



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Phase 2A On Track for Construction

When \$8.8 million in funding for Phase 2A (Westford, Carlisle, and Acton) was unexpectedly included in the 2013-2016 TIP, work was accelerated on the 75% design and is on schedule to be advertised for construction in fiscal year 2014. The bulk of the work is being done by the engineering consultant GPI, with project management by Roland Bartl, Acton's Planning Director, and David Shedd at MassDOT. The design plans will be submitted to MassDOT for approval from Acton, which is the lead town. In between there is a lot of interaction between and among the three towns, MassDOT, and GPI. While the vast majority of Phase 2A will be in Acton (over 4 of the 4.88 miles), discussions have been held with Carlisle and Westford concerning such matters as wetlands protection, parking for trail users, and safety upgrades to the the Route 225 and 27 intersection.

The 25% design was completed in 2008. Then funds were procured to complete the design in 2010, and a design consultant was selected in a competitive bid process (a long process in itself). Before work could commence, terms and conditions with GPI had to be worked out. The next major step will be the submittal of the 75% design plans, which is expected this fall.

This begs the question: what is 75% design? The MassDOT website puts 75% design into context as follows. *Typical milestones in the design process include: submission and approval of the 25% design plans, a public hearing on the 25% design, submission and approval of the 75% design plans, submission and approval of the 100% design plans, and preparation of the plans, specifications and estimates (PSE). Concurrent with this process, right-of-way must be acquired and environmental requirements must be satisfied.*

The 25% design included a submission by which MassDOT evaluated the proposed design relative to current design standards, right of way impacts, environmental impacts and other potential community concerns associated with the proposed design.

So now with context, the 75% highway design review allows MassDOT's Highway Division to ensure that all comments from the 25% review have been addressed. It is also an opportunity to make certain that the plans and special provisions provide sufficient information to bid and construct the project. Further, the 75% design submittal to MassDOT should include: responses to all comments from the 25% review, plans which are 90% complete, cross-sections, special provisions and estimate (including non-participating items).

So there you have it; 75% design means plans are 90% complete, plus other stuff. There are no plans for a public hearing associated with these submittals, since there have been no major changes in the trail design, just a lot more detail. However the Friends will request that the 75% design plans be posted on our website, so that the FBFRT and the public at large can comment.

Other Phase 2A tidbits are:

- In some cases title associated with the right-of-way is unclear. Good news for the towns is that MassDOT will take the lead on all "confirmatory taking", that is confirming that the right-of-way will be continued to be legally intact and used as a continuous transportation corridor.
- Right-of-entry is never easy, as the hot potato of the liability of potentially finding pollution on the ROW gets passed back and forth. Regardless, towns are able to limit liability through environmental insurance, and acquisition of this insurance is in process.
- Plans for the East Acton Village Green have been restarted. (This is a section of land in Acton bordered by Great Road/Rt. 2A, Concord Road, and Ice House Pond, and bisected by the BFRT ROW.) Charlie Abraham of Axe Brothers (tree clearing service) has offered to do work outside of the right-of-way to make the parcel more accessible and attractive: clearing brush, trimming trees, doing minor landscaping. Full plans will not be implemented until after BFRT construction, but coordination of the two much related projects has begun.



The Friends' team, participating in the 1st Annual Greater Lowell Community Foundation's River Ride on September 22, raised \$1500 for the FBFRT. Team members: (front) Eileen Maloney, Jane Ceraso, (back) William Schmidt, Tom Michelman (captain), Judy Perrin, State Senator Jamie Eldridge

Upgrades in Chelmsford Center

The kiosk in Chelmsford Center has been updated with the addition of a larger version of the map found in the trail brochure. Also FBFRT member and historian Bill Gerber, from the Middlesex Canal Association, has added informational signs detailing the history of the railroad. The Middlesex Canal crossed at the northern trail terminus, near Cross Point Towers, where offices of Motorola are located. Railroads replaced canals and were, themselves, replaced by interstates and then the internet as prime movers for commerce. Thus the northern portion of the BFRT encompasses this entire slice of transportation history.

Direct access from the BFRT is now available to Zesty's Pizza, Subway sandwich shop, and neighboring businesses in Chelmsford Center. Two handicapped-accessible openings were installed by FBFRT member Ken Dews last summer. A big thank-you to Ken and to those who contributed to the project, including Zesty's Pizza and the Subway sandwich shop. FBFRT also provided funding.

