



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Concord Breaks Ground

The official groundbreaking ceremony for Phase 2C in Concord was held on July 14 at Brookside Square in West Concord. The overcast skies and threat of rain did not dampen the enthusiasm of rail trail supporters who came to celebrate the start of construction of this phase of the rail trail, which will run from near Commonwealth Avenue to Powder Mill Road. State Senator Mike Barrett acted as Master of Ceremonies and introduced speakers who represented the State, MassDOT, the Town and the Friends. Speeches were followed by the “ground breaking” and serving of cake.



Performing the groundbreaking were Select Board Chairwoman Jane Hotchkiss, Paul Stedman of MassDOT, State Senator Mike Barrett, Concord’s Director of Planning and Land Management Marcia Rasmussen, Barbara Pike of the Friends of BFRT, State Representative Cory Atkins and State Senator Jamie Eldridge.

Although this phase is not scheduled for completion until spring 2019, signs of progress can be seen from various intersections along the trail. Rails and ties were removed last spring and summer, and erosion barriers were installed. The Powder Mill Road culvert/tunnel was replaced during July and August, with construction completed in time for the start of the new school year (photos on next page). The Assabet River Bridge, a pre-fabricated steel structure, was installed in September (photo right).



And of course, there was cake!

Also the base coat pavement has been installed on much of the trail, including the new parking lot on Commonwealth Avenue near the Rotary. Construction is continuing on the spur which leads the trail to the crossing of the MBTA tracks. A new set of dedicated railroad crossing gates adjacent to the two high-level passenger platforms at the train station will enable trail users to cross the tracks safely.

A schematic diagram for the route of the trail through West Concord village can be seen here: <http://bit.ly/2itdJIN>
Construction updates are available at <http://bit.ly/2zyy3FU>.

Please note: The trail is an active construction zone, and it is unsafe to enter.



The new bridge over the Assabet River in West Concord was installed in September. It is not yet open to the public.

Not yet!

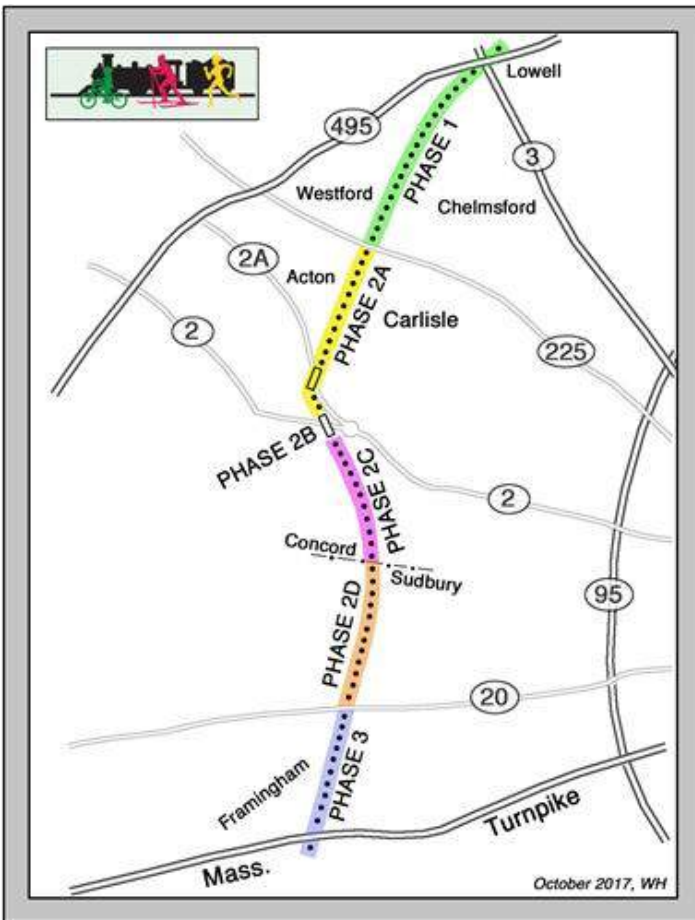
Phase 2A in Westford, Carlisle and Acton is scheduled to open in spring 2018. Phase 2C in Concord is scheduled to open in spring 2019. Until they are open it is unsafe to enter the active construction areas.





