



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Sudbury Clears Final Hurdles

The BFRT in Sudbury took three major steps forward as a result of articles passed at Town Meeting on May 3 and 4. **First**, the town approved articles for temporary construction easements, authorized the town to sign the 99-year lease with MassDOT for the rail trail corridor and gave permission for easements on town owned land for access to the rail trail. These were the final acts needed for MassDOT to issue the Right of Way Certificate and prepare the project to go out for construction bidding.

Construction of the 4.4 miles of the BFRT in Sudbury, Phase 2D, should begin this fall or next spring. Passage of the Town Meeting articles means construction of the last half mile of the trail in Concord, from the culvert at Power Mill Road to the Sudbury line, which has been waiting for Sudbury to complete its design and permitting, can also begin. Construction will take about two years.

Second, Town Meeting approved \$500,000 in Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for amenities along Phase 2D, north of the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT), such as construction oversight, environmental monitors, utility connections and interpretative panels not covered by state and federal funding.



BFRT Right of Way in Sudbury looking south from Old Lancaster Road.

Third, Town Meeting approved an additional \$300,000 in CPA funding for design of the one quarter mile between the diamond, that is where the MCRT intersects with the BFRT, to Sudbury's commercial district at Rte. 20. This short but vital stretch of the rail trail will assure safe, uninterrupted passage, almost 20 miles, from Lowell to central Sudbury. The funds will also be used for a feasibility study to extend the BFRT an additional mile, along the former CSX rail corridor, from Rt. 20 to the Framingham line.

Framingham is aggressively moving to acquire its 3-mile section of the CSX corridor beginning at the Sudbury line, to further extend the rail trail into Framingham.

The long wait for further construction of the BFRT is coming to an end.

The Bridge Over Rte. 2

The contractor for the Rte. 2 bridge has submitted a request to extend the completion date to Nov. 30 due to the scheduling of weather-dependent activities. The staining process will take place in May; the staining will take 3 to 4 weeks, will cure for 8 days, then an anti-graffiti material will be applied in late June. Since the spring planting season ends in June, the planting schedule has been extended to the fall. Also the top course of paving is expected to be done in July. Until the project has been completed, the site is an active construction zone and is unsafe to enter.



Access to the Rte. 2 bridge viewed from Acton, with the State Police Barn fencing on the right.



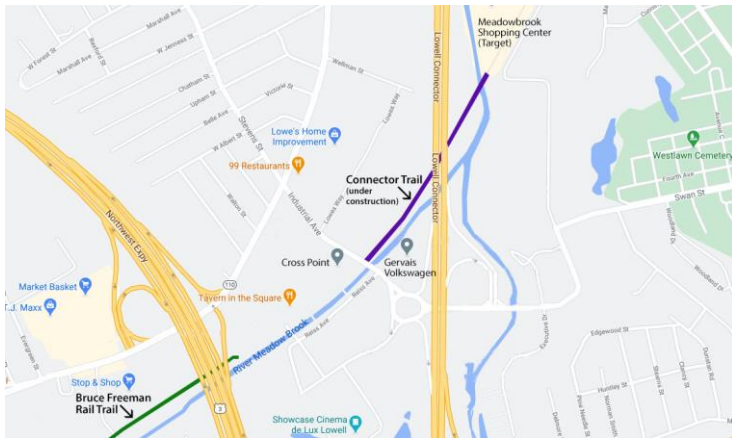
New railings on the bridge access ramp from Concord.



The bridge construction area is closed until completed.

Progress on the Connector Trail in Lowell

The northern terminus of the BFRT has been at the parking lot for Cross Point Towers office complex in Lowell ever since the first part of the trail was opened in 2009. The original rail bed, which is adjacent to the office complex, continues to the far side of Industrial Avenue. Now the City of Lowell is spearheading a project called the Connector Trail, a 0.35-mile paved path extending the BFRT from Industrial Avenue northward, under the Lowell Connector highway, and continuing to the Meadow Brook Shopping Center where Target is located (see map). This trail will provide 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.



In the long term, this section of trail will be a link connecting the BFRT's northern terminus, the 5.2-mile system of downtown Lowell 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.

Funding for this project has been provided by a Mass Trails Grant and 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.

Although the Connector Trail is still under construction, it has been finished on both the northern and southern ends of the extended Gervais parking lot. At the southern end, the trail is paved to Industrial Avenue, and there is a new sidewalk. At the northern area of the Gervais lot, part of the trail has been paved. It does not yet extend under the Lowell Connector highway overpass.

Legal details with the easements and permissions on private property are being addressed. The trail cannot be completed until all of these issues are resolved.

Completion of the trail also includes fencing and signage in order to make it a safe passageway. The entrance at the Industrial Avenue end needs a clearly marked crosswalk and signage in order to allow a safe crossing from the trail to the Cross Point parking area. No completion date has been set at this time.

The project includes an ADA-accessible crosswalk at Industrial Avenue, regulatory signage, vegetation clearing and loam and seed landscaping.

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.

