

MEMO

From: Len Simon

To: Planning Board

Date: January 2, 2021

Updated May 4, 2021

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL, MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL, A CONNECTION TO ROUTE 20, A POCKET PARK, AND PLANNED DEVELOPMENT IN SUDBURY'S COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

INTRODUCTION

This memo will address multiple changes that are likely to occur in Sudbury's commercial district within the next 2 to 3 years. The purpose of the memo is to provide town planners, boards, commissions, and special committees, such as the Master Plan Steering Committee, with a common set of facts to allow them to develop an integrated plan, and keep current with multiple aspects of the Comprehensive Plan as it emerges. Adoption of a Comprehensive Plan will allow, for the first time, planning and implementation of changes that are on our doorstep, to optimize the appeal and vibrancy of central Sudbury.

One objective is to avoid the kinds of piecemeal changes that have plagued most of the Route 20 corridor, from Horsepond Road to Concord Road.

Within the next two to three years the following changes are likely to take place:

1. Construction of Phase 2D of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT), 4.6 miles, from the Concord/Sudbury line to the Mass Central corridor which should begin in the summer of 2022. Construction will require at least two construction seasons.
2. Construction of the Eversource underground high voltage transmission line, along the Mass Central right of way, from the Sudbury substation to the Hudson/Sudbury town line.
3. Upon completion of the underground transmission line, Eversource will install a gravel service road within the Mass Central right of way.

4. A hard surface will then be placed on top of the gravel service road by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to serve as part of the Mass Central Rail Trail (Wayside Branch).
5. The (north-south) BFRT and the (east-west) Mass Central Rail Trail will form a T intersection at the 'diamond', a point 0.22 miles north of Rt. 20, along the (north-south) CSX corridor. The diamond is where the two railroad lines intersected. (See PowerPoint)

Now is the time to plan to upgrade the town-owned 0.22 mile of CSX corridor, which is now a walkable path, from the diamond to Rt. 20. The objectives are to:

1. Extend the aesthetic, safe, and functional design of the BFRT from the diamond to Rt. 20.
2. Avoid the need for BFRT and MassCentral Rail Trail users to divert onto Station Rd. and Union Ave., which are not pedestrian and bicycle-user safe.
3. Avoid the need for pedestrians and bicycle users to navigate the five driveway curb cuts between Union Avenue and the CSX corridor: Citizens Bank, West Sport, Jewelry Exchange, Sudbury Mobil Exxon Station.
4. Prepare for the eventual continuation of the BFRT south to the Framingham line.
5. Ensure the trail 100% emergency-vehicle and ADA accessible for all users.

Sudbury residents who have appropriated one million dollars for the design of the BFRT and voted for it at multiple town meetings and at the ballot box for more than 10 years, expect and deserve, safe and direct access throughout the full length of the rail trail.

Construction of the rail trail from the diamond to Rt. 20 will be paid by federal and state funds, just as the \$12,887,676 cost of the BFRT Phase 2D is now being paid for with federal and state funds.

In its current state, there is a direct, walkable path, varying in width, about 6 to 8 feet, from Station Road to Route 20. It was dry, end-to-end, when I walked and photographed it on March 26, 2021. When the BFRT and/or Mass Central Rail Trail users reach the location where the paths intersect, i.e., the diamond, trail users will use the readily visible, existing path to get to Route 20. However, it is not ADA compliant, nor emergency vehicle accessible. It will not be passable when foliated.

FOLLOW THIS LINK FOR PHOTOS OF CSX CORRIDOR FROM RT. 20 TO STATION ROAD, MARCH 23, 2021:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/TtRz9XbHgbGTLb198>

Also, residents and visitors to the commercial district in Sudbury will have safe, direct access the BFRT and MassCentral Rail Trail. Upgrading to a MassDOT standard rail trail is safer and more direct than diverting along Rt. 20. to Union Avenue, turning north onto Union Avenue, then left onto Station Road. Union Avenue and Station Road do not have walkways.

Planning should incorporate access points and sufficient parking for both rail trails' users, thus avoiding interference with parking on existing commercial properties. A second, though no less important a consideration, is commercial development in the immediate vicinity of the CSX crossing of Rt. 20, next to Nobscot Road. A third set of considerations is the availability of sanitary facilities, bicycle parking, and ADA accessible amenities.

Existing pedestrian crossing and traffic controls at the intersection of Rt. 20, Nobscot Road, and the BFRT could be modified for access to the pocket park and the southward continuation of the CSX corridor.

It has been the practice of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and the Department of Conservation and Recreation to include and fund trail access and parking needs in their rail trail designs.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation and MassDOT encourage the integration of spurs to increase accessibility and usage of rail trails.

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

This is believed to be the first time two major multiuse paths, under the jurisdiction of two distinct public agencies has occurred. The expertise of both agencies should be combined and integrated with the Town's vision for a once-in-a-generation opportunity to enhance Sudbury's attractiveness and livability.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

1. Design and construction, to Mass DOT standards, of the 0.22 miles (1,200 feet) of the CSX corridor from the diamond to Rt. 20 to be part of the BFRT.

