



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Phase 2B Bridge Construction On Schedule

Work on the 300-foot bridge spanning Rte. 2, which will connect the BFRT sections in Acton and Concord, and the wildlife tunnel under Rte. 2 are expected to be completed this summer and open on schedule in late fall 2021.



Wood framing for abutment for bridge spanning Nashoba Brook.



New bridge pier in the median of Rte. 2.



Constructing the foundation for a bridge abutment.



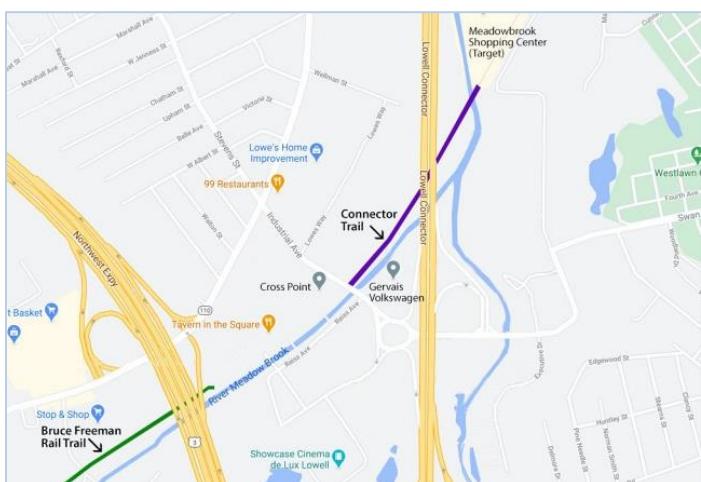
Bridge girder that will support the decking on which the trail will be laid. Rte. 2 can be seen in the background.



View from under the girder for the bridge spanning Nashoba Brook. Note the old stone abutments for the original two tracks that crossed the brook.



The trail right of way in Acton looking north past the State Police Horse Barn with new chain link fencing on the left.



Map showing the future Connector Trail in Lowell

Connector Trail Coming Soon to Lowell

The BFRT northern terminus is at the parking lot for the Cross Point towers in Lowell. The sign on the tower building is currently Kronos. This office complex is adjacent to Industrial Avenue. The original rail bed continues on the far side of Industrial Avenue.

The Connector Trail is a project spearheaded by the City of Lowell to pave the rail bed from Industrial Avenue northward, under the Lowell Connector, and on to the Meadow Brook Shopping Center where Target is located. Design of this 0.35-mile section of trail is complete and went out for bids in early spring. Construction is expected to be completed this summer. Funding for this project has been provided by a Mass Trails Grant with matching funds from community organizations. The Friends of the FBRT donated \$10,000 to the matching funds to help with the costs of this project.

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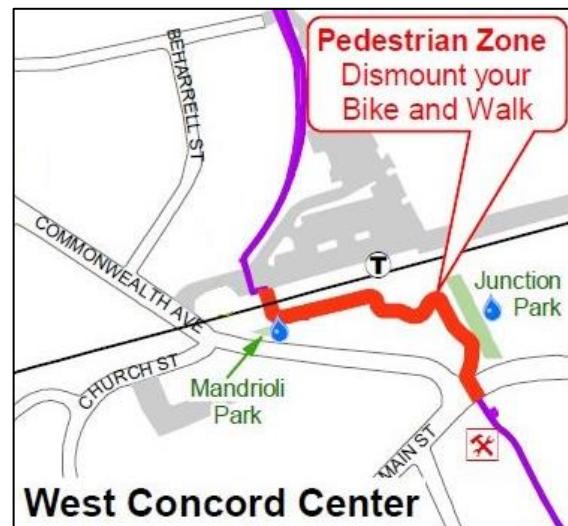
The City hopes that the section under the Lowell Connector will become an Outdoor Urban Art Gallery: a destination that local residents and visitors will enjoy visiting because of its art. Ideally, this section will become the first permanently sanctioned aerosol art area in the state, where people can feel safe to practice their art without the fear of a criminal charge.



Entrance to future Connector Trail from Industrial Avenue in Lowell.