New Kiosk and Bench in Chelmsford

A new kiosk, built by the Nashoba Tech Carpentry Shop, has been installed on the trail at Pond Street in Chelmsford (see photo). The Town DPW assisted by augering the post holes and installing the sonotubes for the kiosk posts. A map and a trail rules sign have been posted along with brochure and map boxes. The Chelmsford Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) has approved the purchase of BFRT logo signs, an acknowledgement sign crediting these who made the amenities at the site possible and a permanent bulletin board for the kiosk. BPAC also approved the purchase of a new bulletin board for the Cushing Place kiosk. Dennis McNurland and Thomas Gazda have been working on these installations.



A new bicycle tire pump has been installed at the bike repair stand at Cushing Place. The Friends funded the purchase, and BPAC vice chair Jim Kelsey installed it.

BPAC continues to work with the Chelmsford DPW and Police Department to address maintenance and safety issues along the trail in Chelmsford. Last fall and winter, the DPW removed leaves from the trail as well as old fallen trees between Cushing Place and High Street. Bob Schneider has been patrolling the Chelmsford section of the trail to pick up trash and remove small branches and limbs from the trail.

A new bench, donated by Diane Leath, was installed late last fall near the 4.8-mile mark south of High Street.

The BPAC and the Town wish to thank the Friends for funding the portable toilets along the trail at Cushing Place and at Pond Street/Heart Pond again this season. Thanks also to MassDOT for its prompt response in addressing ongoing graffiti issues in the Rte. 3 tunnel and at the I-495 underpass.

Hope Springs Eternal for a Connection to Framingham

Dear Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail,

As stated in our 2004 Articles of Organization, our first of four purposes for incorporating is as follows.

To work for the creation of a multipurpose recreational trail and alternative transportation corridor known as the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail connecting the city of Lowell and the towns of Chelmsford, Westford, Carlisle, Acton, Concord, Sudbury and Framingham and generally following the route of an unused railroad line formerly known as the Framingham & Lowell Railroad;

There are a couple of observations from the above. First, that the FBFRT as an organization is persistent, and second, the completion of the BFRT is our primary goal and hopefully our destiny.

As you can read elsewhere in this newsletter, Sudbury Town Meeting has approved the BFRT from the Concord Town line south to just north of Rte. 20 and is pushing forward with efforts to facilitate design and construction to the Framingham border. Not unrelated to Sudbury BFRT progress, we've been requested from the City of Framingham to provide support for an application for grant funding for design of the BFRT with the City's intent to purchase the railroad right-of-way in 2022.

While I'm not foolhardy enough to think that the immediate right-of-way acquisition in Framingham, and design, and construction of the BFRT in Sudbury and Framingham are a *fait accompli*, I do contend that it is the FBFRT's and the citizens of the Commonwealth's irresistible destiny to accomplish this essential duty. That is, we all are compelled to keep working and advocating (i.e., persisting) for the completion of the BFRT until we all have accomplished the first purpose of the FBFRT's Articles of Organization.

In other words, as hope springs eternal, I contend that it is our collective duty to ensure that the BFRT will one day stretch from Lowell to Framingham with, just for good measure, connections north to the Merrimack River and south to Framingham State University.

I look forward to working and persisting with all of you, Friends of the BFRT, to fulfill the BFRT's ultimate destiny.

Sincerely,

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

Concord: Focus on Safety in Junction Park

The BFRT through West Concord follows the original rail line, which runs through Junction Park at the commuter rail station. Although no accidents have been reported in the park, safety concerns have been raised about this shared space. Last October, the Concord Select Board asked the Town BFRT Advisory Committee (AC) to recommend "conceptual designs" that would improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists in the park.

The AC was asked for both a short-term plan to address the expected increase in trail usage after the opening of the Rte. 2 bridge and a long-term plan that would be a more permanent solution and could include changes to the park layout.

Since November, the AC has held several public meetings, surveyed over 550 people who use the park, sponsored a site walk and public forum and formulated several possible design concepts to address these issues. The AC expects to present its recommendations to the Select Board by the end of June.

Spring Town Meeting approved \$30,000 in Community Preservation Funds for the BFRT to be used for design and installation of additional planting and landscaping, signage, benches and other trail amenities. Voters also approved funds to be used toward acquisition of Assabet River Bluff, a 7-acre site in West Concord that abuts the BFRT for about 1000 feet.

Installation of the four shelters with bike racks located near the West Concord Commuter Train Station was delayed last year but is expected to be completed this spring. Funding for the bike shelters was provided by a MassDOT Community Connections grant.



Friends Board members thank Dennis McNurland for his years of service as the Board member from Chelmsford. Dennis and his wife Betsy are shown holding the cake. Dennis has been the liaison between the Chelmsford BPAC and the Friends Board, attending events and promoting the trail.

