

**Town of Sudbury
Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
Environmental & Engineering Assessment**

Public Information Meeting / Workshop
Thursday, June 15, 2006 at 6:00 PM
Sudbury Town Hall

Meeting Summary

On June 15, 2006, about 70 people attended a meeting on the *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Environmental & Engineering Assessment* and participated in a workshop session designed to give the community an opportunity to express their thoughts and concerns on the project.

The consultant, Fay, Spofford & Thorndike, gave a brief presentation on the scope of services they will provide for the Assessment and presented an overview on rail trail corridors. Following the presentation, attendees broke into four workshop groups and discussed the following six questions:

1. Would your family use a rail trail for transportation? Where would you likely travel to and from?
2. Would your family use a rail trail for recreation? What type of activity - walking, biking, inline skating, etc?
3. What type of rail trail surface material do you feel would be most appropriate along this corridor?
4. Where do you anticipate your family would park or access the rail trail?
5. What effect would a rail trail have upon Sudbury? (Positive or Negative)
6. Any additional comments?

Citizens unable to attend the June 15 meeting were encouraged to submit their comments via email and/or mail through Thursday, July 20. Copies of these comments can be viewed in hardcopy form at the Town's offices.

Fay, Spofford & Thorndike compiled the following summary which is intended to outline the comments made by participants attending the June 15 workshop and is not intended to be a transcript. Similar comments have been grouped together and organized by topic. Comments are listed in no particular order and have not been validated for factual correctness. The comments listed are the opinions of individual participants and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Town of Sudbury as a whole.

The following is a summary of the comments received at the workshop:

QUESTION 1: Would your family use a rail trail for transportation? Where would you likely travel to and from?

Yes

- Featherland Park
- Shopping
- Parks, fields & grounds
- School, Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School
- Town Center
- Restaurants
- Shopping
- West Concord Train Station
- Route 20
- Cambridge – one to two times a week
- Library
- Conservation lands

No

- Would not use the trail
- Not likely
- More for recreation use than for travel

QUESTION 2: Would your family use a rail trail for recreation? What type of activity - walking, biking, inline skating, etc?

General

- If paved, good place to teach kids how to bicycle
- Not a good place to teach – too much traffic (especially if well used)
- No inline skating – accidents on the Lexington trail, need a dedicated lane
- Good to have dedicated lanes for different users
- People need to know the rules

Yes

- Walking
- Walk/run with strollers
- Biking
- Cross country skiing
- Running / jogging
- Everything
- Bird watching

No

- Would not use the trail
- Too boring
- Dangerous for kids and/or families

QUESTION 3: What type of rail trail surface material do you feel would be most appropriate along this corridor?

General

- Would not use the trail
- Not sure - don't know enough about the available options
- Prefer current surface with rails intact
- Concerned about limitations on use and environmental impacts
- A 8 foot or 10 foot width surface
- Northampton used recycled glass but not working well – punctures bike tires
- Cabot Trail on Prince Edward Island not well used; Montreal Rail Trail is unpaved and very usable, users go slower
- Surface that is contiguous with other portions of the corridor

Paved

- Asphalt because it allows the widest use, least amount of maintenance and less noisy than other options
- Paved – soft sand, erosion, uneven surface makes it difficult
- Paved or don't do it at all
- Paved – unpaved expensive and difficult to maintain
- It is only multi-use if it is paved
- Paved like the other sections of trail
- Paved or alternative hard unpaved surface

Non-Paved

- Not asphalt – prefer something more environmentally friendly
- Prefer something like the Minuteman National Park Battle Road Trail
- Possibly recycled materials
- Something firm that won't wash out – which acts like asphalt
- Soft surface to allow equestrian use
- Stonedust but presents seasonal concerns and wheelchair accessibility issues
- Soil stabilizer
- Paved for entire length – lowest cost for the widest variety of users, funding and maintenance concerns
- No objection to a high quality soft surface – would compromise
- Unpaved – for horses and nature walks
- Unpaved trail – Lincoln experience is very good
- Unpaved because s/he doesn't bike
- Unpaved because easier to walk, people bike slower
- Concern about paving trail because it significantly alters the trail – if it is a soft surface it is not changing because it is already there, just need to consider maintenance costs
- Soft trail is good – long term maintenance costs

QUESTION 4: Where do you anticipate your family would park or access the rail trail?

General

- Would not use the trail
- Should have some parking – both for residents and non-residents
- Park wherever parking was provided
- Driving to the trail would defeat the purpose
- Parking at Davis and Crumble Station but no where else – reduces crime and theft

QUESTION 4 (cont'd):

Concerns

- Concerned about where parking will be
- Concerned about out of Town parking

Residential Areas

- Walk or ride/bike to the trail
- From home via walkways or on bike
- From Peakham Road
- Access from property or from other nearby locations

Town Property

- Park at Davis Field
- Park in Hayes Road area
- Ti-Sales field or other existing parking lots in close proximity to trail
- Parking must accommodate existing users if at playing fields

Commercial Areas

- Park at Sudbury Plaza
- Make arrangements with Chiswick and other nearby businesses

New Parking

- Parking lot should be reasonable in size – not 3 spaces
- Do not need to provide parking at every road crossing
- Trail should have a dedicated parking area
- Railroad right of way is 80 feet wide, trail is 10 feet wide – can construct parking along trail corridor

QUESTION 5: What effect would a rail trail have upon Sudbury? (Positive or negative)

QUESTION 6: Any additional comments?