2. Incorporate, by design, a gate or similar structure at the southern end of the BFRT to prevent bicyclists and pedestrians from proceeding directly onto Rt. 20.
3. Confirm that MPO will approve funding for this multi-use trail, and that MassDOT will award the construction contract for this section of the BFRT.
4. Preserve historical significance of the area immediately adjacent to the diamond to make it a destination, similar to the pedestrian mall in West Concord where historical artifacts are displayed.
5. Acquisition of the former gas station located at the southwest corner of Rt. 20 and Nobscot Road for a 'pocket park', with provisions for use as a rest stop for trail users, bicyclists, and automobile and bicycle parking.

FOLLOW THIS LINK FOR PHOTOS OF ABANDONED GAS STATION AT INTERSECTION OF ROUTE 20 AND NOBSCOT ROAD:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/dENrRy8H3tPg94zS6>

Summit Realty Partners Website for 465 Boston Post Road, Sudbury
<http://www.summitrealtypartners.com/Sudbury%20MA%20%20465%20Boston%20Post%20Road%2010.16.2019.pdf>

6. Permanent, accommodating free-standing sanitary facilities for trail users, visitors, and shoppers, withing the 'pocket park' at the former gas station location. Not portable bathrooms.
7. Potential acquisition of additional parcels, or partial parcels, to augment rail trail parking and access, i.e., Interstate Oil and Sullivan Tire.
8. A comprehensive pedestrian crossing and traffic control system at the intersection of Rt. 20 and Nobscot Road.
9. Encourage small business development that would provide services desirable to rail trail users in all seasons.
10. Interim and long-term planning for the 1.1-mile portion of the CSX corridor south of Rt. 20 to the Framingham line.

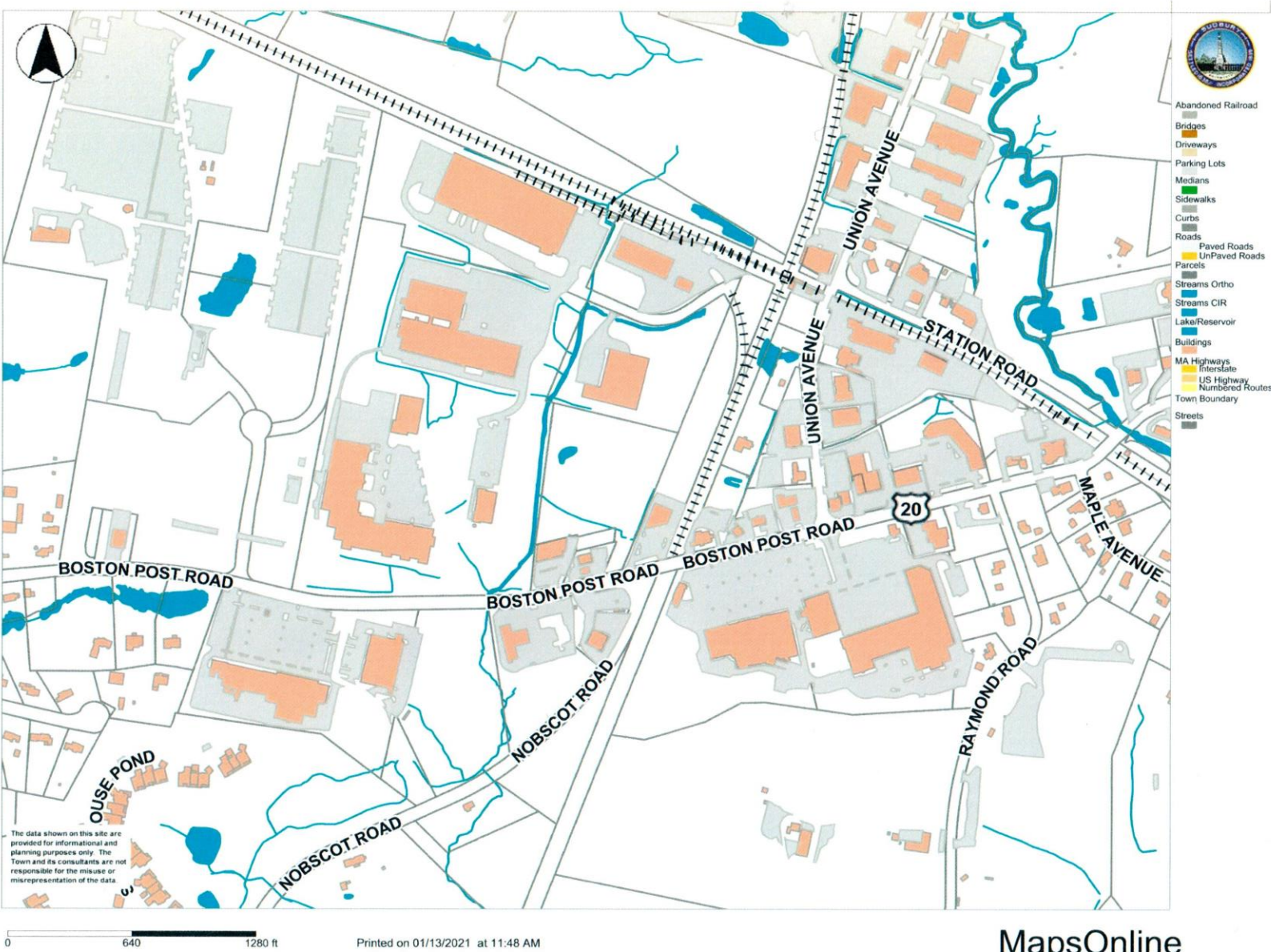
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT

BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL,
MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL,
THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Len Simon

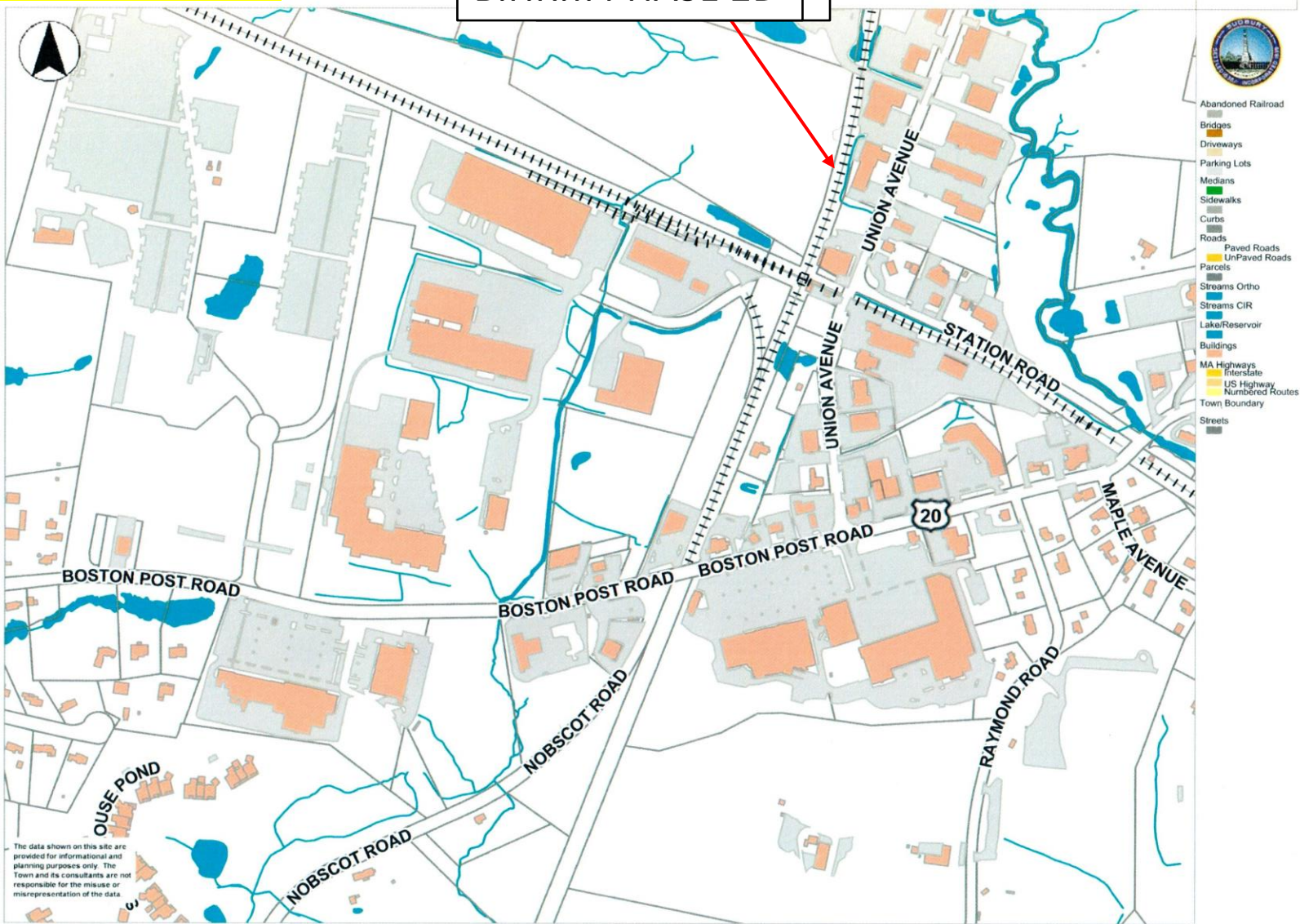
January 15, 2021

