



# Town of Sudbury

## Rail Trails Advisory Committee

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### MINUTES

January 7, 2026 – 7:30 PM

### VIRTUAL MEETING

**Members Present:** John Drobinski, John Sugrue, Chris Menge, Jason Wellemeyer, Glenn Pransky, Laurie Eliason (7:40 pm)

**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 the progress on the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) where it intersects with the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT), especially the recently installed 'diamond' cross rails in the granite circle where the two paths meet.
- He asked that the committee consider how best to support connections from the BFRT Phase 3 to commercial areas as well as open space and recreation areas, and asked that ideas be sent to Ms. Rasmussen.
- He noted that conditions on the trail were very icy and recommended that people accessing the trails be very careful.

#### Discussion with Sudbury Police:

Lt. John Perodeau, head of public outreach for the Sudbury Police Department (SPD), attended to provide insights from the police perspective and to discuss some of the initiatives the department is undertaking and equipment available that may be helpful in responding to issues related to rail trails. Lt. Perodeau provided some background information about himself and his role in the SPD. Having served the Town of Sudbury for over 19 years, he is currently assigned as the commanding officer of the Patrol Division, and he focuses on department outreach, social media presence, and getting officers involved with public events and schools.

He noted that the main rail trail concerns so far have been:

- cyclists not stopping at intersections,
- the very dangerous Route 20 MCRT crossing that has not yet been installed;
- speeding vehicles at the Route 117 BFRT crossing;
- and, intersections that are more hazardous because of limited sight distances.

Other concerns include the proliferation of e-bikes – especially those that are higher powered and are virtually scooters; off-leash animals (there are bylaws that can be used to address this); location markings along the trails so people know where they are when reporting an emergency (observing that markings are better on BFRT than MCRT). He reported that SPD has about 3

off-road calls each month for all off road incidents: bicycle falls, pedestrian injuries, and hunting accidents.

He then shared his PowerPoint presentation with the committee noting that specialized equipment is needed for rail trails and the SPD has acquired some of this in anticipation of these trails opening soon. The department currently has 3 drones (2 Mavic Pros and one mini drone, with infrared cameras – excellent for locating missing persons). Drones have proven to be very useful for finding people in remote locations or challenging terrain, but only 3 officers are certified as remote drone pilots with 3 more in training. Lt. Perodeau stated that the State Police have helicopters and are willing to help out – a helicopter can be provided in 15-20 min if needed; and infrared cameras have excellent technology for finding people even in cold bodies of water. The SPD has a variety of SUV vehicles capable of driving on rail trail – but it's hard to turn them around and there's limited space; there are also 2 pickup trucks that can deliver equipment if needed. Currently there is only one motorcycle and only one officer who can use it. The SPD also has 3 bicycles and 2 e-bikes with and multiple officers trained to use them having taken a 3-day course. E-bikes are excellent for rapid access and are the primary tool for rail trail related police activity. Soon, SPD will get an e-dirt bike, with tires that allow access to dirt trails, this will be licensed for on road use, too. Less training is required for a dirt bike than a motorcycle. They also have one ATV that can transport 2 people – but it's too wide for side trail use and has to be trailered to incident location, so it is less useful for rail trails.

Lt. Perodeau then moved on to information about e-bikes and related vehicles, noting that the statutory framework for regulation had been clarified in the 2022 Mass Transportation Bill. He observed that riders using e-dirt bikes have been responsible for destroying turf at Haskell Field, and have been reported riding on the BFRT near the center of town. If a “bike” can go over 20-MPH and doesn't require pedal power, a license is required and cannot be used off-road. This means there are statutory regulations that can be used for enforcement if needed but the SPD would prefer to begin with education. Regular e-bikes (class 1 and 2) are not allowed on sidewalks but can't be prohibited from use on roadways or trails, unless there's been a town-specific evaluation and regulatory process. They are treated as bicycles under the law. Helmet laws apply to all riders under age 17. Mopeds provide power up to 30-MPH; these must be registered and users are required to have a valid license. Motorized bicycle regulations are similar to those for mopeds but with some significant differences. To legally operate an off-road vehicle or dirt bike all persons under the age of 18 are required to take a two-part Safety and Responsibility Course; and if 16 or younger, must be directly supervised by an adult. Additional restrictions apply for persons younger than age 14.

He commented that the SPD has received a lot of complaints about golf carts in Sudbury, generally on sidewalks but such complaints could extend to rail trails. He observed that golf carts are prohibited on trails managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) and they are prohibited on streets. Enforceable laws exist for all of these classes of powered vehicles but again, SPD prefers to focus on education.

Lt. Perodeau noted that the SPD has helmets for those in need of a helmet and they also have high visibility backpacks which they are handing out to pedestrians and cyclists to promote visibility and safety. In the spring the SPD plans to distribute bike lights and reflectors. Ms. Eliason suggested adding bicycle bells or horns as another give-away, noting that it would help trail users inform others when they are passing.

