

Town of Sudbury

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Task Force

Tuesday, March 15, 2021 at 7:00 PM

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting

Task Force Attendees:

John Drobinski, Charlie Karustis, Richard Morse, Glenn Pransky, Lana Szwarc, Frank Vitale, and Dick Williamson

Staff:

Beth Suedmeyer, Environmental Planner, Planning and Community Development

Fuss & O'Neill Attendees:

Arnold Robinson and Matt Taylor

Meeting was called to order and roll call was requested by Chair John Drobinski. Meeting was recorded by Sudbury TV.

The focus of the meeting was to prepare recommendations to Select Board for concept areas, amenities and amenity locations.

There are major and minor BFRT road crossings and access areas. Major ones are 'gateways' and will include services, information, bike racks, benches, water, bike repair, interpretive signage, etc. We reviewed a map of these locations (Major and Minor). General agreement with the locations and amenities at those locations was indicated. Members asked about adding a bench to the Pantry Brook area, so there's a place to sit approximately every 0.5 miles. A plan for incorporating memorial benches will be made as well. Potential areas for additional trash receptacles were discussed and it was mentioned Pantry Road is not a good location for trash receptacle as the roadway is not ideal for having maintenance vehicles frequently accessing. While the location may be desirable, water / toilet might be challenging at the intersection with the MCRT due to coordination with utilities and the MBTA ROW / construction. Discussions with DCR can happen to determine what is feasible.

Additional concrete pads for art installations can be considered in the future. Richard Morse suggested Hudson Rd, and the MCRT junction. We could also add another bike repair station at Parkinson.

Bike racks need to have at least 4 ft between racks. Would like to have at least one rack near bench locations.

Overlook at Hop Brook it was identified that putting bench and signs at the SW corner is safest and less disruptive for development of a pull-off.

Very nice views from NW of bridge but ROW is narrow and sloped towards river in this location. The design team will continue to evaluate the options.

For kiosks consensus was indicated to use the design that is in W. Concord. Presentation of information in an accessible manner, with QR codes and potentially links to audio interpretation will be desirable.

Consensus was determined on uniform use of cast metal benches throughout. Could have memorial plaques also. Wooden benches don't last as long, so were not favored. Consideration of backless benches to facilitate views around in wooded areas is made. Where space allows, it is ideal to space benches at least 6 ft from the trail but aim for 10 ft distance. Benches would generally face the trail except where there is a point of interest that calls for facing in a different direction.

Bike racks will be of the same design as W. Concord, but a historic town center-matching green color for these, the bike racks, bike repair stations, and hydration stations will be used. Aim for consistency with Town-wide hydration stations for maintenance ease and same bike repair station as W Concord. Same trash receptacles as W. Concord (metal green exterior). Will ask DPW what type of receptacle they prefer.

Will develop play areas using granite blocks from existing construction – perhaps one at Davis, one at Ti Sales, and one at Broadacres. Some concerns were raised about potential liability and accessibility, these will be researched, but aren't considered to be any different from other playground or recreational areas.

Installation of electrical utility connection at Broadacres will be added to the design, so that charging stations can be installed at a later date.

Identifying and directional signage for gateways will be granite posts similar to those in Acton that tells users about the trail, direction, distance, and current location. Info on both sides would be helpful, with direction (i.e. 3 miles to W Concord, one mile to Sudbury Center) on the side facing the trail. Will need to consider font size / readability.

Directional information can also be displayed with larger font at kiosks with estimated travel time by bike and foot.

Propose to have the granite identifying markers on both sides of a major street, but only on one side of the bike trail. Town boundary can be indicated by inlaid line on path and perhaps a sign. We also want signage directing cyclists and others to the BFRT – and warning at crossings indicating that “you are approaching a crossing with the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail” and the roadway name identified.

Mile markers on the trail will be granite posts (consistent with the markers north of Sudbury) and these will be different than historic mile marks which will be retained.

Interpretive signs will be similar to those in Concord and a combination of kiosk-based overview signs, NPS standard interpretive signs, and smaller granite post signs for rail artifacts. Task Force members agreed on the approach and locations for interpretive signage. It is recognized that the historical artifacts inventory will continue to be updated. We suggest identifying a few exemplary artifacts, and then users can traverse the trail and find other examples. Additional information could be accessed through QR codes linked to web-based information.

Hop Brook Bridge discussion involved the plan to remove existing steel beams and replace with lower profile new beams. Mass DOT engineers and cultural resource experts have commented as well. New construction has less env. impacts during construction and less impact on wingwalls and path profile.

We will address footpath connections at a later stage. Abutters can comment during their meetings. Task Force members have developed a list of possible trail connections.

For roadway crossings beacon activation was discussed. Push button, hand-waving motion sensor to activate signals, and remote sensing options were discussed. Concerns about false flashing with movement detection and drivers becoming desensitized was discussed. Input from public safety will be important. At this point will recommend motion sensing warning signals, may try to install both manual and motion sensing and can then revise later. Might need more signs and 'rumble strip' as one nears Pantry Rd. as this intersection might be especially dangerous.

The cattle crossing near station 190 and Parkinsons Field the proposal to route around the track and cattle crossing here as recommended by the Historical Commission was discussed. This rerouting of the trail is generally don't favored, to be able to ride by it on the side, as this will result in significant impact on trees and grade. But we can have a separate side trail on Town - owned land that allows users to view the crossing from the side and can have an interpretive sign there. Side track at Ti Sales will provide a nearby historic example of what that area looked like and what the rails looked like.

Abutter meetings to discuss corridor design and specific ideas for fencing and other treatments are scheduled on March 22, 25, and 29. Task Force members are not required to attend; these are intended to be private meetings. Staff will provide the Task Force with notes.

Minutes of prior meetings on March 2nd and March 9th, as well as the 2020 Annual Report were approved. Agreement was indicated regarding holding future Task Force meetings on Tuesdays. Beth will email plans.

The meeting was adjourned.