

Rail Trail Conversion Advisory Committee

The Rail Trail Conversion Advisory Committee (RTCAC) was created by the Selectmen in November 2004, to provide a mechanism for the Town to examine the conversion of the unused Framingham-Lowell rail line into a recreational path and alternative transportation corridor, to help identify and address the many questions and concerns of Sudbury residents concerning this project, and to support town staff as they study the feasibility of such a conversion. The section of the rail trail in Sudbury would continue the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail whose most northern 6.8 miles opened in Chelmsford in 2009.

At a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen November 3, 2010, the RTCAC was apprised that the Town had accepted the field survey of the corridor approved by Town Meeting in 2007, although the wetlands delineation specified in the RFP was never completed. The Selectmen included completion of the concept plan for the trail in Sudbury by Town Staff as one of their 2011 goals. The intent was for Town Staff to present a concept plan to MassDOT to determine how much flexibility the Town would be granted in designing the trail to Sudbury's standards. The RTCAC has no formal role in this. The Board considered the six recommendations by RTCAC that were submitted as part of the Notebook; the Notebook is available to the public as multiple documents on the RTCAC web page.

The RTCAC hosted representatives of the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization on March 22, 2011 to describe the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), part of the complex and volatile funding process for federally funded highway projects, including rail trails.

On September 22, 2011 the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail presented their proposal to the RTCAC, and subsequently to the Selectmen, to provide \$50,000 for the 25% design of a half-mile extension into Sudbury of the trail proposed in Concord. The proposed design would include access to the Davis Field parking area. The proposal requires building the extension to MassDOT standards. The RTCAC is not in a position to accept such a proposal; that is a policy decision for the Sudbury Board of Selectmen. Another group presented a wildlife study along the corridor that augments the information presented in the four season wildlife study approved by the Town of Sudbury in 2007.

On October 13, 2011, the RTCAC approved by a five to three roll call vote a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen that the Board accept the Friends' proposal. That recommendation was submitted to the Board by e-mail on October 24 and accepted by the Board on November 1.

The information compiled by the RTCAC is posted on the committee page of the Town website where citizens can find an up-to-date account of our activities.