In the long term, this section of trail would be a link connecting the BFRT's northern terminus, the 5.2-mile system of downtown Canalway trails, the Concord River Greenway, and the Merrimack River Trail to New Hampshire, closing one of the very last remaining gaps in the regional 200-mile Bay Circuit Trail. Residents would have an off-road, bicycle and pedestrian-friendly connection to employment, shopping, restaurants, and recreational opportunities across Greater Lowell. It would also help existing users of the BFRT continue into Lowell and access Meadow Brook Shopping Center and, even more exciting, eventually connect to Lowell's extensive trail system along its waterways and canals.

This trail provides the only direct path between historic Lowell neighborhoods (that were divided by the Lowell Connector highway more than 50 years ago) and employment and recreation opportunities to the south. The project includes an ADA-accessible crosswalk at Industrial Avenue, regulatory signage, vegetation clearing, and loam and seed landscaping.



Dismount Bikes in Junction Park

Cyclists are reminded that they are required to dismount and walk their bikes over the railroad tracks, past the commuter train station and through Junction Park (a Pedestrian Zone, see map above). The Town hopes to add "Dismount and Walk" pavement signage in two locations later this spring as an additional reminder.

New Bike Shelters for West Concord

Bike shelters and racks will be installed near the BFRT and West Concord Commuter Train Station, providing commuters a covered place to park their bikes. The project has been funded by a \$80,000 State Community Connections grant awarded in December 2020. The Town is providing a \$20,000 match to the grant and will be responsible for shipping costs and installing the equipment.

Reuse, Renew, Reprise

This summer Westford and Carlisle will host an installation of "Go Outdoors 2021." The towns will share six or seven works of art that transform various types of recycled doors into celebratory and intriguing works of art. A year ago the inaugural installation of 12 doors was placed on the BFRT in West Concord through the vision of Concord's Umbrella Arts Center. A grant from FBFRT helped to fund the installation.

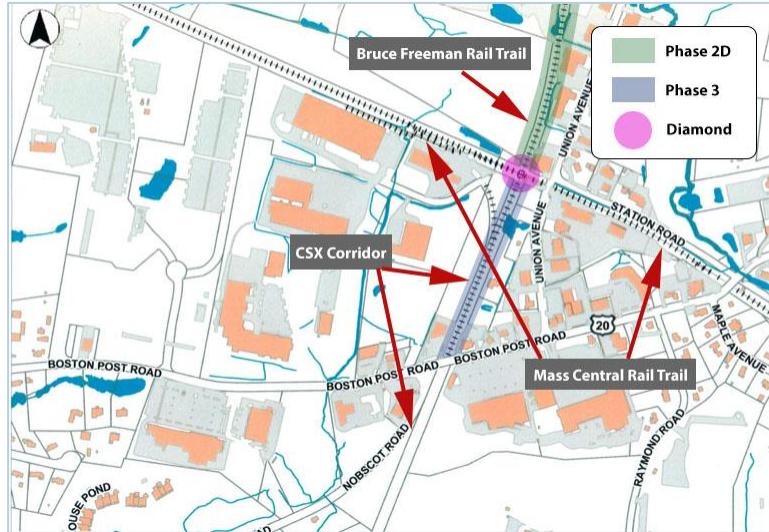
The FBFRT Board wanted to expand the presence of such fun and surprising artwork to other towns through which the BFRT passes. Through restoration by these doors' original artists and with help from The Umbrella, FBFRT funding will again allow other trail users to enjoy art in unexpected places along the rail trail through October 2021. The Umbrella also is working with Lexington and Arlington on similar door installations on the Minuteman Bikeway this summer.

Door photos by Ron Mann and courtesy of The Umbrella



BFRP Progresses in Sudbury

The BFRT in Sudbury, known as Phase 2D, continues to make strong progress on several fronts. This 4.5-mile section of the BFRT, from the Concord/Sudbury line to the intersection of the proposed Mass Central Rail Trail just north of Rte. 20, will extend the trail to over 20 miles.