The new tunnel at Powder Mill Road was completed at the end of August, replacing the old corrugated steel tube. The new tunnel was painted this fall. Work continues on the ramp from the road to the trail. Landscaping is expected to be installed in 2018. A 360-degree view of the tunnel is available here: <http://bit.ly/2gEjgph>.

The Phases Explained



Phase 1 (6.8 miles in Lowell, Chelmsford and Westford) opened in 2009.

Phase 2A (4.9 miles in Westford, Carlisle and Acton) is scheduled to open in spring 2018.

Phase 2B (Approx. 0.8 miles: Bridge over Rte. 2) is currently being designed.

Phase 2C (3.0 miles in Concord) is scheduled to open in spring 2019.

Phase 2D (4.5 miles in Sudbury) is currently being designed.

Phase 3 (4.8 miles in Sudbury and Framingham) Right of Way is still owned by the railroad company CSX.

Three Big Steps in Sudbury

Guest Commentary, by Len Simon

Sudbury has taken three big steps toward advancing Phase 2D of the BFRT. First, 2017 Town Meeting demonstrated continuing enthusiasm for the BFRT by voting overwhelmingly for \$330,000 in funding for the 75% design. This accomplished twin goals: ensuring there will be no gap between finalizing the 25% design and starting work on the 75% design and demonstrating Sudbury's commitment to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) that the Town firmly supports the project.

Second, on May 25 the full Board of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) voted to include the Sudbury section of the BFRT, Phase 2D, on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for construction funding in 2022. This was made possible by the fine work done by the Town's Environmental Planner in providing extensive documentation and support to the MPO to get Phase 2D into the final draft of the TIP, positioning it for approval by the MPO Board. The outstanding advocacy of the Friends through letters, calls and email was instrumental in persuading the MPO of the value and need for Phase 2D of the BFRT. At the May 25 meeting, MPO Chair David Moeller recognized President Tom Michelman for his longstanding support and promotion of the BFRT. Three other Board members also attended that meeting to speak in support of Sudbury's request for inclusion on the TIP.

Third, on September 8, Sudbury formally submitted its 25% design to the Mass. Department of Transportation (MassDOT), an important milestone. It is expected that MassDOT will hold a meeting in Sudbury by the end of this year to solicit community input as it works with VHB, the design contractor, to finalize the 25% design. After that, work on the 75% design will begin, since the Town has voted for and appropriated the funding. With good progress on the design, it may be possible to move the start of construction forward.

The recent completion of the tunnel at Powder Mill Road in Concord, a tremendous piece of engineering and construction, is evidence of MassDOT's confidence and commitment in building the entire BFRT, from Lowell to Framingham.

Although completion of the BFRT is still a few years away, hurdles have been overcome and measurable progress is being made, week by week. The vision that inspired the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, with the tireless advocacy and financial support by the Friends is being fulfilled.

2A Set to Open Spring 2018

Construction of Phase 2A of the BFRT, including most of Acton plus small segments in Westford and Carlisle, has progressed significantly over the past six months. Although the trail has been partially paved, it is not open and is unsafe to use until it is formally opened next spring. The entire length of the project is an active construction area and has ongoing, changing conditions common to construction sites. The hazards may include: drop-offs, loose construction materials, incomplete road crossings, incomplete signage, unstable piles, sharp objects, partially installed railings and fencing, holes for planting or posts, service vehicles and debris. In addition, during the fall and early spring, the contractor will be installing many live plants, which need time to settle without being disturbed.



The wildlife tunnel, which is part of the the Great Road (Rte. 2A) overpass ramp, opened for use in November...



...but the "people-life" trail is still under construction. After 20 years, please be patient for a few more months and stay off the trail until construction is complete! This photo of the up ramp for the Great Road (Rte. 2A) overpass shows some of the hazardous conditions.

By the end of December, most construction activities on this phase will be complete. Then management of Acton's newest recreational resource will transition to the Town. A public ribbon-cutting ceremony is planned for the spring.