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



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Join us for our annual **Summer Solstice Bike Ride**

Tuesday, June. 21, 2022, 6 p.m. at Pedal Power, Bike & Ski
176 Great Road, Acton (See last page for more details)

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+* |

*Conductor (\$100) 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:

<http://www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org>

Acton: Seeking to Connect the BFRT with Town Playing Fields

In mid-March, representatives from the Friends met with town staff from Acton and Concord to request Acton's support for – and leadership in – pursuing a connection between the BFRT and the Acton School Street fields. Although not included in the current construction project, the Rte. 2 bridge was designed to facilitate integration of a future ramp on the Acton (west) side. Friends' Board member Paul Malchodi made a presentation of route selection alternatives and considerations for further off-road connections to the School Street fields. While this connection would start in Concord and cross Department of Corrections land, it would be primarily located in Acton and would require Acton's town staff support throughout the feasibility study and design phases.

Acton Town Staff included representatives from Natural Resources, Planning, Town Manager's office, the Select Board, Engineering, Recreation and Public Works. Representatives of the Acton Water District, Concord Town Staff and the Concord Rail Trail Advisory Committee also attended the meeting.

East Acton Village Green

Acton's Natural Resources Department planned and coordinated extensive landscaping for the East Acton Village Green, located on Concord Road near Rte. 2A and the BFRT. A walkway with picnic table was installed last fall. A kiosk with educational panels focusing on the Stream Awareness Project will detail the value of streams and the importance of protecting them. Plaques will honor three Acton environmentalists: Carol Holley, Mary Michelman and Mikki Williams.

Signal Automation for Street Crossings

In June 2021, the Friends funded the upgrade to automatic signalization equipment at the five rapid-flashing safety intersections of the BFRT and Acton streets. This equipment is intended to improve trail user safety and was installed after experience showed that many trail users failed to use the manual switches to turn on the flashing beacons. Within a few months all of the systems experienced failures. Some did not work and others flashed when no trail users were approaching the crosswalks. Acton's Public Works Department is working with the original supplier and installers of the equipment to correct this situation, which had not been resolved by press time.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are needed to take care of the new plants at the East Acton Village Green this spring and summer as they become established. Contact Bettina Abe: babe@ActonMA.gov for further information.

Volunteers are needed to help keep the four kiosks in Acton organized and stocked. Contact paulmalchodi@gmail.com for further information.

Adaptive Trikes Come to Acton

Three new adaptive tricycles will be available to borrow for the day at NARA Park in Acton this summer: an adult traditional foot pedal trike, an adult hand cycle trike and a child trike, which has features that allow children with disabilities to ride safely. These trikes may be borrowed for the day at the snack bar window starting on May 28th. The trikes are free to Acton residents. The charge is \$5 for non-residents. Borrowers will leave their ID until the trikes are returned.



Leslie Johnson, founder of the Greater Acton Adaptive Bike Coalition, said that the goal of GAABC was "to make adaptive biking happen on the BFRT." Thanks to Leslie, the coalition and a state grant, the trikes will bring this vision to reality in Acton this summer.



As the culmination of a Concord Middle School enrichment course called "Ponds, Pools and Produce," students designed nature awareness signs for the BFRT between Williams Road and Powder Mill Road. During the course, students explored the local ecosystem with a special emphasis on wetlands, learned to identify local plants, trees and wildlife and tested the water at nearby Jennie Dugan Brook.

Photo Credits

Sharon Galpin, Leslie Johnson, Ed Kross, Paul Malchodi, Dennis McNurland, Chris Menge, Judy Perrin, Barbara Pike, Len Simon, Abby Swaine, Nat Welch

Framingham Earth Day Festival



The Friends joined dozens of other exhibitors at Framingham's Earth Day Festival on April 23. The large crowd, encouraged by the beautiful weather, gave the Friends an opportunity to promote the rail trail in the city. Pictured (L to R) are Board members Chris Menge, Ed Kross, Dick Williamson and John McQueen. Ed did a short demonstration on his penny farthing bicycle, shown in the background.

Join Us at a Friends' Event

Summer Solstice Bike Ride

Tuesday, June 21, 6 p.m.
Pedal Power, Bike and Ski
176 Great Road, Acton
Parking available across the street
Bike or walk on the BFRT
Stay for Pizza afterward
Contact: tmichelman@gmail.com

Old Home Day Saturday

June 25, 11:30 to 2
Carlisle school parking lot

See something? Say something!

In case of emergency, dial 911

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



Sam Swaine of Brookline uses the BFRT for exercise and nature enjoyment on his race wheelchair. After a ski injury, Sam has looked for new ways to exercise his natural athleticism, and the BFRT is a good fit for his needs. His mother Abby says, "Having this resource within the Greater Boston area makes a huge difference to Sam's health and quality of life."

Thank You!

To Pedal Power Bike and Ski, 176 Great Road, Acton, for hosting the Friends Summer Solstice Bike Ride and their support throughout the year.



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: Glenn Reed	978-807-2785	greed@energyfuturesgroup.com
Chelmsford: Dennis McNurland	978-251-0777	djmcn192@gmail.com
Concord: Barbara Pike	978-369-0437	bbpike@aol.com
Framingham: Ed Kross	508-380-6925	ekross1976@gmail.com
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