



# Town of Sudbury

## Rail Trails Advisory Committee

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### MINUTES

**November 19, 2025 – 7:30 PM**

### VIRTUAL MEETING

**Members Present:** John Drobinski, Glenn Pransky, Ken Holtz, Christopher Menge, Laurie Eliason (7:32pm), Jason Wellemyer (7:41pm)

**Others Present:** Marcia Rasmussen, Planning & Community Development

Meeting called to order at 7:31 PM by Chair John Drobinski.

#### **Update from Chair:**

- Chair Drobinski noted that handicapped access concerns raised about construction of the plaza, parking lot, and access ramp at Broadacres Farm site as well as remaining punch list items have delayed the Town assuming the maintenance responsibility for the rail trail. MassDOT has not yet scheduled a ribbon cutting.
- He asked that committee members start thinking about potential goals or areas of focus for next year.
- Chair Drobinski stated that Nick Lapointe from Fuss & O'Neill would join the meeting at 8 PM to provide an update on the design for BFRT Phase 3.

#### **Staff Update:**

##### BFRT Phase 2D Update:

- Two new whistle post interpretive panels have been fabricated and installed atop granite posts to accurately reflect current conditions (posts north and south of Hudson Road).
- The Town has not yet accepted maintenance responsibility for the BFRT due to handicap access concerns, conservation issues, and traffic signal issues.
- Traffic signal issues at the Hudson and Peakham intersection identified by trail users were provided to MassDOT and the Contractor. The Contractor reported that the electrician responsible for installation has made corrections to the signal timing.
- Mr. Menge asked about the handicapped access concerns raised about the ramp at Broadacres Farm: Are there railings on other handicap ramps on other parts of the trails? They don't seem to be in use elsewhere, so where does the requirement come from? Sudbury resident Kay Bell had provided a report to the Town raising concerns about ADA and Architectural Access Board requirements on aspects of the Broadacres ramp (such as the need for railings) and plaza which have been referred to both the Town's consultant and to MassDOT for their response.
- While reviewing an application for funds requested by the Cultural Council to install artwork along the BFRT, the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) asked why

Phase 2D existing funds couldn't be used. Ms. Rasmussen prepared a list of potential projects that have been identified to date for funding by the remaining CPA funds for additional work along the BFRT Phase 2D, which has been shared with the Town Manager and Finance Director.

- Ms. Eliason asked what new projects have been submitted to the CPC this year and learned that the Planning Office submitted applications for design and construction funds for connections to the Mass Central Rail Trail west of Dutton Road and construction funds for improvements to the access and parking lot serving Parkinson Field.

BFRT Phase 3 Update:

- Project Manager Nick Lapointe will be providing his update later in the meeting and seeking comments from the RTAC.
- An event in Framingham was held on November 10<sup>th</sup> to introduce that community to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

MCRT:

- Top course paving has been completed, including the 10-space parking lot off Union Ave. around "Crumble Station".
- Warning signage and striping on roadways where the MCRT crosses is expected to be completed this week on most of the roads in Sudbury.
- The HAWK signal and other signage and pavement markings at the Boston Post Rd. crossing will likely not be installed until April 2026.
- Additional work around the "Diamond" intersection is expected to be completed in the next few weeks.
- A new 2-sided sign to identify the BFRT and MCRT has been ordered and should be installed before the next meeting. The existing sign could not be revised because of the lamination process used.
- Ms. Eliason noticed there were a lot of large, loose rocks around the paving area on Union Ave. and asked if they were intended for the MCRT and how they would be used. No one present had a definitive answer.

**Fuss & O'Neill – BFRT Phase 3 update with Nick Lapointe:**

- Mr. Lapointe provided a brief introduction to his firm and asked the RTAC for their input on the 75% design progress plans distributed prior to the meeting. He noted that the current design work is based on lessons learned during the Phase 2D 75% design process.
- At the Route 20/Nobscot Rd. intersection, the design team is proposing a small plaza using pervious pavers and reusing granite blocks from existing culverts (that need to be replaced) to create an elevation change and protected space for trail users. A sidewalk connection to Sudbury Farms area will be included.
  - Mr. Menge asked about the westerly side of trail opposite the plaza area. Mr. Lapointe responded that not much is planned for the other side of the trail because they don't want to do too much close to the road and they don't want to restrict sight distance for drivers on Nobscot Rd.