Many opportunities will be available for those who wish to help make the BFRT a lively and vital part of the Town's recreation infrastructure. Trail neighbors and future users have already expressed their wishes for trail activities and access. With this strong public support, the trail is expected to become the backbone of a network of connected, safe, off-road trails.

Northern Extension Progresses

At the current northern terminus of the BFRT, the railroad Right of Way (ROW) extends from the tunnel under Rte. 3, across the Cross Point (parking lot) property, across Industrial Avenue, behind the Gervais car dealership, north under the Lowell Connector overpass and up behind the Target complex in Lowell.

The hope has been to expand the rail trail north into Lowell on this ROW corridor, allowing the BFRT to continue and connect to the Concord River Greenway and to downtown Lowell in the future.

This goal for BFRT extension became closer to reality this summer when Peter Gervais of the Gervais Auto Group very generously agreed to grant an easement for the BFRT along the ROW that is on his property. Along with allowing the BFRT to extend onto this land, he has also agreed to pave a portion of the trail.

Peter, along with his engineer Brian Milisci, Jane Calvin of the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust, members of the Board of the Friends of the BFRT and the Lowell Conservation Commission and Planning Board, worked on a development plan. It would incorporate an easement for the BFRT that will parallel the asphalt "car storage" portion of the Gervais Volkswagen expansion.

The strong public support at the Conservation Commission and Planning Board meetings went a long way toward gaining the approval of the two boards, and the Friends would like to thank all the supporters and friends who turned out for those meetings. By granting this easement, the Gervais Auto Group has provided a potential link to connect the BFRT with the Concord River Greenway in Lowell. The Friends are most grateful.

In addition, the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust is working closely with the City of Lowell, the design team and abutters to the Concord River Greenway to begin permitting for the next phase of construction of the Greenway. The first public hearing, to submit the Notice of Intent to the Conservation Commission was held on November 8. The next phase will close the gaps between the three sections of the Greenway that are already complete. This will include pedestrian bridges across the Concord River and the Wamesit Canal. Once permitting is finalized, construction will take an additional two years. For more information about the Greenway and its amenities (e.g. public art, multi-lingual signage and outdoor classroom), please visit:

<http://lowelllandtrust.org/concord-river-greenway>.

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Concord, MA 01742



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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 gift.

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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send my newsletter via email (include email address above).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send via postal mail.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would like to receive email updates from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am willing to receive phone calls from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a trail abutter.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would like to volunteer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gift: <input type="checkbox"/> Cap <input type="checkbox"/> BFRT Socks (S/M or L/XL) <input type="checkbox"/> 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 online at:		
www.BruceFreemanRailTrail.org		

New Signs in Chelmsford

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. The Town 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 and helpful for rapid response, particularly in cases where public safety on the trail is jeopardized.

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

BPAC is working with trail users who have expressed interest in donating additional benches for placement along the trail. These benches are expected to be installed by next spring in the section of the trail between Cushing Place and High Street. BPAC is working on a “recommended bench styles document” to guide potential donors and to ensure consistency along the Chelmsford section of the trail. The BPAC is also working to identify other locations for benches at scenic locations where there is sufficient room along the trail.

BPAC is continuing to work on transforming the Art Walk area of the trail at Cushing Place into the Carol Cleven Park. This area will include a memorial to Carol Cleven, an interpretive sign giving the history of the Framingham & Lowell Railroad as well as additional amenities. A major modification of The Winstanley project to redevelop the Cushing Place site into housing consistent with the Chelmsford Center Village Master Plan was approved by the Chelmsford Planning Board in early summer. After subsequent delays in the closing of the land sale, the transaction finally occurred during the first week of October.

The developer has continued to support the landscaping, irrigating and ongoing maintenance of the Art Walk area adjacent to the trail and parking improvements and traffic flow in that location. The BPAC will work with the developers and its engineering firm and landscape architect to coordinate the landscape plan and to incorporate the Carol Cleven Memorial into the newly created park area along the Art Walk. Construction on the redevelopment likely will not begin until the spring of 2018. Since landscaping is typically one of the last items in a development, the park probably will be completed in the spring of 2019.