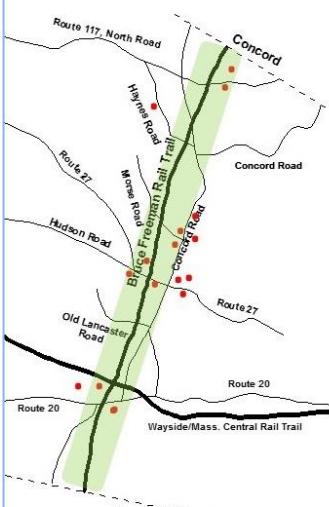
Map of South Sudbury showing the intersection of the BFRT and Mass Central RT at the "diamond."

The 75% design of this section will be completed in April, and the remaining design is expected to be completed by the end of this year. The project has received in excess of \$10 million in federal and state funding for construction, which could begin as early as the summer of 2022. The bridges over Hop Brook and Pantry Brook will be rebuilt. Cattle crossings which go under the track bed and railroad artifacts, such as whistle posts, will be preserved.



The "diamond," where the BFRT and Mass Central Rail Trails will meet.

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail in Sudbury



Map showing many of the sites in Sudbury that will be connected when Phase 2D of the BFRT is completed.

CONNECTING

- Frost Farm (residential)
- Davis Field (recreation)
- Haynes Elementary School
- Lincoln-Sudbury High School
- Featherland Recreation Area
- Nixon Elementary School
- St. Elizabeth Church
- Parkinson Fields (recreation)
- Sudbury Town Square (commercial)
- Town Center, Town Hall
- Noyes Elementary School
- Heritage Park
- Police & Fire Department Headquarters
- Chiswick Park Area (commercial)
- Sudbury Commercial District
- Raytheon site redevelopment (residential and commercial)

Sudbury's BFRT Advisory Task Force, formed to assist in advancing the design, development, construction, and long-term maintenance of the trail, has been working with the design consultant Fuss & O'Neill. The group has discussed amenities to be placed along the trail, such as benches, signage, sanitary facilities, and parking. Fuss & O'Neill has also met with the Sudbury Historical Commission to utilize their expertise, help identify historic artifacts, and plan interpretive panels. Meetings with abutters are planned to ensure community involvement.

Last September, Sudbury Town Meeting approved the acquisition of the entire 1.4 miles of the former CSX rail corridor, to become part of the BFRT (Phase 3 in Sudbury). It will extend the BFRT southward to the Framingham line. The acquisition was funded at the November 2020 Town election for \$1.1 million. Securing ownership was essential to preserve the integrity of the inactive rail corridor.

Repairs to the Trail In Chelmsford

In summer 2020 the MassTrails Grant Program awarded the Town of Chelmsford \$90,000 to repair sections of the trail where root incursions had cracked and heaved the trail surface. Work on the trail repairs began in late fall. Several sections of the trail were closed so that areas of damaged pavement and tree roots could be removed. Work proceeded through a largely snowless January but was stopped by several early February snowstorms. In late February, the Chelmsford DPW sent out sidewalk plows to clear snow and hasten thawing so that work could continue as soon as practical. It is important to note that this snow removal was only to facilitate repairs and will not be a routine practice in the future.

Final repairs and paving will be completed this spring. Cooperation and understanding from trail users will ensure that the work can be completed safely and expeditiously.

The Chelmsford BPAC and the Town of Chelmsford thank the Friends for funding the portable toilets along the trail at Cushing Place and at Pond Street/Heart Pond again in 2020. The Friends and Town COVID relief also provided funds for daily cleaning during the summer months last year. BPAC and the Town also thank the MassDOT for their prompt response to ongoing graffiti issues in the Rte. 3 tunnel and at the I-495 underpass.



The barricade closing the trail at the north side of the Golden Cove Road trail crossing (left). Section of trail excavation in Chelmsford Center (right).

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



NON PROFIT ORG
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PAID
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 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.

