



Town of Sudbury

Rail Trails Advisory Committee

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MINUTES

October 15, 2025 – 7:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

Members Present: John Drobinski (Chair), Glenn Pransky, Ken Holtz, Jason Wellemeier, Chris Menge, John Sugrue, and Laurie Eliason

Others Present: Marcia Rasmussen, Planning & Community Development

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM by Chair John Drobinski.

Update from Chair:

Chair Drobinski noted several upcoming events related to the BFRT in Sudbury:

- Len Simon will be presenting a talk on the history of the BFRT at 3 pm Sunday Oct 19 at Goodnow Library
- An Adaptive Cycling event is scheduled for the Broadacres Farm parking lot on Morse Road on October 25th from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. coordinated by All Out Adventures and the Sudbury Commission on Disability. Pre- registration with All Out Adventures is required, as noted on the Town's Commission on Disability website.
- Also on October 25th the MBTA has scheduled a special bike train to West Concord with bike rides planned to ride north or south on the BFRT. Sign-up and information is expected to be available tomorrow on the MBTA website.

Chair Drobinski also stated that Fuss & O'Neill will provide an update on Phase 3 design of the BFRT at the RTAC meeting in November. They are currently reviewing design in house and will be ready in Nov with a 75% design – nearly final version.

Staff Update – BFRT Phase 2D

- A final walkthrough was conducted on October 1st with Town staff, MDOT staff and representatives from AA Will. Two whistle post signs installed in the wrong locations will need to be refabricated, a wheelchair ramp that was not included in the initial list will be replaced on the westerly side of Peakham Rd, and additional invasive plants need to be removed. Planning staff learned that any plantings that died in 2025 will NOT be replaced by Mass DOT – only the plants that died in 2024 will be replaced. Mass DOT is looking to get a credit or supplying new plants to the Town for installation for those that died in 2025. A possible ribbon cutting and transfer to Town is anticipated in early November but no specific date has been identified.
- An interpretive panel about the Hop Brook area was installed a week ago and the Broadacres Farm panel was relocated, leaving an empty interpretive panel stanchion. Graphic Designer

Lynn Horsky is working on a temporary panel that will be installed in the empty stanchion which can be used in another location once the final site of the sculpture from the Friends of the BFRT is identified. Town Manager Andrew Sheehan is working on the final sculpture location with the Parks, Recreation, and Aquatics Department.

- The stoplight at Peakham Rd and the BFRT crossing seems to be working better.
- Fairview Farm (north of Route 117/North Road) continues to experience egregious trespassing by trail users where the trail crosses their driveway, despite obvious signage about this being private property. There continues to be a problem of cyclists crossing the driveway without slowing or stopping which conflicts with truck/vehicle traffic using the driveway. Once the Town assumes maintenance responsibility of the BFRT, additional wood rail fence and chain-link fence is proposed to be installed to clearly direct trail users to remain on the trail. Examples of fencing and signage from a NY trail illustrated how to narrow the path to ensure trail users slow down at driveway crossings; this may be needed to avoid collisions with commercial vehicles using this driveway.
- There continues to be confusion about whether the crossing lights require users to push a button or are automatic because some of the towns north of Sudbury (specifically in Acton) have motion-activated crossing light which automatically activate the flashing lights to alert drivers of trail users crossing the street. MassDOT discontinued use of motion-activated crossing lights on rail trails so Sudbury's crossing lights require trail users to push the button to activate the crossing lights. Additional signage may be needed, at least temporarily, as well as information on the Town's website to inform trail users.

