



OLD NORTH BRIDGE

**TOWN OF CONCORD**  
TOWN MANAGER'S OFFICE  
22 MONUMENT SQUARE - P.O. BOX 535  
CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01742

TELEPHONE (978) 318-3000  
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June 24, 2005

Mr. Mark Boyle, Director of Real Estate  
**MASSACHUSETTS BAY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**  
10 Park Plaza, Room 5750  
Boston, MA 02116

Subject: **Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Project - Concord Section**  
Town of Concord, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Boyle:

The Town of Concord is considering a multi-use path (or rail trail) along the former Lowell Secondary Track right-of-way. This trail, known as the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, would extend from the Acton / Concord town line (just north of Route 2) to the Sudbury Town Line for a distance of approximately 3.5 miles. The railroad right-of-way is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, under the care and control of the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT). At this time, the project is at the study phase. An *Environmental and Engineering Assessment report* is being prepared by our consultants, Fay, Spofford & Thomdike (FST,) to determine the feasibility of developing a rail trail along the Concord section of former railroad right-of-way. We are contacting the MBTA as part of this *Assessment* so that we can address the rail trail crossing of the active MBTA Commuter Line and Commuter Parking Lot in West Concord as early as possible in the project planning process.

The north-south Lowell Secondary Track right-of-way corridor crosses the active MBTA Commuter Line in West Concord center. On the north side of the rail junction is the MBTA commuter parking lot, on the south side is a small public park and pedestrian walkway. Following the alignment of the Lowell Secondary Track, the rail trail will travel through the MBTA commuter parking lot and cross the active commuter line in West Concord center at the existing at-grade pedestrian crossing. This alignment is shown on the attached project mapping (Exhibit 1) and site visit photos (Exhibit 2). A site reconnaissance effort by FST revealed that there are no other practicable or substantially better routing alternatives in the general station area given available information.

The MBTA parking lot is situated within the Lowell Secondary Track right-of-way, from approximately Valuation Station 607+18 to Station 613+42 (Exhibit 3). This parcel contains about 24,800 square feet of land. On April 4, 1991, the EOT granted a license agreement to the MBTA to permit the agency to use and maintain this portion of right-of-way for commuter parking purposes. A copy of this agreement is attached hereto (Exhibit 4).

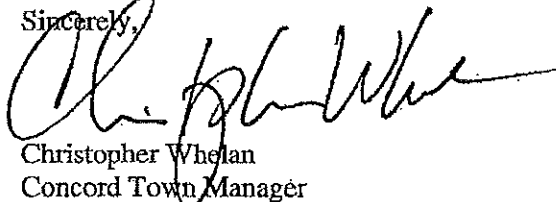
The purpose of this letter is to request that the MBTA review and provide input regarding the Town's intent to:

1. *Align the rail trail through the MBTA commuter parking lot using, for example, pavement markings, signage or special pavers.* The design of this route will seek to minimize conflict with vehicular circulation in the parking lot.
2. *Utilize the existing at-grade pedestrian crossing of the active rail line at the West Concord Station platform.* The design of this crossing may require the installation of additional safety controls to account for increased bicyclist and pedestrian volumes at this location.

The Town shares the MBTA's concern for providing safe and continuous access through the West Concord Station area for all users. However, we also recognize that this intermodal connection is a critical component in the local and regional rail trail project. This project will provide improved access to the MBTA system while serving to invite new riders onto the transit system from communities along the rail trail corridor. When complete, the rail trail will provide an alternative means of transportation for users from Lowell to Framingham.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and we look forward to your response. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 978-318-3000 or via e-mail at <cwhelan@concordnet.org> with any questions or comments regarding this request.

Sincerely,




Christopher Whelan  
Concord Town Manager

Enclosures (4)

