



# Town of Sudbury

## Historical Commission

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August 18, 2021

Mr. Paul Jahnige, Director  
Trails and Greenway Section  
MA Department of Conservation and Recreation  
136 Damon Street  
Northampton, MA 01060

RE: Massachusetts Central Rail Trail – Wayside Branch in Sudbury

By Registered USPS and Email to [jahnige@mass.gov](mailto:jahnige@mass.gov)

Dear Mr. Jahnige,

The 1881 Central Massachusetts Railroad (CMRR) located in Sudbury is a unique extant historical resource, comprised of over 60 individual railroad features and structures identified to date, which has been evaluated by the Historical Commission's cultural resource consultant to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NR) as a linear transportation corridor historic district. This railroad enabled the development in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century of a regional floriculture greenhouse industry, known as a carnation capital, and supported rural farming, and after World War II helped transform Sudbury into a suburban commuter town.

All the Central Massachusetts Railroad structures and railroad features are character-defining contributing elements to the potential NR historic district corridor. As an important part of Sudbury's heritage, the Historical Commission wants the entire CMRR corridor and its individual railroad features retained, protected, and eventually preserved and restored.

### MBTA-DCR Lease Agreement

As the Historical Commission's August 16, 2021 letter commented, the Commission understands that DCR entered into an Alternative Transportation Corridor Lease Agreement (Agreement) on December 30, 2010 with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) which allows the MBTA and DCR to remove and dispose of rail infrastructure. According to Agreement Provision 13, Existing Utilities:

“The MBTA reserves the right to remove the rail infrastructure and agrees that if it chooses to do so, said removal shall be within 180 days of the date the DCR notifies the MBTA to be the date of the trail construction commencement. The DCR shall be responsible for removal and disposal of all other rail infrastructure, after said 180 days, and may retain any revenue from DCR's removal and disposal of such.”

Removal of contributing railroad elements from the linear corridor by either the MBTA, DCR or another party would potentially adversely impact the resource areas' historical integrity and its ability to convey its historical significance, and therefore put in jeopardy its NR historic district eligibility status.

For this reason, the SHC is concerned about the potential loss of railroad infrastructure by removal and would like to understand if DCR and/or the MBTA intends to remove any infrastructure and, if so, what infrastructure and when. The SHC recommends that plans for removal of CMRR infrastructure be done in consultation with the SHC.

As the SHC stated in our August 16<sup>th</sup> letter, the SHC would like to meet with DCR at our September monthly evening meeting to consult on MCRT design details discussed in that letter, and also to discuss the issue of infrastructure removal. The Commission may be reached through the Town of Sudbury Planning and Community Development Department at [historical@sudbury.ma.us](mailto:historical@sudbury.ma.us).

Sincerely,



Chris Hagger  
Chair  
Sudbury Historical Commission



Diana Warren  
Vice Chair  
Sudbury Historical Commission

cc:

Brona Simon, MHC (#RC.62384)  
Jonathan Patton, MHC  
Sudbury Town Manager  
Sudbury Town Counsel  
John Eddins, ACHP (#016522)