

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.

On September 27, 2011 the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail presented to the Selectmen an offer of \$50,000 for the 25% design of a half-mile extension into Sudbury of the trail proposed in Concord. To gauge the support of Sudbury citizens for a rail trail and for this proposed extension the Board of Selectman placed two non-binding questions on the ballot for the March 26, 2012, town elections:

- 1) Should the Town of Sudbury create a recreational Rail Trail more or less on the old rail right of way in Sudbury known as the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT)?
- 2) Should the Town of Sudbury move forward with designing a 0.5 mile segment of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) in north Sudbury from Rt. 117 at Davis Field to the Concord Town border?

While the Selectmen created these questions and the summary information, the RTCAC was provided the arguments in the warrant in support of and opposed to both measures. The RTCAC also participated in the March 19, 2012, informational session hosted by Selectman O'Brien to allow citizens to ask questions, raise concerns, and voice support of or opposition to these proposals. Both questions passed by about a 2 to 1 margin in the March election.

These two questions were also presented as non-binding resolutions at Sudbury 2012 Annual Town Meeting; members of the RTCAC supplied both the presentation in support of and in opposition to these resolutions. Both resolutions were approved by Town Meeting.

On August 15, 2012, the Board of Selectmen directed that Conservation Coordinator Debbie Dineen, DPW Director Bill Place, and Town Planner Jody Kablack to develop three concepts for a trail in Sudbury. Town Staff plans to develop these concepts by the end of 2012, using information collected by the RTCAC and potentially consulting the RTCAC for specific expertise.

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.