress of the trail

2 p.m. Refreshments and meeting

Pedal Power Bike and Ski

176 Great Road (Rte. 2A), Acton



One of six small historic bridges being rebuilt over brooks and streams in Acton. The top course of original stones is being reset onto the new deck..

Photo Credits!



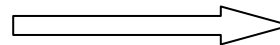
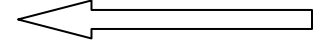
Larry Bruns, Alan Cameron, Bill Davies, Doug Deyoe, Dennis McNurland, Judy Perrin, Emily Teller, Bob Schneider

Take a video tour of the BFRT!

Join Acton TV's George Cox and cameraman Mark Duci on an entertaining 6-minute "Talk of the Town" video tour of the BFRT in Acton and Westford. Board members Emily Teller and Joyce Reischutz provide the commentary during this documentary that includes sections of the completed trail in Westford as well as construction in Acton, including the bridge over Rte. 2A. This video, which first aired on September 12, 2016, can be viewed on-line at https://youtu.be/i38_2ejoJKA



The Friends, with help from a generous gift from the O'Donnell-Wieselquist family, donated a Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon and signage to the Town of Westford. This updated equipment will enable safer travel on the BFRT at the Rte. 27 road crossing.



FBFRT Board member Dennis McNurland and Chelmsford BPAC member Tom Gazda installing new parking signs at Cross Point Towers in Lowell. They were joined by FBFRT Board member Sharon Galpin.



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:

President:	Tom Michelman	978-580-6190	tmichelman@gmail.com
Acton:	Paul Malchodi	978-406-7264	paulmalchodi@gmail.com
Carlisle:	Alan Cameron	978-369-2223	alancameron@comcast.net
Chelmsford:	Dennis McNurland	978-251-0777	djmcn192@gmail.com
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