AREA OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



AREA OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

B.F.R.T. PHASE 2D



0 640 1280 ft

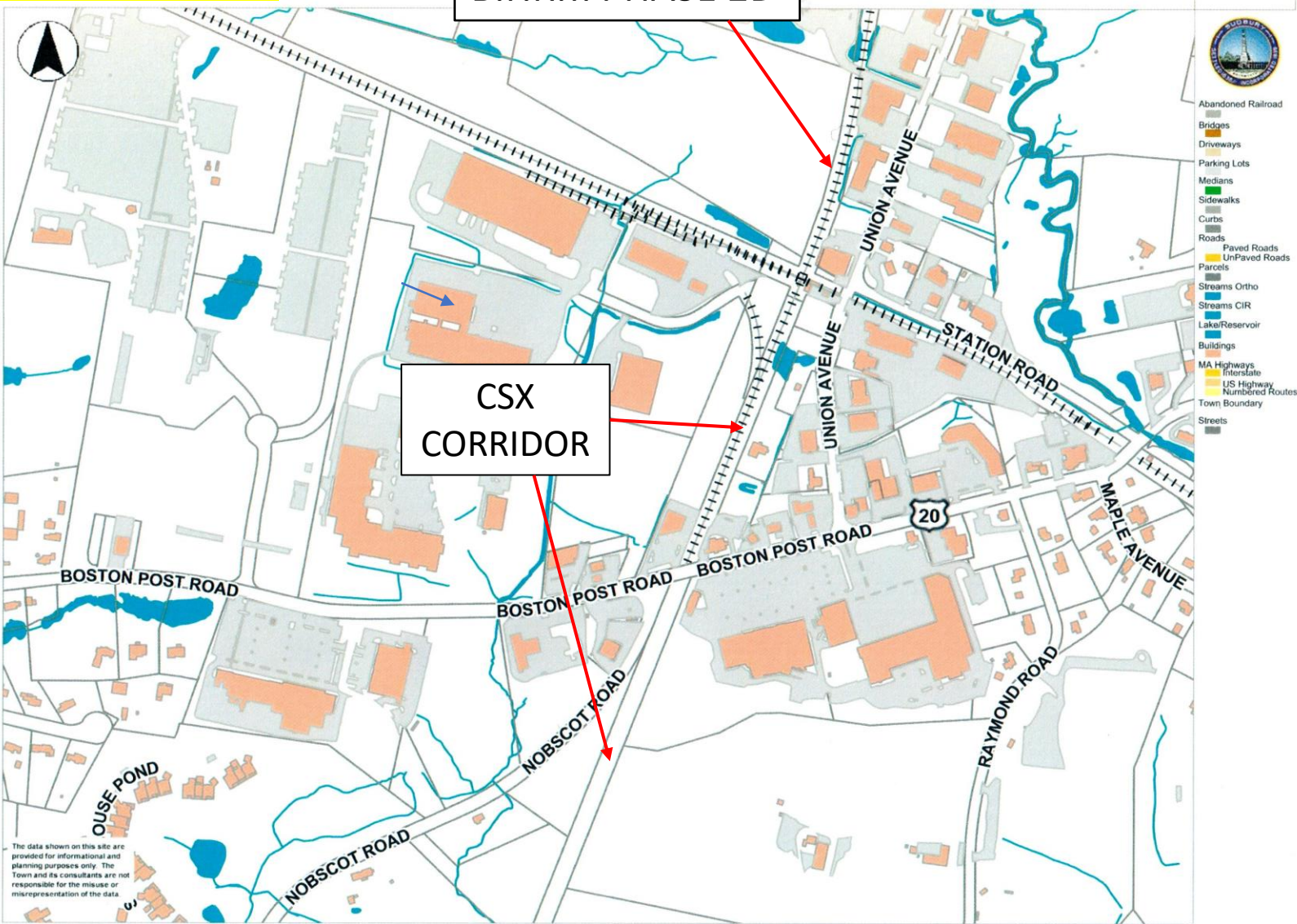
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MapsOnline