When construction begins, parking for the trail at Cushing Place will no longer be available until project completion. Parking in that area will be restricted to customers of the Brickhouse Sports Grill and the residents of the apartment building in Central Square. Trail users will be directed to park in the lot behind the Chelmsford Center for the Arts or in the

lot behind Santander Bank on Billerica Road. BPAC will be working with Winstanley’s Engineering firm and the Chelmsford DPW to communicate this change to the community and trail users.

The Chelmsford BPAC conducted the annual trail count at the Chelmsford Artwalk/Cushing Place on Saturday, September 9. The day started cloudy, and weather conditions varied from clouds to brighter skies with only an occasional sprinkle before turning into a mostly sunny day by late afternoon. The total count was 1,120 trail users. About 50% of trail users were bicyclists and walkers and runners represented about 46% of users. There was slight reduction in cyclists but a gain in walkers compared to past results. The number of cyclists not wearing helmets was approximately 12%, compared to 19% in 2016 and an improvement from around 25% in 2014 and prior years. All cyclists are encouraged to wear a helmet at all times when riding on the trail and on roads. Volunteer counters included Mike Garvin, Bob Morse, Bob Schneider, Mike Carignan, Mike Koziel, Sharon Galpin, Melinda Goodick, Dennis McNurland and Tom Gazda.

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 2017. They also thank the Friends for funding the purchase of several new signs along the trail to replace missing and vandalized signs.



Left: New signs direct trail users to the crosswalks at Fletcher Street (shown) and in Central Square. The Chelmsford DPW provided the sign posts, and the signs were installed by Jim Kelsey, Dennis McNurland and Tom Gazda.

Right: This summer the Chelmsford BPAC installed signs at numerous locations along the trail instructing users that dogs must be on a leash and that dog owners must clean up after their pets and dispose of waste properly.

Photo Credits

Tom Gazda, Stu Johnstone, Paul Malchodi,
Barbara Pike, Len Simon, John Wood



Assabet River Rail Trail - New Section Under Construction

The groundbreaking was held in June 2016 for the 3.8-mile section of the ARRT, which starts at the Maynard/Stow line and ends at the South Acton Train Station. Updates on which sections are open for use are available at <http://arrtinc.org/statuschart.asp>.

The trail is scheduled to open in May 2018.



Construction on the Assabet River Rail Trail near the South Acton Train Station

Thank You!

Gwen Noyes and Arthur Klipfel,
Oaktree Development, for making the plaza at Brookside Square in West Concord available for the 2C groundbreaking ceremony

Jill Moonheron, Concord GIS Analyst,
for creating an updated map of the trail in Concord

Judy Perrin,
for creating the graphics for our new socks

Bill Harman,
for sharing his map-making skills

Pedal Power Bike and Ski, Acton,
for their support for the groundbreaking celebration in West Concord, assistance with the sock order, and all their other on-going support

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

Jet Mail, Hudson,
for their assistance in printing and mailing our newsletters

Friends Annual Meeting

You are invited to the Friends Annual Members Meeting - Board Member Elections

Sunday, November 19, 2017, 1 p.m.
Come celebrate the progress of the trail in 2017 (WOW!) and see what we have to look forward to in coming years.

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

Light refreshments will be served.



MassDOT rendering of proposed 300-foot bridge over Rte. 2

Design Continues Over Rte. 2

The design firm Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI) is continuing to work on the 75% design of Phase 2B. This phase includes creating a 304-foot bridge over Rte. 2, building a wildlife culvert under Rte. 2 and replacing a bridge over Nashoba Brook.

Also being taken into consideration is a future pedestrian/cyclist ramp from the rail trail near Nashoba Brook to existing trails and playing fields in Concord and Acton. This phase will connect the trail in Acton from TeamWorks (near Wetherbee Street) to Concord near Commonwealth Avenue.

A public information meeting will be held after the 75% design submittal to MassDOT, tentatively January or February 2019. The current Advertisement Date goal is June 2019 or earlier, with construction to begin in 2020.

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

