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## Executive Summary

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This is a study to determine the feasibility, benefits, and costs of building a trail on the South Sudbury Industrial Track in Framingham and Sudbury.

CSX Transportation, Inc., (CSX) owns the 4.8-mile right-of-way. The southern endpoint is the active Fitchburg Secondary line in Framingham and the northern endpoint is the inactive Central Massachusetts line (Central Mass.) in Sudbury. The potential trail under study would make use of the entire South Sudbury Industrial Track, except that it would stop just short of the Fitchburg Secondary line.

The South Sudbury Industrial Track is part of a right-of-way that extends to Lowell. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns the line from the Central Mass. crossing in Sudbury to Lowell; this portion is known as the Lowell Secondary. Construction of a trail, called the Bruce N. Freeman Memorial Path, is expected to start on the northernmost section in 2006. This 6.8-mile segment would extend from the Lowell-Chelmsford line into Westford. Detailed engineering analyses have been done or are underway for all additional segments on the 13 miles of right-of-way between that northernmost section and the study area, traversing the communities of Westford, Carlisle, Acton, Concord, and Sudbury. The potential trail on the South Sudbury Industrial Track would be an extension of this Bruce N. Freeman Path.

The rail trail would be a major asset for Framingham, Sudbury, and surrounding communities. The proposed rail trail would provide access to many schools, as well as residential, commercial, and recreation areas. There is a proposal for a trail on the Central Mass. right-of-way, which extends intact west to Berlin and east to Belmont. From Belmont, there is the possibility of connecting to Alewife Station in Cambridge and to the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway and the Linear Park in Somerville. There are also plans to connect the Minuteman to the Charles River path system. West of the study area, the Central Mass. line crosses the Assabet River Rail Trail in Hudson. That trail, already built in Marlborough and Hudson, is slated to continue through Stow and Maynard, ending at the MBTA commuter rail station in South Acton.

The character of the trail would vary. In Framingham, the right-of-way passes through primarily residential areas. Most of the abutters live in single-family dwellings. The trail would abut the Hemenway School and conservation land owned by Sudbury Valley Trustees and the Garden in the Woods. The right-of-way in Sudbury passes primarily through open space, as well as residential and commercial areas.

Depending on the type of surface used, the trail would be expected to attract pedestrians, bicyclists, joggers, wheelchair users, and baby carriages. If a hard surface were used,

skaters would also use the facility. If the trail were not plowed, cross-country skiers would be accommodated as well.

Costs include acquisition, engineering and design, and construction. After construction, the two communities would need to police and maintain the facility.

If both communities agree to proceed, CSX would sell the right-of-way as a railbanked facility. If only one or neither community agrees to purchase the right-of-way, then several scenarios are possible, from a partial trail to selling the right-of-way parcel by parcel.

There would be extensive public review by state, regional, and local officials, and members of the general public in the design stage. It is during this stage that detailed decisions on the trail would be made. A detailed construction cost estimate would be included, although the actual construction cost would not be determined until the project is bid. The lowest responsible bidder would be awarded the construction contract. A preliminary estimate of the construction cost is \$3,300,000.

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# Introduction

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The communities of Sudbury and Framingham requested this study of a potential trail on the South Sudbury Industrial Track. The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization funded the study. The South Sudbury Industrial Track, located between the Central Mass. line in Sudbury and the Fitchburg Secondary line in Framingham, is owned by CSX. No trains have run on the line since 2000.

The term “shared-use path” denotes a path used by bicyclists, pedestrians, joggers, skaters, wheelchair users, etc. A “rail trail” is a category of shared-use path. It denotes a path that is built on a railroad right-of-way. As this is a study of such a facility, the more specific term “rail trail” will be used.

A task force composed of representatives from agencies, organizations, and the two communities met during this study. The agencies and organizations that appointed representatives were the MetroWest Growth Management Committee (MWGMC), the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT), the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The following individuals served on the task force:

Framingham	Bill Williamson, Christine Long (alternate)
Sudbury	Dick Williamson, Deborah Dineen (alternate)
MWGMC	John Stasik
EOT	Josh Lehman, Todd Fontanella
DCR	Dan Driscoll
MAPC	Scott Walker, Barbara Lucas (alternate)

Other individuals who helped with various aspects of this study included Craig Della Penna of Greenway Solutions; Betsy Goodrich of the Rails to Trails Conservancy; Bryan Taberner of the Town of Framingham; Harvey Bingham and Tom Fortmann of the Friends of the Minuteman Bikeway in Lexington; and George Batchelor, Steve McLaughlin, and Steve Miller of MassHighway.

Input was also received from citizens attending two public meetings in 2005, held on February 2 in Framingham and on February 17 in Sudbury.

Chapter 1 of this report presents background information on the study area, including demographics, travel patterns and services, and bicycle and pedestrian crash data. Chapter 2 provides a brief history of the rail service on the South Sudbury Industrial Track, written by Thomas J. Humphrey of CTPS, and a description of the right-of-way, including details on width, environmental issues, and current uses. Chapter 3 discusses the proposed trail, including modes of travel, street crossings, potential destinations, parking, community impacts, and costs. The final chapter concerns implementation.

Thomas J. Humphrey also wrote Appendix A, a more detailed description of the history of the rail line. Appendix B is an excerpt from the environmental section of the Framingham-Sudbury Rail Trail Task Force Report. Appendix C describes the method employed to estimate users of the proposed trail.

Copies of this report are being sent to state, regional, and local officials, staff members in the study area communities, area libraries, and interested individuals.