AREA OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

B.F.R.T. PHASE 2D

CSX
CORRIDOR



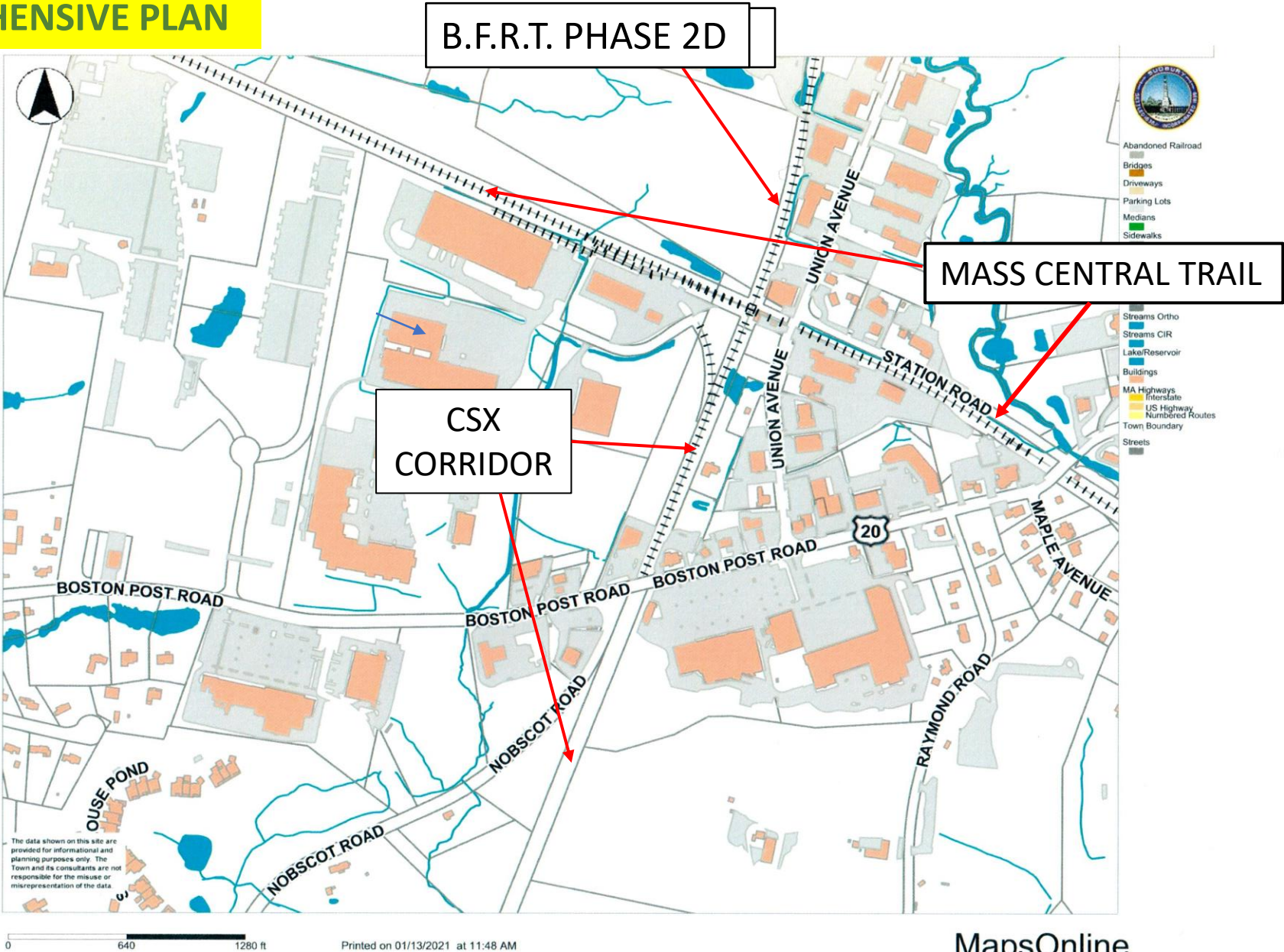
The data shown on this site are provided for informational and planning purposes only. The Town and its consultants are not responsible for the misuse or misrepresentation of the data.