He noted that grant funding has helped in acquisition of the e-dirt bike, with pedestrian and bike enforcement and community outreach, and with pedestrian and bike safety items for handing out. The SPD plans to participate and conduct events to distribute safety items to youth in town. They would like to have fun events on rail trails to educate everyone – trick-or-treat, “whistle stops” and ticketing booths at intersections handing out items, bike road-eo, and yard sign deployment where there are issues. He commented that there are e-bike safety signs used in Wellesley that were well received and suggested such signs could be useful here.

One of the major concerns is that of injuries and response time – not only at road crossings but people falling or running into each other along the trail away from road intersections. SPD is especially concerned about how to get to people quickly when on a rail trail because often times the injured party doesn't know their location on the trail, especially in more rural areas. The 911-system gives an area location but it's not precise enough. Putting up additional mile-markers or other signs might provide more landmarks.

Mr. Wellemyer mentioned that e-bikes are a significant concern – especially for a town with roads that are not bike friendly and with many new/young bike users, education is important. Ms. Eliason mentioned that the crossings are most concerning – especially places where people, particularly adults, don't stop; suggesting that they are modelling bad behavior for kids. She thought there was a need to target families for bicycle safety education. Lt. Perodeau responded that school resource officers are developing education programs for incorporation into the STARS program for elementary schools and in partnership with Park and Recreation. SPD may also seek opportunities to engage students and their parents in preschools. He added that the SPD was thinking of placing more temporary signs and having an office present at smaller intersections (Morse, Haynes, etc.) to engage with trail users. Halloween events, when there is a high number of children on the streets, could be redirected to the rail trails where it may be safer to travel. He commented that the SPD has not had much interaction with other BFRT towns, except Concord. Every town has different levels of staffing; some have had more difficulty keeping officers, so priorities have not been focused on the rail trail. Committee members were very appreciative of the presentation and discussion.

### **Designating US Bicycle Route 1 through Sudbury:**

Adventure Cycling Association has requested the Town of Sudbury's support be made to Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to designate three Sudbury roads as part of a US Bicycle Route 1. The identified roads include: Pelham Island Road at the Wayland town line, Landham Road, and Woodside Road to the Framingham city line where it intersects with Eaton Road. This is a bicycle route mapping project and is part of a national effort (through the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials - AASHTO) to expand the US Bicycle Route system. The effort is being led by MassDOT, East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECGA), MassBike, and the Adventure Cycling Association. Getting this route designated will provide a defined bicycling route for cyclists traveling across Massachusetts, connecting existing U.S. Bicycle Route 1 in New Hampshire to Rhode Island. Each community where the route is located is requested to provide a letter of support or proclamation from the Select Board and/or Town Manager. Once the BFRT and MCRT are completed, the route can be altered to follow these rail trails; however, this effort is to identify a safe route that can be used now. There are no costs to the Town with this designation – it's simply a mapping project.

Some of the benefits include safer routes for travelers and potential economic development. Mr. Wellemeyer asked if any community declined but this is unknown and wouldn't make sense given that there are two rail trails through Sudbury. Committee members noted that there is already some bike traffic on Pelham Island Road because it's part of the East Coast Greenway, and there's more use now because it's the route to Landham Road and to the east end of the MCRT. A motion was made and the committee unanimously voted to recommend to the Town Manager and Select Board that the Town of Sudbury support designation of certain roads in Sudbury as US Bicycle Route 1.

**Staff Update:**

- BFRT Phase 2D – Town maintenance responsibility has not yet been accepted due to the handicap accessibility issue of the ramp at the Morse Rd. parking lot which needs to be addressed. Fuss & O'Neill have provided several different scenarios, but each one has had concerns raised by town staff.
- The BFRT sculpture will be temporarily stored at Stonybrook Fine Arts in Jamaica Plain after the school announced that it was closing. A final location for its installation has not yet been decided, so it will be stored at the red barn near the Morse Rd parking lot.
- BFRT Phase 3 – Fuss & O'Neill have indicated that they are close to completion of the 75% design with submission to MassDOT by February 13<sup>th</sup>. A side path/ramp to the cattle crossing near the Framingham city line has been included, and existing trail crossings will be added to the plan.
- MCRT – work is expected to begin again after April 1<sup>st</sup> for installing landscaping and completing traffic signals at the Rt. 20 crossing. It's possible that some of the signal equipment may be installed earlier, depending on the weather. The Diamond intersection was completed in November. The large stones in the roadway near Union Ave. that had been disrupted by trucks turning into Chiswick Park driveway were removed by Lynch Landscaping; DCR is working with the Town to identify a solution for this problem.
- Parkinson Field driveway and parking lot – test pits will be dug next week. After a meeting with town staff to discuss a potential easement, Ti-SALES owner and management will not grant an easement for egress due to significant safety concerns because of the large equipment delivery vehicles. The Town and its' consultant are considering other options.

**Public Comment:**

Chair Drobinski asked the status of the license agreement for use of land off Chiswick Park driveway as a rail trail parking lot. Ms. Rasmussen will follow up with Town Counsel.

**Meeting Minutes and Annual Report:**

A draft annual report for 2025 was provided for review. Mr. Pransky moved to accept the report as amended. All VOTED in favor.

Meeting minutes of November 19, 2025 were reviewed with no comments. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Meeting minutes of December 10, 2025 (joint meeting with the Community Preservation Committee were reviewed with no comments. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.