The Town continues to make improvements at the rail trail/street intersections in the Center. New traffic islands and a brick crosswalk at the Central Square crossing have improved visibility and safety at that location. The Town expects the utility pole blocking the pedestrian signal to be removed sometime next year. Safety improvements have also been made at the corner of Chelmsford and Fletcher Streets, near the ball fields: new crosswalk signals with audio and visual countdown were installed, and right turn on a red signal from Fletcher Street onto Chelmsford Street is now prohibited to protect trail users in the crosswalk.

Thanks to contributions by trail users, FBFRT was once again able to fund portable toilets at Pond Street and in Chelmsford Center.



Bike parking racks, donated by the Friends, have been installed by the Town DPW at Chelmsford Center for the Arts (Old Town Hall) on the rail trail. Parking, restrooms, and entertainment are available at CCA for trail users.

Chelmsford Trail Maintenance

Weed and litter removal is very much appreciated by trail users and is vital for keeping the trail usable and enjoyable.

In June a group volunteers from Dell Computer in Nashua cleaned and weeded a section of the trail in Chelmsford Center. The Chelmsford DPW hauled away the weeds. Many thanks to Dell. Thanks, also, to the Chelmsford DPW for this

and their semi-annual sweeping, annual weed whacking, and as-needed replacement of damaged railings and signs!

Kudos to the 2012 Trail Crew in Chelmsford for keeping the trail clean: Eric Andrus, Mike Carignan, David Carlson, Patrick Cunha, Ken Dews, Tom Gazda, Brian Hannigan, Brian Herzog, Fred Holmes, Mike Koziel, Bob McCabe, Jonathan Moore, John Morrisey, David Nyhof, Butch O'Lari, Al Souza, and Junior Girl Scout Troop 6019.

Thanks to all!

Volunteer opportunities in Chelmsford include the Trail Crew for a 1/4 mile section of trail, constructing a lost & found box and a brochure holder to mount on the kiosk and gardening to help to beautify the trail in Chelmsford Center. For more information E-mail: info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org.

Bike Routes Link Lowell & BFRT

Over the summer, Lowell initiated a program to promote transportation options by marking several streets with lanes for bicycles. Some of the streets have dedicated cycling lanes and other have a shared lane for bicycles and cars. These lanes are marked with large painted emblems on the roads. Two routes provide access to the BFRT, one being direct (Rt. 110) and the other being a bit more indirect (Gorham Street). Route 110 heading out of Lowell toward Chelmsford has one lane marked as a "sharrow" – a shared lane, and goes directly past the Motorola/Cross Point tower. Access is through the parking lot for Cross Point. Turn right to arrive at the northern terminus of the BFRT, which is the tunnel under Route 3.

A less direct route via Gorham Street toward Chelmsford also has a sharrow. One must go through the cemeteries by taking a right on Spencer Street, a left on Plain Street, a right on Swan Street, and a left on Industrial Avenue, which leads to the Micky Ward Rotary. Take the exit off the rotary that leads to the parking lots for the Lowell Cinema. Head toward the Cross Point parking, cross the parking lot bridge and turn left toward the Route 3 tunnel. An article describing the Lowell initiative, along with a map of the designated streets can be found at: <http://lowellma.wordpress.com/2012/06/25/a-friendlier-and-safer-lowell-for-cyclists/>. The new bicycle lanes in Lowell will promote bicycle travel throughout the city and surrounding bicycle routes.

Many Thanks

To paraphrase a popular advertising slogan: The Friends run on volunteers. We are deeply grateful to the members of the trail steward crews and trail use counters listed elsewhere as well as the following: Bob Armstrong, Mike Carignan, Connie Farb, Alan Frankel, Art Huston, Mike Jacobs, Ed Kross, Stan Mudrets, Ken Perrin, Jennifer, Michael & Jackson Pincus, Nancy Powers, Ellen Quackenbush, Janet Rothrock, Mark Sevier, Boris Shnapir, Bill Schmidt, Len Simon, Bethany Smith, Lisa Underkoffler, Alan Whitney, and Bob Zuffante. We apologize to anyone whose name was inadvertently omitted.

A special thank you to Pedal Power of Acton, Jet Mail of Hudson, and A-1 Portable Toilets of Chelmsford.

Westford Plans for Trail Amenities and Extension

Summer and fall have been busy seasons in Westford, both on the rail trail and in Town Hall. The best news: the construction schedule for the continuation of this amazing regional recreational and transportation resource through Acton has been moved up to 2014!! We are looking forward to those additional miles and parking availability at the southern end of the trail.