0 640 1280 ft

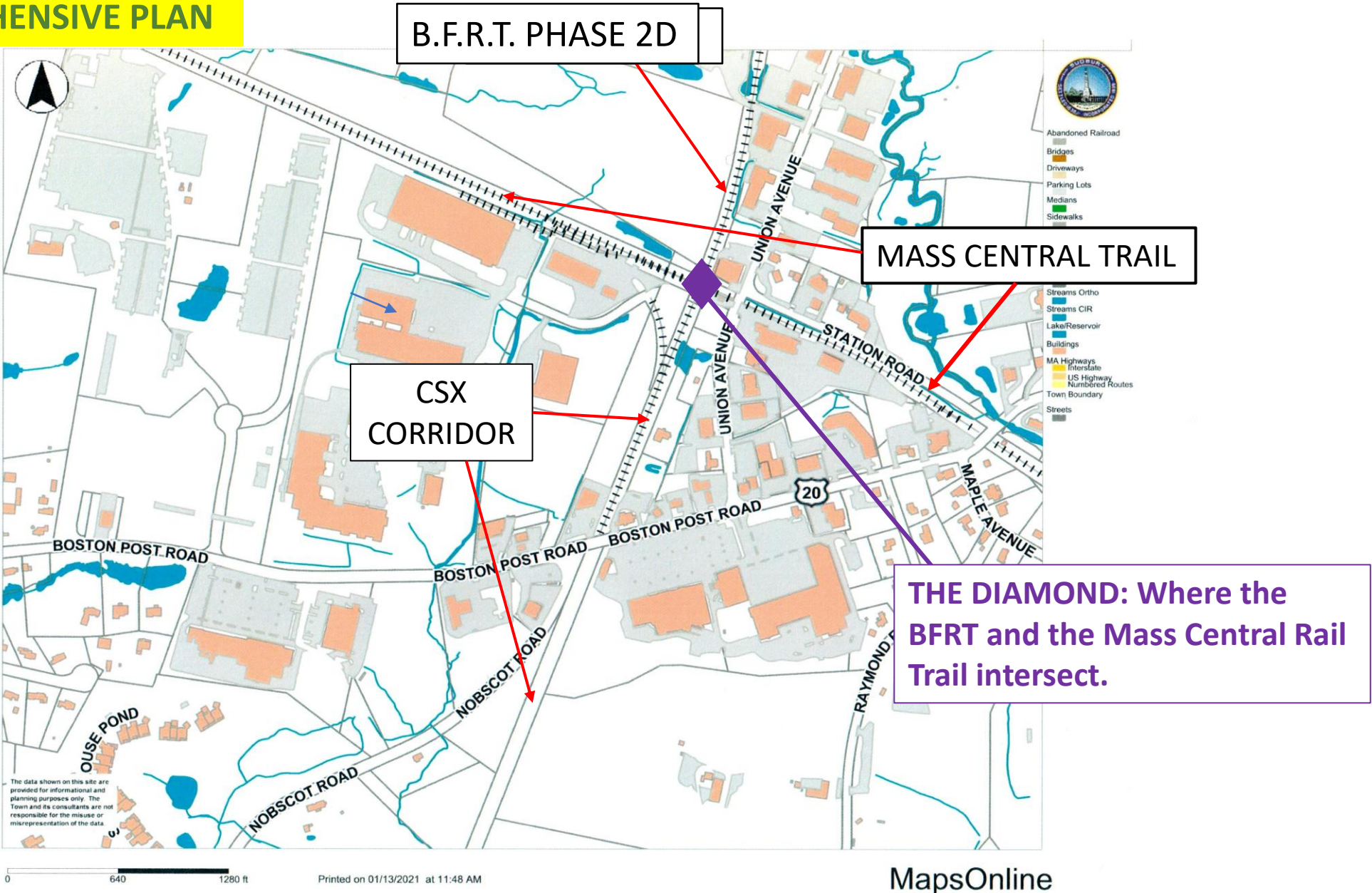
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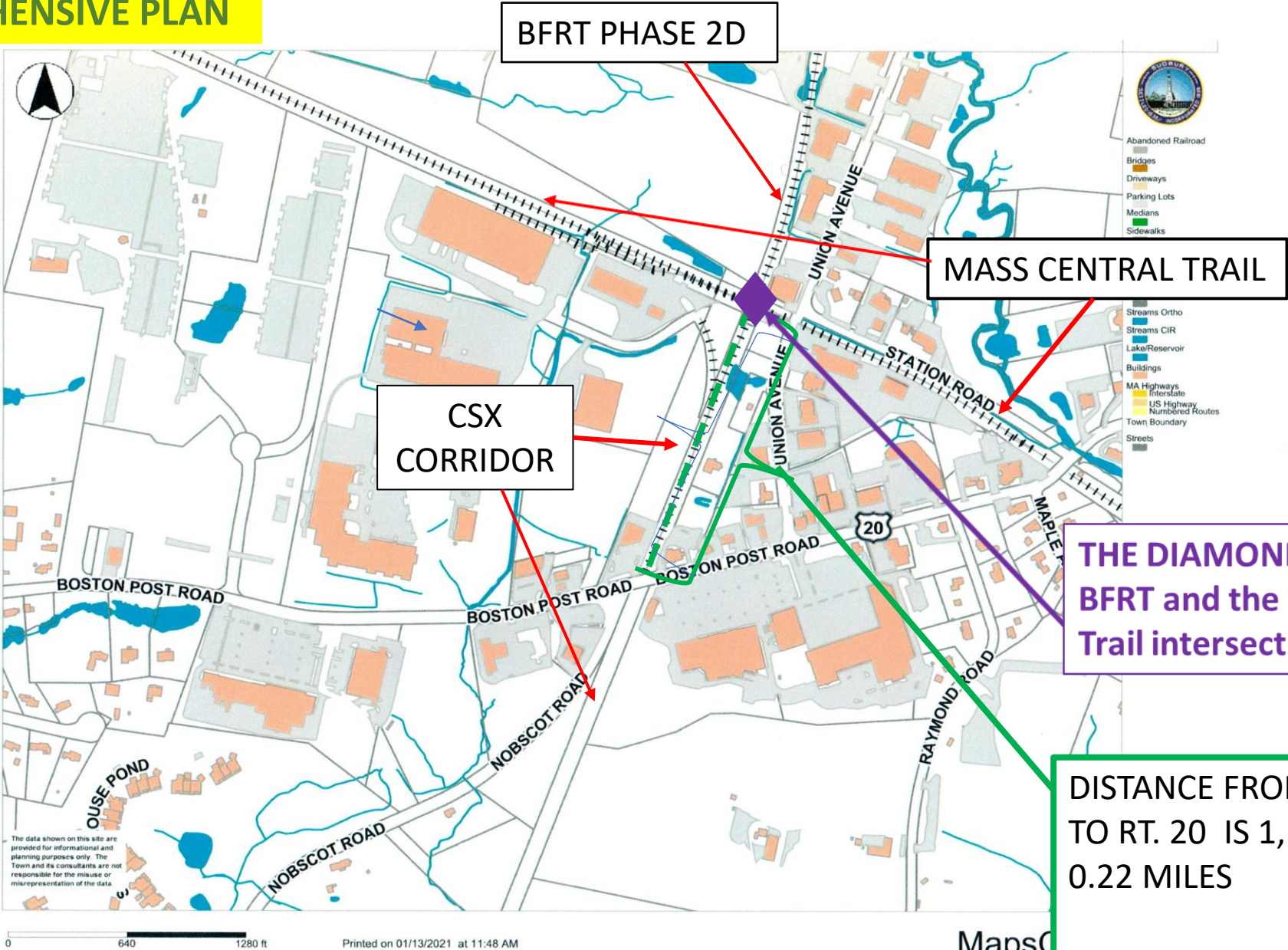
AREA OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



