

Assabet River Rail Trail

telephone interview with Michelle Ciccolo, Assistant Town Manager, Hudson

7/16/07

Bridget Hanson Interviewer

What were funding sources for trail?

Federal Transportation Enhancement, CMAC, TDDM (?), Federal earmark, HPP (?), small amt DCR recreational trail project, private developer

How much money? \$6 million Federal/3.5miles Hudson/Marlboro,private developer paid for 2.5 miles

Who administers Trail? Primarily Recreation, police patrol it also. There is a municipal steering committee with reps from all 5 towns. Non-profit group coordinates and promotes.

Did you invest in any equipment for trail? cleaning equipment, motorcycle, 2 bikes, bike patrol training

They are looking for grant money for pedestrian controlled lights at crossings

Do you have any estimates of use?

40 users/hour at a crossing on a busy weekend day

Do you have any estimate of out of town users? No (Hudson would like to promote out of town use to revitalize downtown)

Has parking or traffic been a problem? No. There are 3 dedicated parking lots. So far no issues of overflow/crowding (from AART website- 20 spaces at Brooks Pharmacy at rt 85, 15 spaces off Rt 62 downtown, 25 spaces at Wilkins st)

Are there rules for use ?

yes. they mean to post them, but hasn't happened yet.

is there a curfew? No

Is there crime? Graffiti in the tunnel

A person was hit by a car at a crossing and died. (not clear if this was trail-related, so I guess it was a crossing which involved more than just the trail)

Have you had issues with illegal motorized vehicles? no, this was more of a problem on the unimproved rail corridor

Do police patrol? Yes on bike and motorcycle

Are there bylaws to enforce rules? Yes, this is most helpful- non-criminal enforcement bylaw.

Complaints from abutters?No

Measures for privacy? none really. The people who were most vocal in wanting screening were farther from the trail. Those close to it didn't ask for screening.

Effects on business or property value? none measured. She has subjective sense that property values will increase.

Maintenance? done by DPW (?sweeping) no separate maintenance item in budget

Resurfacing? No, trail is only 2 years old

Volunteers? Friends group, garden clubs- planting/maintaining beds at crossings, trail clean-up days, caboose with exhibits.

Advice/suggestions-

- save enough money to pay designer during construction for things that come up
- at 100% design, MassHighway takes over, bids out contract, towns lose ability to supervise during construction, figure way to maintain some control
- have bylaw for non-criminal enforcement of trail rules
- appoint town staff (planner/DPW, Conservation,Rec) to joint municipal steering committee
- Plan for adequate parking
- put down root barriers

Assabet River Rail Trail- Hudson, Mass
phone interview with Tony Marques, DPW director
8/18/08
Bridget Hanson interviewer

What do you do to maintain the trail?

Mow sides and adjacent grassy areas, empty trash barrels, blow off leaves spring and fall, clean up fallen branches (spring and when needed), maintain plantings at benches (minimal effort needed), wash off graffiti in tunnel.

No winter maintenance is done.

Trail is 8-10 feet wide and paved, so accessible to vehicles. There are bollards at crossings with standardized lock.

Because the trail is new, they have not had to replace/repair any fencing or redo traffic markings at intersections. (He said because these were done with a thermoplastic material they're very durable.)

Who does the work?

Almost entirely DPW staff. They have seasonal employees in the summer. No additional staff was added, but they are now stretched a little more. He does not have estimate of additional man-hours the trail has required. He describes trail as a town project, with DPW and Recreation involved. Has any additional equipment been required?

A power washer and special soap for graffiti in the tunnel, which is located in remote area. Occasional graffiti on fencing. They already had a tractor with a blower on it for leaves.

Any issues with tree roots disrupting surface?

No, trail design is such that no trees are near the paving.

Anything else?

Abutter issues minimal. There was an issue where a subdivision road ended in view of trail and people assumed access from road. Issue resolved with No Trespassing sign, no fence built. Some abutters like trail; one gentleman gets praise for his extensive garden.

He says you can assume contamination from tires, dripping diesel, pesticide use. Suggests asphalt surface because where they've used stone dust in park paths it required a lot of maintenance and they ended up paving it anyway. Also you have to replace stone dust because it gets blown off with the leaves.

Assabet River rail trail- maintenance questions- Marlborough
Phone interview with Chris White, DPW
Bridget Hanson, interviewer 8/28/08

What do you do to maintain the rail trail?

Mow it about 6 times a year and treat for poison ivy about twice a year.

Do you have a specific budget for this?

No, it's incorporated into regular budget. This stretches personnel somewhat, may look for increase in budget equal to 6 days of mowing

Any graffiti problem?

No, that's in Hudson.

Any problems with tree roots?

No

Comments or suggestions?

They have 2 industrial crossings- one leading to Boston Scientific, the other to Rt 495. He stressed the importance of signage both for trail users and for motorists and for maintaining open sight lines.

They have an adopt-a-bench program.