At Westford's Special Town Meeting on October 15th, both warrant articles concerning the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail passed. The quarter-acre parcel at the current southern terminus of the BFRT known as the "Vose Parcel" was (finally!) transferred from the Tax Possession Sale Committee to the Conservation Commission. After an amendment removing any language about restricting parking was added, the article passed by an overwhelming vote of 226 to 30. A permanent conservation restriction will be requested of the Commonwealth to preserve this small parcel as open space next to the BFRT intersection with Rt. 27 and Rt. 225.

The second BFRT article, which passed unanimously, authorizes the Board of Selectmen to acquire any property adjacent to the BFRT which may be necessary for clearing the title in order to enter into a 99-year lease with MassDOT for the Phase 2A section of BFRT that lies within Westford. This is the same language that Acton, Carlisle, and Concord have passed at their Town Meetings for MassDOT BFRT leases. An environmental insurance policy will be required from all three Phase 2A towns during construction, but the cost of this will be minimal for Westford and Carlisle, since there is so little land in each of these towns to cover.

Organized by Jessica Ryan and Claire Enos of Westford, the third annual PanMass Challenge for Kids held on June 17 was staged at the Byam School in Chelmsford. More than 50 riders raised over \$5,000 for cancer research. The event this year included a "moonwalk" (jumping cage) as well as ice cream donated by Sullivan Farms in Tyngsboro. It was truly a fun day for riders, volunteers, and their families.

The second annual Live for Liv Ride in memory of Olivia Marchand, who was a Westford Academy student, took place on July 22, starting from the 4-H fairgrounds in Westford. Contributions totaled over \$25,000 for the ride.

Planning for a kiosk and benches near Rt. 225 is continuing. Pat Savage, Westford's Director of Parks and Recreation, and Emily Teller and Chris Barrett (Friends Board Members in Westford) met with Dennis McCabe, the abutter, and an on-site meeting resulted in selection of the particular location that is amenable to all for these amenities. Permission is necessary from MassDOT's Right of Way Division before going forward, and that has been requested. Funding for this project has been generously donated to the Friends by Lowell General Hospital and through employee matching grants from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care which were awarded through the efforts of Westford resident David Martin.

The volunteer Trail Stewards, working all year along the Westford portion, keep the BFRT at its best. This group has expanded and now includes Linas Alinskas, Dave and Diane Earl, Ron and Mary Jo Johnson, and Bob and Beth Shaw. We are grateful to these stewards as well as to the Westford Conservation Trust Tuesday Trail Group, which occasionally

chooses the BFRT as a destination for their trail work. Westford's Parks and Rec crews, as well as workers from the Highway Department, also do a great job of keeping the trail clear after storms and do a complete sweep several times each season.

We continue to be grateful for the hard work done and active good will extended throughout the year by Town Staff, especially Angus Jennings, Director of Land Use Planning; Paul Starratt, Town Engineer; Chip Barrett, Highway Superintendent; Jodi Ross, Town Manager; and Michael Croteau, WPD Safety Officer. Kelly Ross, a frequent dog walker on the BFRT, continues his essential and important service as liaison from the Board of Selectmen to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

Counting on Trail

The Chelmsford Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and FBFRT collaborated on three counts of trail usage in May and September this year. We are grateful for the support of local businesses and volunteers. We could not do the counts without them. The following businesses once again allowed us to use their stores as transfer points for the clipboards during the Tuesday count in September: Agway (South Chelmsford), Java Room (Chelmsford Center), and Staples (Chelmsford Mall).

Thanks to the trail usage count volunteers (An '*' next to the name indicates the person volunteered for both the May and the September counts): Gerri & Ernie Abrams*, Lynn Ahlgren, Anne Anderson*, Jeff Bentley, Jane Calvin, Alan Cameron, Mike Carignan*, Bridget Coughlin, Tracy Cutter, Carol Doblewski, Pam Elrod, Sharon Galpin, Mike Garvin, Tom Gazda*, Lowell Gilbert, Melinda Goodick*, Carol Grueneich, Bob Hall, Brian Hannigan, Brian Herzog, Joe Holmes, Kathy Jacob, Clare Jeannotte, Jim Kelsey, Jody Klenk, Ken Leonard*, Tracy Mendes, Tom Michelman, Tim Norton, Anastasia O'Malley, Pat Pellegrini, Colin Piette, Graeme Piette*, Jeff Robinson, Janice Ruell*, Nancy Savage, Norbert Schade, Bill Schmidt*, Al Souza, Glenn Stewart, Karen Taylor*, Lisa Underkoffler*, and Ken VanTassel.