AREA OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



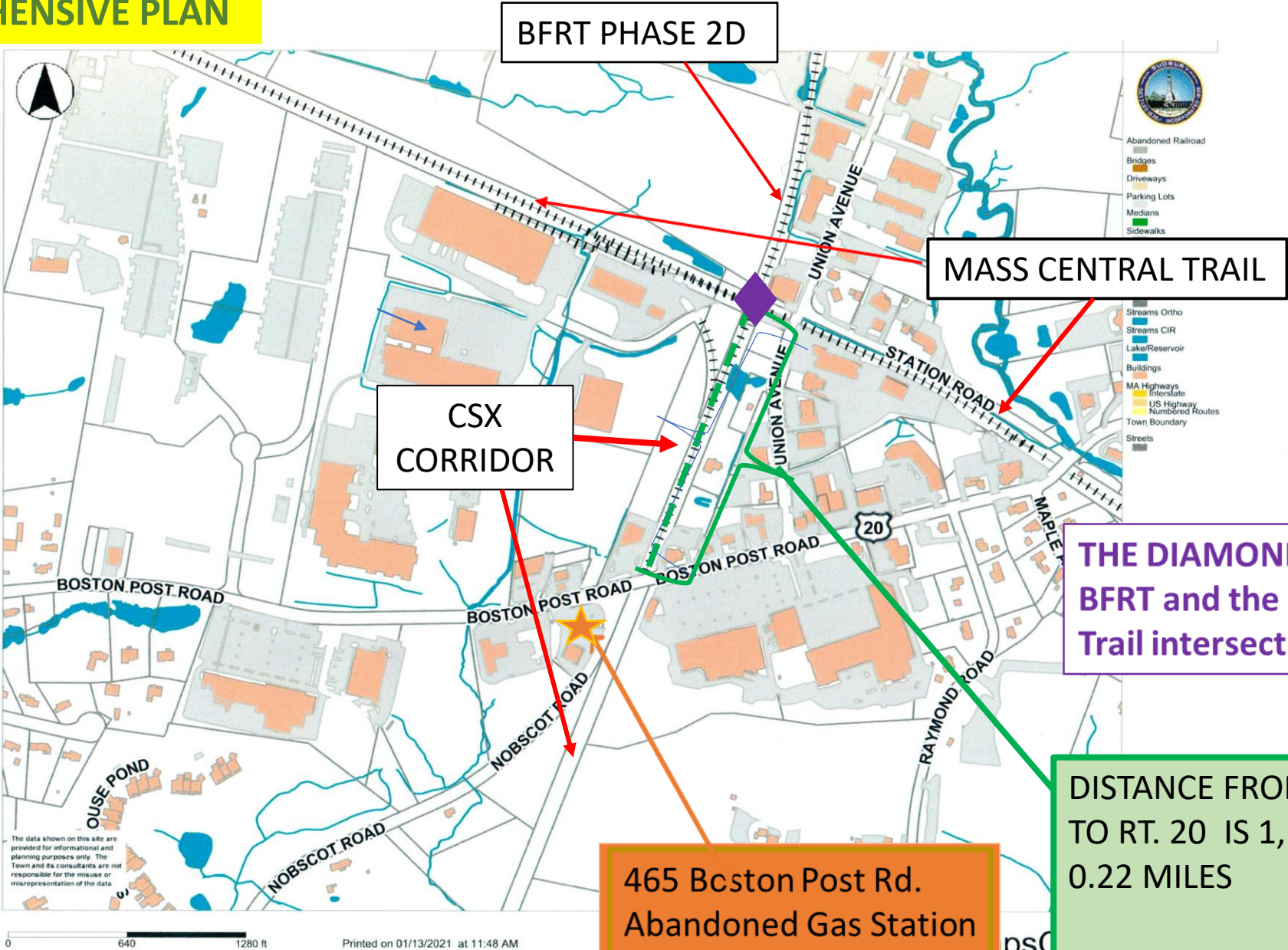
AREA OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



THE DIAMOND: Where the BFRT and the Mass Central Rail Trail intersect.

DISTANCE FROM THE DIAMOND TO RT. 20 IS 1,180 FEET, ABOUT 0.22 MILES

AREA OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



View: Looking north west to the diamond,
the cross-point
of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail with the Mass Central Trail.

MASS CENTRAL



The image shows a wooded area with a dirt path and a paved area. In the background, there are two sets of railroad tracks running horizontally. A yellow arrow points from the 'MASS CENTRAL' label to the tracks on the left, and another yellow arrow points from the same label to the tracks on the right. In the foreground, a blue arrow points from the 'BFRT' label to the tracks on the left, and another blue arrow points from the same label to the tracks on the right. The ground is covered with brown pine needles and some patches of grey asphalt.