The responses to Questions 5 and 6 led to similar responses from workshop participants. Therefore, the comments made have been grouped together for simplicity.

General

- Consider terminus issues presented by ending the trail at Route 20 – influx of people
- Wonderful asset to the Town but the concerns expressed are genuine and need to be dealt with
- Maybe a rail trail is more successful in urban areas
- The question is too broad and too simplistic – whether the impact is positive or negative depends on the design
- Illusion of opportunity that everything will be solved by the rail trail
- It doesn't make sense to consider building only a portion of the trail in Town – to help some of Sudbury and not help others
- Do not want to put the “cart before the horse” like they are doing in Concord – urge people to be diligent in asking questions, don't sweep concerns under the table, need to be cautious
- Acknowledged that rail trails have been successful in some communities
- We use trails in other towns, should be reciprocal
- Frequency of use – should be less crowded due to lower population density – this may mitigate problems and lessen negative impacts
- Need to identify needed bathroom and other facilities

QUESTIONS 5 and 6 (cont'd):

Public Safety

- Security and privacy concerns
- Concerns about ability to police or monitor the corridor
- Poses safety and crime issues
- A trail will invite unwanted people into Town
- No crime on the corridor now; a trail will increase crime
- Concern about emergency access given limited access points along the corridor
- Individuals watching each other will act as a means of patrol
- Safety issues must be dealt with along remote stretches
- Concern about how to deter illegal vehicle access to the trail
- Remoteness – night time, motorized vehicles, dirt bikes, snowmobiles
- Trash / pollution / litter – how will the Town manage the waste?

Noise

- Potential for noise, not direct abutter – control through noise ordinance or time limitation on use (dawn to dusk)
- Type of surface may affect noise

Abutter Concerns

- Privacy issues for abutters
- Will result in a complete loss of privacy
- Invasion of people's privacy
- Curious about Lexington abutter views – but need a more similar view to Sudbury
- Will require mitigation for abutters
- Need to deal with abutter concerns directly and try to satisfy

Costs

- Concerns about ongoing costs to Town – police, construction (even 10%) and maintenance
- Need to consider long term / on-going maintenance costs
- Need to understand fiscal / tax impact

Liability

- Presents liability issues to Town

Property Values

- Concern about property value impact to direct abutters
- Perception that property values would increase
- Seattle survey shows property value decreases
- Need to look at unbiased property value reports

Environment

- Trail construction will destroy wetlands
- Contamination concerns
- May affect pristine quality of natural areas
- Disruption to wildlife corridor and migratory patterns
- Provide access to inaccessible natural areas
- Privately owned Wolfe property heavily used by wildlife
- Concerns about vernal pools along the corridor
- Environmental concerns – turkeys and deer population
- Concern about wildlife corridor and where the animals will go if the trail is built

QUESTIONS 5 and 6 (cont'd):

Pets

- Dog presence and pet waste concerns
- No dogs – too many users, people don't clean up after their pet, no loose dogs
- Dogs – many abutters will want to walk their dogs

Traffic

- Trail will result in additional traffic
- Reduce the number of bikes and car traffic on roads
- Offer alternative travel option in light of rising gasoline costs
- Crossings will slow down vehicles / traffic on roads

Cultural / Historic Resources

- Indian remains – Mass Historic cites 90 sites where skeleton and native artifacts have been discovered in heavily inhabited areas

User Safety

- Additional safety improvements will be needed
- Concerns about cross user conflict on the trail
- Trails are not safe as people think – accidents between bicyclists and motorists & pedestrians and bikes
- Need to make wide enough for two-way traffic
- Crossing guards would be needed at each road crossing in order to call it a Safe Route to School
- Provide a safer place to bike

Quality of Life

- Great for the Town – recognize economic impacts, connectivity to east-west trail, perceived improvement to removing tracks
- Would improve neighborhood connections and allow people to interact with their neighbors
- Positive effect – safer route for children, cross country skiing, family bike rides, level terrain makes for an easy route
- Rail trail will define town as an asset
- Arlington bike path enhanced quality of life when s/he lived there
- Rail access to help exercise / address obesity issues and walking to school

Recreation

- Perceived to be more used for recreational purposes
- Positive influence because a trail will get teenagers moving and allow them to go to Friendly's on their own and get them off dangerous local streets
- Good place for family activities
- Place to take children as part of daycare activities
- Will help keep kids off local roadways and onto the trail
- Provide a recreational benefit to the Town
- Excellent new recreational asset for more user types
- Provide a healthy form of exercise

Parking / Access

- Concern about trail access in North Sudbury – would need sidewalks to connect
- Concern about people using their property to park (even though they are not abutters)
- Question on where trail will go – are easements possible?
- Need to place limits on use of Town parks

QUESTIONS 5 and 6 (cont'd):

Capital Improvements

- Look into bike lanes on roads rather than a trail
- Environmental concerns and integrated transportation concerns (combine with build sidewalks)
- Use corridor for revenue generation – install utility conduit and lease to utility companies. Even if Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) retains, there is a possibility of some revenue back to the Town
- Look into installing town sewer line in corridor

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Rail Trail Conversion Advisory Committee