Staff Update continued - Phase 3 Trail Extension

- Fuss & O'Neill reports that landscaping, vegetation, and culvert design is nearly final. Project Manager Nick LaPointe will be at the RTAC meeting in November to review these plans with the RTAC.
- After hearing requests from trail users, Sudbury's Department of Public Works is willing to clear the portion of trail from the Diamond to Route 20/Boston Post Road over the winter. Some boulders or similar barriers will be placed at the north and south end of this ¼ mile segment to narrow the path in an effort to prevent people from crossing roadways/driveways without stopping and looking.
- Town Counsel is preparing a draft licensing agreement for the owner of Chiswick Park to allow the Town to prepare plans for a potential parking lot on one of the adjacent parcels near the Diamond for use by BFRT and MCRT trail users. Currently, many people parking on the Chiswick Park driveway and Station Ave. are local residents who want to walk on the southern BFRT or MCRT, and they do not want to park at the Parkinson Field or Broadacres Farm parking lots.

Staff Update continued - Mass Central Rail Trail

- The top course of paving is almost complete.
- At a meeting with DCR and Town staff on October 9th, DCR staff indicated that a water main break damaged the subgrade elements of the Crumble Station parking lot, but it's believed that this damage can be remedied to allow completion of the final paving before November 15th when paving plants typically close. There will be 10 parking spaces provided near the former train station.

- There is a requirement for additional signaling east and west of the proposed HAWK signals to alert drivers approaching the Route 20 crossing, which may result in a delay for installation of the HAWK signal.
- Much progress has been made on construction at the Diamond.

Staff Update continued - Parkinson Field Driveway

- Town staff (from Conservation, Planning, Public Works and Parks/Recreation/Aquatics) met with TEC designers on October 15th to review optional parking layouts and the driveway.
- Widening the driveway will be challenging due to the wetlands at the property line. The design team believes the driveway can't be modified to more than 16 feet wide within existing property lines which is not acceptable for two-way travel and to public safety officials. Town staff will be talking to Ti-SALES about the current situation and potential options.
- Ms. Eliason noted that Parkinson Field is the main field for ultimate field frisbee – a growing sport at Lincoln-Sudbury High School – but they are using the one-lane driveway now with some risks for users.

Staff Update continued - CPC Applications

- Five CPC project reports were submitted to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) by their deadline of October 15th. The RTAC was copied on that submittal.
- After the walk with DCR on the MCRT, and input from Sudbury Valley Trustees and the Conservation Commission about improving access, an application was submitted to the CPC to provide funding for design and construction of improved ADA access and accessible parking for Hop Brook Marsh conservation land and SVT-owned Memorial Forest.
- Ms. Rasmussen followed up with Erica Puccio of the Sudbury Cultural Council about the Council's CPC application to install additional artwork on the BFRT and whether some of the funding previously approved for the BFRT amenities might be available for their use.

Horses on Rail Trails – discussion

- A preliminary discussion regarding whether to allow horses on the rail trails commenced, with final action continued to the November meeting.
- It was noted that horses are not allowed on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) in any of the communities north of Sudbury. Mr. Sugrue commented that Sudbury should be consistent on rules across the BFRT including rules about horses.
- Issues include the fact that the trails have not been designed to include horses, dung that is not picked up but left on the pavement, trail users safety and lack of adequate space for a bridle path.
- It was observed that horses ARE currently permitted on the DCR-controlled Mass Central Rail Trail.

Memorial Benches - discussion

- The RTAC reviewed a proposed policy prepared by Ms. Rasmussen as its recommendation to the Select Board. Specific costs were not included because these vary by the item/amenity selected. For installing a plaque on an existing amenity (such as benches), the cost of replacement might be included to ensure that the bench or other amenity could be replaced at

the end of its service life, retaining the plaque. Additional research is needed to provide guidance on the number of words, plaque material and sizes that are acceptable

Member Updates

- Mr. Pransky shared a link to a PBS program about rail trails, commenting that it was an excellent national overview. The link is <https://www.pbs.org/show/from-rails-to-trails/>.

Public Comments

- No public comments were made.

Approval of Minutes

- Minutes of September 17, 2025, were reviewed and unanimously approved.
- Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Next Meetings

- November 19, 2025
- December 10, 2025