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 BFRT Socks (S/M or 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 online at:

<http://www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org>



New Murals in Chelmsford

New murals adorn the wall of the Art Walk at Cushing Place. Since the original murals were showing effects of age with peeling paint and warped boards, it was decided last year to replace them. The original artist, Markus Lewis, painted replacement murals and added another one depicting the 4th of July parade/road race over years, which is the only one with color. The murals reflect images from the Chelmsford Historical Society depicting local landmarks, events, and people. They were mounted on the wall at the end of October and have transformed the concrete wall into an attractive backdrop for the park.



The Chelmsford Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) is considering a brick donation program to raise funds for trail amenities. Those bricks would include the donors to FBFRT who had plaques on the original set of murals on the wall. In the interim those donors will be recognized on a display in the kiosk at Cushing Place.

Completing the Art Walk project was a collaborative effort. There are many people to thank, most especially Cindy McLain, a former FBFRT Board member. Without her connection with Markus Lewis, the artist, and her expertise on the first installation, the project could not have been completed. The Friends offer a big thank you to Cindy.

This project was supported in part by a grant from the Chelmsford Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Additional funding was supplied by the FBFRT. The Friends thank the group that installed the new murals for their donated time, energy, materials, and tools. Those individuals are Don McCaul, Carl Hunnewell, Ron Gibson, John Cronin, George Edwards, and Charlie Wotjas. Supporting businesses include the Chelmsford Lumber Company, Grist Mill Condominiums, NorthernBank and Trust Company, and Colorworks Paint and Decorating Center.

For all their help with the mural boards, the Friends thank Tom Gazda (Chelmsford BPAC member), Bob Morse (former Chelmsford BPAC member), Dennis McNurland (FBFRT Board member) and Sharon Galpin (FBFRT Board member). Thanks to all for contributing to this project and its successful completion.

The original set of murals included a display for donors to the BFRT to have personal plaques mounted. Those donor plaques were removed and are being stored. The Chelmsford Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) is investigating a brick donation program to raise funds for trail amenities. Those bricks will include the original donors who had plaques on the wall. In the interim, donors will be recognized by a display in the kiosk at Cushing Place.

FBFRT Fund Acton Safety Improvements

Letter from the Friends' President Tom Michelman

So in one way, it all started with my discussing the progress of the East Acton Village Green (EAVG) with Acton Town Manager John Mangiaratti. In October 2019, we met to discuss the status and schedule of the EAVG design and construction. That discussion didn't take too long; we agreed that the EAVG project was to be finished in 2020 with the ribbon-cutting to take place in the fall of 2020. (See update below.)

Having the Town Manager's ear, I offered that the FBFRT also was interested in working with the Town to improve the safety of the five Acton at-grade road crossings. Westford was very happy with the upgraded motion-activated crossing signals they had installed, and the Friends were willing to fund improvements to pay for road crossing safety (photo right). Corey York, Acton Director of Public Works, then submitted a grant application to the FBFRT a couple of weeks later for retrofitting the crossing signals at the five at-grade crossings with motion activated flashing beacons (a la the Westford installations the FBFRT had funded). Instead, the FBFRT Board voted in November 2019 to fund a study to determine the best option for upgrading the safety at the road crossings and then potentially pay for retrofitting the crossing signals. Then COVID hit and all plans were blown to smithereens.



In January 2021 discussions about the road crossing safety were revived. The FBFRT Board, invited guests and Corey spent many hours in preparation and discussion at two Board meetings this winter.

The general question was whether the Board should stick with its November 2019 decision to have the FBFRT provide the Town of Acton a grant to pay for a study first and then, with study in hand, support funding for retrofitting the crossing signals as recommended by the study, or just pay for retrofitting the crossing signals (and, if so, which of the five crossings).

The Board's non-unanimous vote was to do both. The decision was to rely on Corey York's judgment that the retrofit would provide immediate safety benefits, and thus provide Acton with a grant of \$20,000 to retrofit all five street crossings. The Board also decided to give Acton a grant of \$12,000 to pay for a subsequent professional engineering study of the street crossings with particular focus on two: Concord Road and Route 27 (Main Street) near NARA Park. The study would determine if additional improvements or different retrofits were recommended. It was understood that even if more retrofits were desired, the motion activated crossing signalization hardware could be re-used elsewhere in Town.