Results of the trail counts are available on the FBFRT website.



These Minutemen in full colonial regalia were included in the May trail count. They were appearing on the trail as part of an event to raise funds for the restoration of the Chelmsford First Parish Church's clock, weathervane and steeple. (photo by Paul Buckley)

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



NON PROFIT ORG
 US POSTAGE
 PAID
 PERMIT NO.6
 HUDSON, MA 01749

ADDRESS 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. | <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 authorize the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail to use my name for promotional efforts to support the trail. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I would like to volunteer. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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

Or join on-line at www.BruceFreemanRailTrail.org



Phase 2B: Details Slow Progress

Phase 2B, basically the Rt. 2 crossing in Acton and Concord, is progressing, but not rapidly. It had been expected that the 25% design would be submitted to MassDOT last summer, followed by public information meetings. Things don't always go as planned. It was found that additional borings were needed for the bridge design. This additional scope is now being negotiated between MassDOT and AECOM, the Phase 2B 25% design firm.

Also the two towns had asked MassDOT to look into designing a smaller, light-weight bridge (one that would only accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, but not emergency vehicles). This request has been denied. David Shedd, the MassDOT Project Manager, explained that the request was analyzed internally by MassDOT engineers and that the design exception request (of a smaller bridge) does not follow state and federal design standards, would not be approved by Federal Highway, and thus will not be included in the 25% design submission. After the 25% design has been submitted, a public hearing will be held.



The photographer, Ken Glotfelty, lives near the trail in Chelmsford and uses the trail almost every weekend. A self-described "ambitious amateur," Ken offers these photo tips. Don't stay focused on the path ahead; look up and down, left and right. Don't be afraid to get your knees or back-side a little dirty to get a nice shot. But above all; learn when to put camera down and just enjoy the moment. He got this shot of the "frog family" in Chelmsford on his second visit to the site.

A Letter from the Friends President

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Ten years ago, in October 2002, a small group of rail trail supporters met at Pedal Power in Acton to begin the organization of a group that would support the building of a rail trail on the old Framingham & Lowell right-of-way. Back then it was known as the Bruce N. Freeman Memorial Bike Path.

I was not at this first meeting, but some of our current Board Members, including Barbara Pike, Dick Williamson, Stuart Johnstone, Joyce Reischutz, and Bob Hall, were there. Ten years ago, and continuing today, creating rail trails in Massachusetts was, and is, a long, arduous process. It is much harder than it should be and much harder than it is in other states. The whys and wherefores are various, but regardless the primary reason that the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail was formed was to overcome such barriers. From the start the group was in it for the long slog.

This summer former head of MassHighway, Luisa Paiewonsky, who is now my good friend, offered a huge compliment to the FBFRT. She said the FBFRT's approach is what has made us effective: depth of knowledge about every aspect of project development, funding, and the MassHighway organization, persistence, a respectful and solution-focused approach, and an ambitious but achievable vision. Our strategy and culture of consistent and persistent advocacy over the long-term, the need to build up a large group of supporters who voice support publicly, to repeatedly educate and advocate for what is obviously a great societal benefit, and then search for solutions rather than trying to parse out blame has made the FBFRT a force to be reckoned with in the niche world of Boston area transportation project advocacy.

We have grown to over 500 dues paying members and 4,000 supporters while making many allies and friends along the way. Town, regional, and state employees and elected officials have been key to requesting and acquiring funding and providing entrée to the state bureaucracy and Beacon Hill. Ten years later all of our local state representatives and senators support the BFRT, and probably none is more pro-active than Senator Jamie Eldridge who even joined us on our fundraising bike ride in September (see photo on front page).

After ten years we pretty well understand much of the frustrating, underfunded landscape for rail trail and community path development in the Commonwealth. Fittingly we have a chance to improve this landscape. Three major items are in play over the next few months.

- Richard A. Davey MassDOT Secretary and CEO announced a statewide policy mode shift goal of tripling the share of travel in Massachusetts by bicycling, transit and walking.
- Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has been holding a series of statewide discussions to generate ideas and help prioritize agency transportation initiatives now and in the future. I attended the session in Lowell in October and can confirm that the state officials really do listen and take notes. You can send your comments via <http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/ContactUs.aspx>
- A transportation finance bill will be created and debated on Beacon Hill in order to deal with the ugly mess known as our state transportation budget.