- Mr. Holtz commented on how this plaza delineates rail trail land from adjacent business land and added that this plan should be shared with the owner of the adjacent land, DaVinci's Restaurant.
- Ms. Eliason asked about the existing hedge of trees. Mr. Lapointe responded that they are proposed to be removed. He added that the height of wall and berm will depend on how many culvert blocks are available for use.
- Mr. Wellemyer asked about folks parking in the Sudbury Farms lot and using the plaza area as a park-like space. Mr. Lapointe noted that overuse hadn't really been considered.
- Mr. Menge asked if wall is intended as a sitting wall and Mr. Lapointe confirmed that this was the intent.
- Ms. Eliason questioned the purpose for the area. Mr. Lapointe explained it is intended as a place to pause, gather a group, and orient before crossing Route 20. Also intended to be eye-catching and create a focal point. The group was asked to consider if such a space is desirable at this location. Mr. Pransky noted that the design of this space was comparable to one in Chelmsford.
- Ms. Rasmussen relayed staff comments on the proposed design: 1. A suggestion to add another bench for handicap accessibility, rather than install just one; 2. A concern with the sight lines/distance at that intersection and how the mounded earth/boulders impact the sight lines from Nobscot Road. Mr. Lapointe indicated that another bench could be added and that sight lines/distance is important and should be considered; that adding a `No right on Red` sign on Nobscot Rd. was something to be explored and will be reviewed.
- Mr. Pransky also asked about the north side of Route 20 and whether additional fencing is needed to prevent cyclists from riding off the trail and onto the street. Mr. Lapointe showed the proposed design where the trail turns to the west and noted that a tactile warning panel is proposed to be installed between the existing sidewalk and the rail trail. He suggested that Fuss & O'Neill could look at signage as well and noted that the proposed curve radius meets design speed of 18.5 mph, and stamped concrete delineates sidewalk from rail trail. Ms. Eliason agreed that signage is needed.
- Mr. Lapointe also showed the original plan from the 25% design that could be used if there weren't a sufficient number of granite blocks available. Ms. Rasmussen said she will check with DPW to learn there are any additional blocks in storage from BFRT Phase 2D construction.
- At the Eaton Road in Framingham entry:
  - Mr. Lapointe explained some of the updates here included some additional paving, revised drainage to redirect run-off, grading for access to the trail that met ADA requirements, and added vegetation for screening private property.
  - Mr. Lapointe discussed changes to the grading of the centerline profile as recommended by MassDOT to avoid the need for removing existing materials, which is considered hazardous and is very costly. But these grading changes creates steeper grades along the trail resulting in the need for more guardrail to be installed.

- Mr. Lapointe explained that all direct Wetland impacts in this area have been eliminated but there are still wetland buffer zone impacts. Mr. Holtz asked why this particular area was more impacted by revised grading to the base centerline. Mr. Lapointe noted there was less grading required further north on the trail
- For the various Culvert locations:
  - Fuss & O'Neill has paid great attention to the design of the replacement culverts. Many culverts will be bespoke design, which refers to custom, site-specific engineering solutions that meet strict environmental and hydraulic standards, particularly of the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards.
- Water District zone:
  - Apron has additional plantings and boulders added.
- Nobscot Road Parking lot area:
  - The width of pavement was decreased which reduced the amount of impervious surface area.
  - The stormwater basin design now shown is closer to a final product.
  - There is a wetland replication area south of the parking lot.
  - Trail access connects closer to the northwest (road) side of the parking lot to meet ADA requirements.
  - A wayfinding post design has been added to this area.
- In wrapping up the discussion, Mr. Lapointe explained that Fuss & O'Neill was unlikely to submit the 75% design package to MassDOT until January. Any additional comments and observations from the RTAC members would be welcome, hopefully by the first week of December. Ms. Rasmussen asked whether a handicap accessible path from the trail to the cattle crossing near the Framingham town line could be added along the northwest side of the trail. Mr. Lapointe committed to looking into this.
- Mr. Pransky said he will send his list of comments to Ms. Rasmussen, to be forwarded to Fuss & O'Neill. There was a brief discussion about connecting this part of the BFRT to the existing trail network. Mr. Pransky was asked to provide some indication of the location of these trails.

**Staff Update - continued:**

- Ms. Rasmussen reported that the Park & Recreation Commission voted to support the CPC application for the Parkinson Field access and parking lot improvements. Ms. Rasmussen also stated her plan to reach out to Ti-SALES regarding the latest concept design from TEC, Inc.
- Executive Director of "All Out Adventures" reported that there were 44 participants at the event in October, and expressed appreciation to those who volunteered to support this event. The Commission on Disability announced their grant award from The Sudbury Foundation of \$11,000 to continue and expand the adaptive cycling program in 2026.

**Continued discussion of horse usage on rail trails in Town**

- Chair Drobinski explained there were some questions from residents regarding horses on the MCRT. He noted that the previous discussion held during the October RTAC meeting

was primarily about the BFRT, since the trail design did not accommodate horses and all communities north of Sudbury prohibit horses on the trail.