To finish the story: This spring Acton will be installing motion-activated crossing signal retrofits at all five street crossings. Also, an engineering study of the road crossings will be conducted, all paid for with grants from the FBFRT. In addition, the East Acton Village Green project, partially funded with a \$12,000 grant from FBFRT, is moving forward. It should be completed this year, with a ribbon cutting tentatively to be held in the fall.

Photo & Illustration Credits

Chris Barrett, Sharon Galpin, Tom Gazda, Ed Kross,
Ron Mann, Judy Perrin, Len Simon, Nat Welch

Funding Sought for Purchase of Phase 3 in Framingham

The southern-most section of the BFRT Phase 3 would run approximately 3 1/2 miles from the Sudbury town line to Framingham Center. Formerly owned by CSX, it is currently owned by the Georgetown Highline Railroad. According to Friends Board member Ed Kross, funding for the purchase of this right of way may be available from federal, state, and local sources. He and other members of the Friends are working to make this a priority for the city.

A proposed trails network in Framingham and adjacent communities would connect to the BFRT at the McAuliffe Library in Nobscot. Ron Chick of the Friends of Saxonville has been working with the City Council's Environment and Sustainability subcommittee to create connections to the Cochituate Rail Trail and other trails within the city. The BFRT would be the spine of this network, providing impetus for the purchase of the right of way.



The Weston Aqueduct Trail Crosses the Future BFRT in Framingham.

See something? Say something!

In case of emergency, dial 911

For non-emergency safety issues:

Chelmsford: 978-250-5228 (weekdays)
978-256-2521 (nights & weekends)
Westford: 978-692-5532
Carlisle: 978-369-6156
Acton: Highway@actonma.gov
Concord: 978-318-3220

Tentative: Summer Solstice Bike Ride

Monday, June 21, 6 p.m.

Pedal Power Bike and Ski
176 Great Road, Acton

Come ride or walk on the BFRT.
Masks and social distancing required.

A post-ride party with pizza!

Contact: tmichelman@gmail.com

Volunteers Needed for Trail Counts in Concord & Acton

The Friends will collaborate with the towns of Acton and Concord and the Boston Region MPO to conduct trail counts in Concord and Acton this spring and fall.

The Concord sites on the BFRT will be:

- North of Powder Mill Road where the "serpentine path" connects to the trail
- Across Rte. 62 from Junction Park (near the bike repair station)
- The Nashoba Brook Bridge just north of the MBTA parking lot

The Acton sites on the BFRT will be:

- Behind Pedal Power Bike and Ski, 176 Great Road
- On the trail near the BFRT North Acton Parking Area opposite 1000 Main Street (Rte. 27)

Volunteers can sign up for one or more two-hour segments for the following time periods. Counts will be held rain or shine.

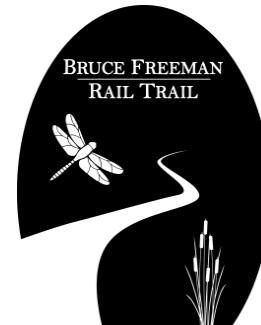
- Tuesday, May 18, Wednesday, May 19, and Thursday, May 20: 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. or 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Saturday, May 22, and Sunday, May 23: noon to 2 p.m.

To sign up or learn more about the Boston Region MPO's bicycle and pedestrian counts, please visit the [Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Program](http://bit.ly/Bike-Ped-Count) (<http://bit.ly/Bike-Ped-Count>) page. The website includes a quick [tutorial](#) for count collection tips and the [2-Hour Bicycle-Pedestrian Count Sheet](#), which can be downloaded.

All volunteers are reminded to observe COVID safety protocols: wear a mask and maintain a safe distance from others. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated.

For further information

Concord: Nat Welch nwelch.BFRT@outlook.com (617-803-5282)
Acton: Paul Malchodi paulmalchodi@gmail.com. (978-406-7264)



For Further Information:

Visit us at: www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org
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Twitter.com/FriendsofBFRT

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Westford: Emily Teller	978-692-6968 eteller@earthlink.net

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