If you care about increasing funding for the BFRT and other community paths around the Commonwealth, now is the time to contact your state senator and representative. Tell him or her that you support an increased piece of the transportation pie for bicycle, pedestrian and mass transit connections and a bigger pie overall via increased revenues for the same. We will be creating an online petition or piggy-backing on one created by other advocacy groups before the end of the year. So you can join with like-minded voices. I hope you will support these efforts.

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

Concord to Continue Design

The final design of Phase 2C in Concord has been funded and will proceed once issues with the right-of-way survey have been resolved and Right of Entry has been renewed.

The Town is also continuing discussions with the MBTA about where the rail trail will cross the Fitchburg Commuter line in West Concord. The 25% design utilizes an existing railroad spur and crosses at Commonwealth Avenue, where there are existing pedestrian crossing gates. Trail users are then required to walk their bikes on the sidewalk along Commonwealth Ave. before rejoining the railroad right-of-way near Main Street/Rt. 62. The Town continues to advocate for upgrading the safety of the existing pedestrian crossing near the West Concord Depot/Club Car Café and redirecting the rail trail crossing to that location based on community input.



A family of recumbent bicyclists rides on the rail trail in Westford.

A Trio of Sudbury Town Staff Developing a Concept Plan

In response to the overwhelming votes for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail on the March Town election ballot and at the May Town Meeting, the Sudbury Board of Selectmen (BOS) in July directed the inactive Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Concept Committee to move forward and to develop a concept plan for the Trail in Sudbury. The Concept Committee, consisting of Director of Planning Jody Kablack, DPW Director Bill Place and Conservation Coordinator Debbie Dineen, had been established several years ago but had done nothing until the recent votes because the BOS considered the Rail Trail to be low priority.

In 2006 under the direction of Sudbury's Rail Trail Conversion Advisory Committee, a contractor (FST) experienced in designing rail trails provided an Engineering and Environmental Assessment that outlined a Sudbury rail trail designed according to the accepted state and national standards for "shared-use paths". The proposed rail trail would be very similar to the existing BFRT in Chelmsford and Westford and the soon-to-be-built extension of the trail through Acton. A rail trail designed to these standards has been the overwhelming choice of residents in Chelmsford, Westford, Carlisle, Acton and Concord.

Because of continued opposition to the rail trail by some abutters and commercial interests in Sudbury, the BOS created the Concept Committee to look at alternatives. The Committee is examining three alternatives. 1) A trail only partially within the rail corridor to avoid environmentally sensitive areas, 2) A trail along walkways entirely outside the corridor, and 3) A rail trail on the corridor designed to state and national standards as outlined in the 2006 Environmental and Engineering Assessment. The BOS directed the Concept Committee to submit its report this November.

Friends Annual Meeting

When: Sunday, November 18, 2 p.m.

Where: Pedal Power Bike and Ski
176 Great Road (Rt. 2A), Acton

What: After a brief business meeting, we will visit the future site of the East Acton Village Green abutting Icehouse Pond.

Light refreshments will be served.

Cochituate Trail Comes to Framingham

The Framingham section of the BFRT has been rather quiet. However, the excitement over the new mile and half Cochituate Rail Trail is generating enthusiasm, especially in the local neighborhood of the trail. And many have asked, "So what about the Bruce Freeman in Framingham?" Our response is consistent but truthful, "It's going to be awhile yet, but we're hopeful."

The Friends were a presence at summer concerts on the Common. Special thanks to Ed Kross for his willingness to explain Framingham's unique obstacle of Right of Way Ownership to a lot of people.

The new library in the Nobscot section of Framingham will be on the BFRT right of way across Water Street from the Hemenway Elementary School. A State Grant for construction of the library has been awarded to Framingham. If Town Meeting approves the town's contribution, the project will go forward. The planning of the Library includes both access and parking for trail use.

If any member in Framingham would like to join the Task Force or has questions or suggestions, please email jhstasik@verizon.net or call (508) 877--6771.

For Further Information:

Visit: www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org

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Send Email: info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org

To volunteer go to www.BruceFreemanRailTrail.org/volunteer

Planning to use the rail trail for an event? Please register at www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org by clicking the **Event Registration** button at the top right corner of the page.