BFRT

View: Looking north along Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, at the diamond, the cross-point with the Mass Central Trail.

Mass Central Trail

BRUCE FREEMAN R. T.
State Owned Section

BRUCE FREEMAN R. T.
Town owned
CSX Section



View: Looking south along Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, at the diamond, the cross-point with the Mass Central Trail.



Station Rd.

View: Looking east along the Mass Central Trail, at the diamond, the cross-point with the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.



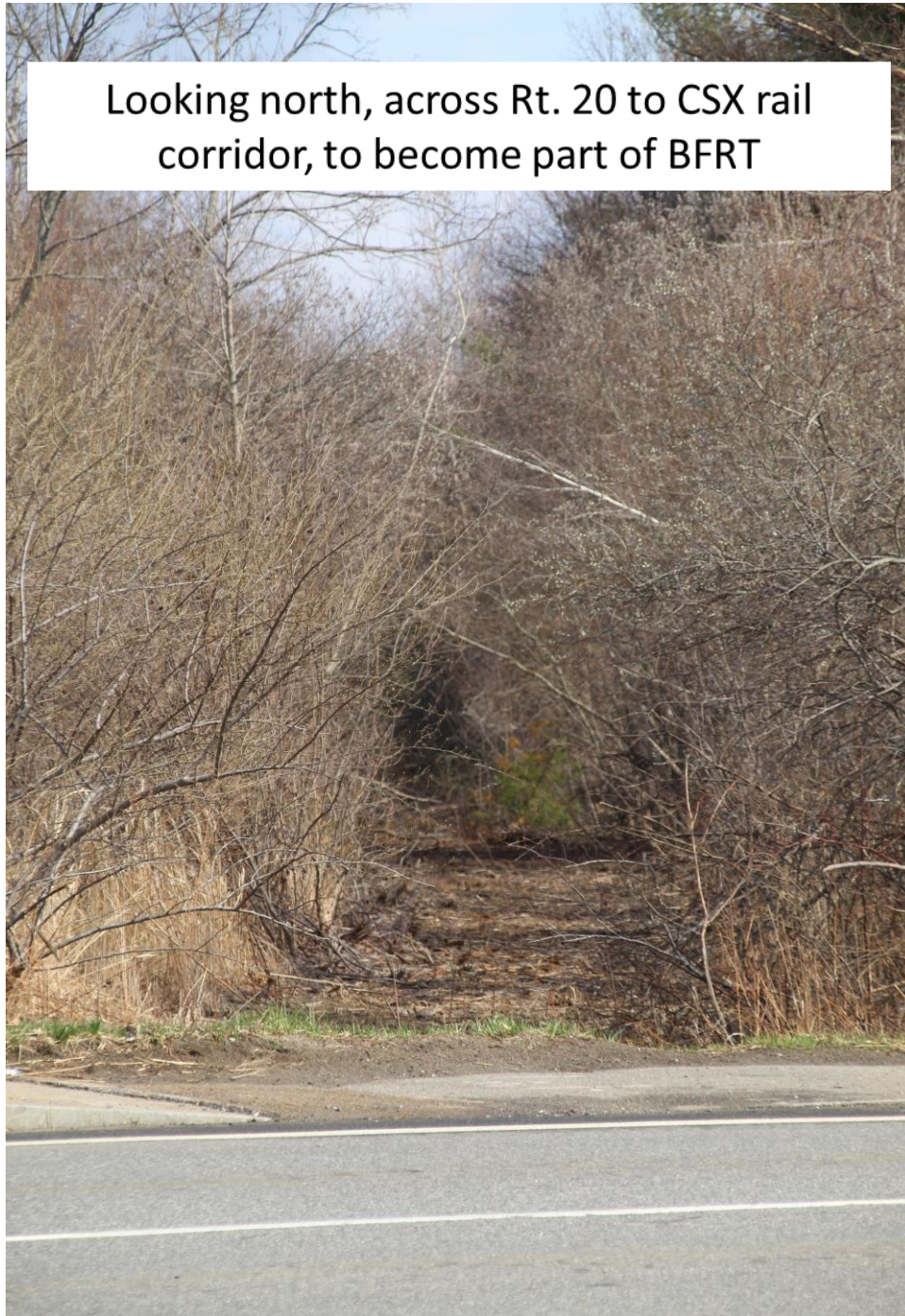
Looking west across Nobscot Rd. towards 465 Boston Post Road,
abandoned gas station



Looking north, across Rt. 20 to CSX rail
corridor, to become part of BFRT



Looking north, across Rt. 20 to CSX rail
corridor, to become part of BFRT



Looking north to CSX rail corridor,
to become part of BFRT



Looking south across Boston Post Road to
CSX rail corridor, to become part of BFRT



Looking south across Boston Post Road
towards gas station



Looking east on Boston Post Road
Abandoned gas station on right side