- Ms. Rasmussen noted the letter provided today from horse owners in the Sudbury community who used the Mass Central Rail Trail and suggested opening discussion to the public.
- Kirsten Roopenian, 45 Hunters Lane, commented on obtaining around 100 signatures in support of the letter provided to RTAC concerning the MCRT. Ms. Roopenian stated that there is an understanding in the horse community that the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail is off limits and her belief that any encroachment on the BFRT is happening further to the North. Ms. Roopenian continued to read a statement regarding the allowance of horses on the MCRT. She also proposed installing signs directing owners to clean up after their horses when on the trail.
- Chair Drobinski asked if anyone from the public had any comment on the BFRT.
- Dotti Bisson, 290 Dutton Road, commented that use of BFRT is not of interest to the Sudbury horse riding community from her perspective.

**Mr. Pransky moved to advise Select Board to prohibit horses on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. The motion was seconded by Mr. Menge. The motion passed unanimously.**

Chair Drobinski opened discussion on MCRT horse usage.

- Ms. Roopenian listed towns along the MCRT that allow horses to use the trail.
- Ms. Eliason asked whether the trail is being used along the extent of trail or only for means of passage and access to other trails. Ms. Roopenian responded that riders typically start at the trailhead at Dutton Road, riding up to the trestle bridge (riding on the soft shoulder), then continuing into areas adjacent to the trail such as Hop Brook or Memorial Forest.
- Mr. Holtz asked if the soft shoulder or asphalt path of the trail was preferred. Ms. Bisson explained that in the past when there were railroad tracks, the soft shoulder was used. That is the preference for continued use with sometimes a need to go onto asphalt due to boulders or fences. Ms. Bisson commented on how DCR regulates other adjacent towns so they likely have guidance here.
- Mr. Pransky explained DCR doesn't have any guidance or preference on trail usage by horses and added that there are some towns where horse usage is prohibited along the MCRT.
- Chair Drobinski directed attendees to discuss further with DCR.

### **Goals for 2026 Discussion**

- Ms. Eliason talked about connections and connectivity. Connections to park and rec areas. Connectivity with Route 20 and businesses along the two trails. She also discussed the need for safety education and additional signage. Mr. Menge seconded Ms. Eliason's comments.
- Mr. Holtz suggested adding the need to address the challenge facing South Sudbury residents in wanting to access the MCRT.
- Mr. Wellemeyer talked about the desire for programs for kids (and others) to promote considerate trail usage as well as safety.

- Mr. Pransky added his agreement to sorting out the South Sudbury access and proposed a site walk by the RTAC to view the current situation. He noted that there are 3 schools within a 1/4 mile of the trail and wondered how they might be encouraged to use these trails to get to school.
- Ms. Rasmussen had provided a list of proposed additions/amenities to the trail. Mr. Pransky proposed additional locations or sites for porta-potties. Mr. Pransky also brought up concerns about dog waste disposal and the speed of e-bikes.
- Ms. Eliason added that the trails could not only provide access to schools for kids but access to other activities and popular restaurants.

**Public comment:**

- Ms. Rasmussen was asked whether RTAC members should attend the Community Preservation Committee meeting on December 10<sup>th</sup> and she thought such attendance would be helpful. Ms. Eliason asked if the RTAC would need to post the meeting if all members attended the CPC meeting (it would).
- Future Meeting dates were discussed.
- Ms. Eliason added that the Parks and Recreation Commission voted to support funding from the CPC for the Parkinson Field access driveway and parking lot project. Mr. Holtz asked why the whole parking lot was being proposed to be paved. Ms. Rasmussen explained that part of the reason is to allow for easier plowing and for addressing stormwater run-off. She added that multiple town departments have been involved in the design discussions to date and advised the designer to start with full paving which could be stepped down as the design was reviewed by other town boards and committees.
- Kay Bell, Old Lancaster Road, emailed a statement she prepared for the meeting today and also discussed the study she provided to RTAC on out-of-compliance elements of the rail trail. She commented how Americans with Disabilities Act is the main consideration of her comments and how other codes may bump up against accessibility codes. She explained a lack of level landings on a roughly 60-foot ramp between the Broadacres Farm parking lot and the BFRT and that handrails were required when there is a slope over 5%. Previous coordinator of RTAC visited commission on disability with assurances that any ADA issues would be caught but Ms. Bell is noting some of the features that are out of compliance and asked that they be addressed in the best way possible. Ms. Bell does not feel the town should accept the rail trail as complete without these issues being addressed. Chair Drobinski noted that Town acceptance was discussed earlier in the meeting and these issues will be addressed by MassDOT.

Meeting Minutes

- Minutes of Oct 15, 2025: No comments

**Mr. Menge made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 15, 2025 as presented. Mr. Pransky seconded the motion and minutes were unanimously approved.**

Next Meetings

- Future dates in 2026 were discussed.
- December 10 (with the Community Preservation Committee)

Meeting ended 9:51pm