



Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail

www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org

Construction Scheduled for 2A!

Construction funding for Phase 2A (Westford, Carlisle, and Acton) was a surprise inclusion in the 2013-2016 Draft Transportation Improvement Program, better known as the TIP. On June 28 the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (Boston MPO: the organization of the 103 cities and towns in the Boston region that allocates federal and state transportation funds) voted to officially include BFRT Phase 2A for 2014 construction start in its most current four-year plan. Construction typically takes most of two construction seasons.

Our reading of the tea leaves is that the strong and persistent support of the BFRT by citizens, legislators (state and local), and the FBFRT, "tipped" the scales for inclusion of Phase 2A in a planning process that is severely budget constrained. (We have been garnering support and commenting on TIPs since 2007.) Thank you to the many FBFRT members who commented on the Draft TIP to help ensure its inclusion on the Final TIP, as well as the various town boards and town staff who commented and worked so diligently for the project's success.

Phase 2A in the TIP

"The proposed project will extend from the end of the BFRT Phase 1 (Westford-Lowell Phase) and continue south through Westford, Carlisle and Acton for a total length of approximately 4.88 miles. The construction will include: a new variable width (ranges from 10 to 12 feet) paved asphalt multi-use rail trail with 2-foot stabilized shoulders, an adjacent 6 foot stone dust trail (provided where feasible), trail pavement markings and signing, passively actuated flashing beacons at trail/roadway crossings, new roadway pavement markings and signing at trail crossings, construction of a pre-fabricated pedestrian bridge structure over Route 2A/119, rehabilitating six existing railroad bridges along the trail, constructing culverts, earthwork, landscaping and other items incidental to the construction of the rail trail."

The preliminary design (25% design) for Phase 2A was completed in 2008 with TeamWorks and Wetherbee Street in East Acton as the most prominent landmarks close to the southern terminus. Post 25% design work is underway and is scheduled to be completed for the 2014 construction season. As with all MassDOT projects there will be opportunities for public input on the final design at various stages. For current design details: www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/pdf/BFRT_2A_25.pdf.

Volunteer Opportunities

Opportunities are available for Scout and community service projects on the BFRT. Contact info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org for more information.



The Broggi family enjoying a beautiful spring day on the trail.

2B: Consensus on Rt. 2 Bridge

Acton and Concord have come to the consensus that the bridge over Rt. 2 should be on a skew alignment following the existing right of way, be aesthetically harmonious with the rural setting (e.g., farmland just west of the prison rotary), and be reasonably cost-effective. The alternative would have been a bridge that crossed perpendicular to the highway. It would be shorter but would have more wetland impact.

To achieve these consensus goals the Towns have asked MassDOT to reconsider the design criteria for the bridge. The Towns are asking if the design specifications can be relaxed from a H10 standard (able to accommodate emergency vehicles) to a H5 standard (able to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists), since there would be easy emergency access from both the Acton and Concord ends of the bridge. The benefits would be substantially lower cost and a more "aesthetically pleasing" bridge over Rt. 2.

MassDOT had promised earlier that, once consensus between the two towns was reached, it would quickly finish up the remaining design issues and hold a "25% Design" (MassDOT parlance for preliminary design) public hearing to take input on Phase 2B plans. The Friends are grateful for this progress and look forward to reviewing the 25% Design.

A Note from the President

What's next?

Nothing is 100% certain until construction starts. Next year a FFY 2014-2017 TIP will be debated and created. The TIP process is arcane & bureaucratic, but your input matters. With the economy as it is, only projects with widespread public support, like the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, are being scheduled, while those with little support are being shelved.

What can I do?

Become a member and/or sign-up for our e-mail (average two a month) so we can easily contact you to ask you to attend public meetings, vote on local articles, and send supportive comments on the TIP, not just for Phase 2A, but for all subsequent design and construction.

Thank you to all who have helped the Friends demonstrate the strong community support for the BFRT.

Tom Michelman, *President, Friends of BFRT*

Concord Approves Right-of-Way Acquisition

Concord's Spring Town Meeting voted to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire the BFRT Phase 2C right of way (ROW) from the state. This vote was required in order for the Town to initiate negotiations for the long-term use of the ROW for design and construction of the rail trail. Acton, as the MassDOT contractual lead Town for Phases 2A & 2C, will be facilitating the necessary discussions, communications, and meetings for negotiating the lease/purchase of the ROW for both Phases.

Send Us Your Stories and Photos

How do you use the trail? Whether it be for recreation, commuting, athletic training, family outings, healthy living, or whatever, we would love to hear from you. Send your rail trail stories and photographs to info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org.

Sudbury Town Meeting Reaffirms Town Support for Rail Trail

At Sudbury Town Meeting on May 8th, voters heartily reaffirmed the highly positive voting results (more than two to one) on the two Bruce Freeman Rail Trail questions that were originally on the March Town election ballot. One question concerned the design of the northernmost half-mile, and the other question asked whether the Town wanted a rail trail over the entire length of the state-owned rail bed.

The two non-binding resolutions in the Town Meeting Warrant were identical to the questions on the Town election ballot. Being non-binding resolutions, there was no vote count, but rather the judgment by the Moderator that the resolutions passed overwhelmingly. With a clear message from the residents, the Sudbury Board of Selectmen must now decide how to proceed with the design of the BFRT in Sudbury.

Rail Trail

**Vote
YES**



Chelmsford Center for the Arts

The Chelmsford Center for the Arts (CCA) cut the ribbon to the newly renovated historic Town Hall on July 3rd. The new main entrance is a few steps from the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail in Chelmsford Center, and the Friends have funded new bike racks there. It is the home to the CCA Gallery, Artists-in-Residence Studios, Cabaret Coffeehaus, and several other local cultural organizations. It also provides parking and restrooms for trail users. The Gallery is open Thursdays from 2 to 4 p.m., the first Friday of every month from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., and on weekends. Visit www.chelmsfordarts.org for more information and to view the CCA calendar which lists events like plays, live music, and film screenings. All are welcome.

Improvements in Chelmsford Center

Thanks to Ken Dews, FBFRT member and volunteer, direct access is now available from the BFRT to Zesty's Pizza, Subway sandwich shop, and neighboring businesses. Two handicapped-accessible openings were installed in June. A big thank-you to Ken and to those who contributed money for the project, including Zesty's Pizza and the Subway sandwich shop. The Friends provided matching funds for the project. Parking in these locations is for the businesses only.

The Town continues to make improvements at the rail trail/street intersections in the Center. Traffic islands and a brick crosswalk were installed recently at the Central Square crossing. At the corner of Chelmsford and Fletcher Streets, near the ball fields, new crosswalk signals with audio and visual countdown were installed, and making a right turn on red from Fletcher Street to Chelmsford Street is now prohibited.

The FBFRT is funding BFRT parking signs to be installed in Chelmsford Center. The Town plans to install additional handicapped-accessible parking for the rail trail on Katrina Road, off of Glen Avenue. Trail users are reminded to park only in authorized parking areas.



No matter how slow you're going on the BFRT, you're still lapping the ones on the couch... (photo by Patrick Cunha)

Spring Trail Counts

On Saturday May 5, the weather was cool and cloudy resulting in fewer trips recorded than on a warm sunny day in September 2011 (825 vs. 1500). Rain canceled the Tuesday count. The next counts will be in September. Thank you to all the volunteers! Your help is critical to performing these counts.

*The Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.*