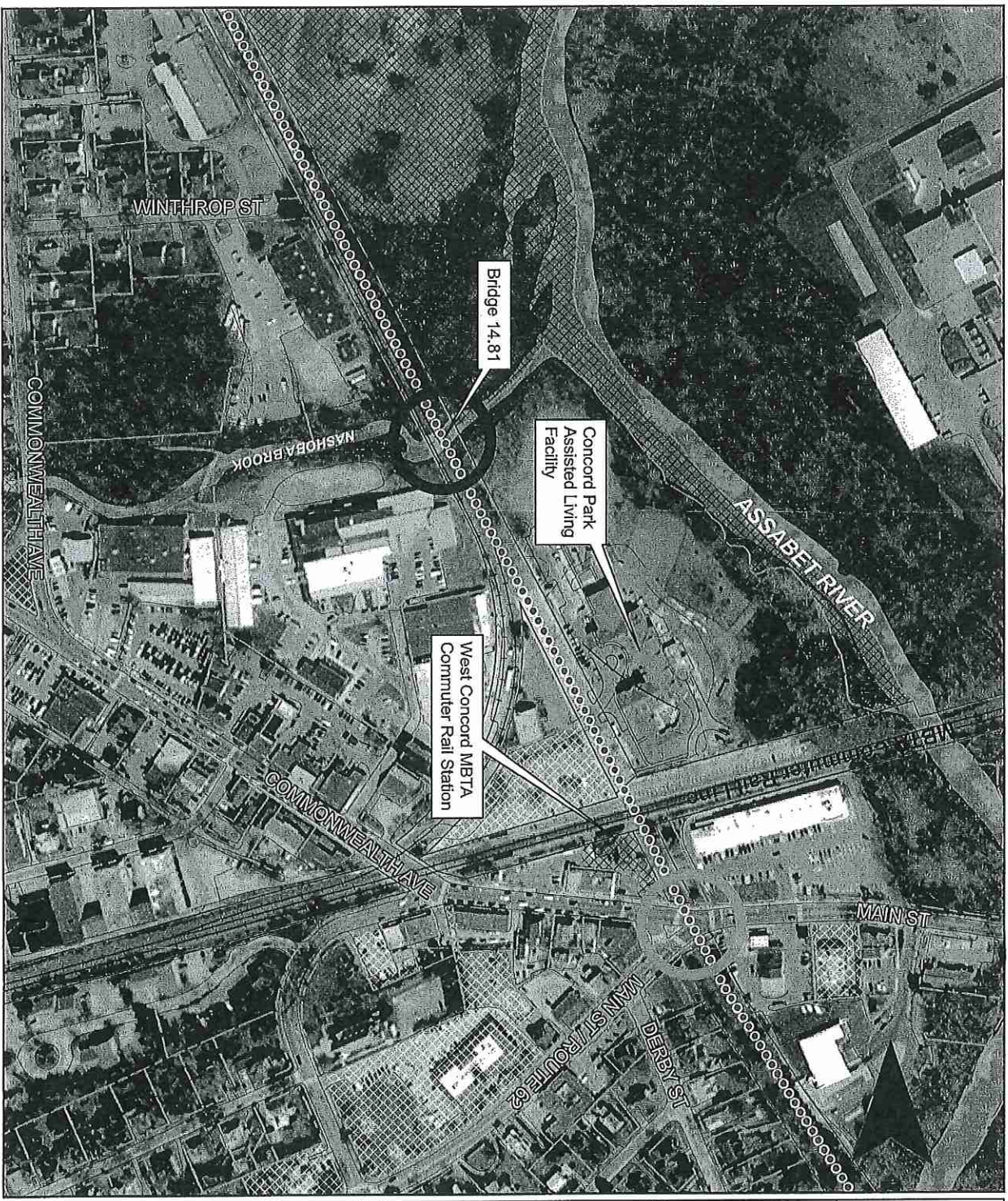
**Legend**

- Rail Trail Alignment (CONCORD)
- Rail Trail Alignment (FRUNES)
- Railroad Right of Way
- Edge of Unpaved Road
- Edge of Paved Road
- Railroad Line
- ▭ Municipal Boundary
- ▭ Parcel Boundary
- ▭ Conservation Trust
- ▭ Federal or State Property
- ▭ Town Conservation Land
- ▭ Town-Owned Land
- ▭ School Property
- Streams
- ▭ Water Bodies
- ▭ Wetlands
- Rail Trail Intersection with Road
- Rail Trail Bridge

0 100 200 400 Feet



GIS Data sources: The Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, and the Town of Concord, Massachusetts.



*Excerpt from FS+T  
Environmental + Engineering  
Assessment.*

DATE: AUG 2005  
SCALE: 1"=200'  
JOB NO: QC-027  
FILE: BFRT.MXD  
DRAWN: TMW  
CHECKED: JAS

Sheet 3 of 9

**Environmental  
and Engineering  
Assessment**

**BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL**  
Town of Concord, Massachusetts



FAY, SPOFFORD & THORNDIKE, LLC  
ENGINEERS • PLANNERS • SCIENTISTS  
BURLINGTON, MA

## Executive Summary

The goal of the *Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Environmental and Engineering Assessment Report – Concord Section* was to determine the feasibility of developing a rail trail, or multi-use path, along the Concord portion of the former Lowell Secondary Track right-of-way of the Old Colony Rail Road. This section of corridor is currently owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, under the care and control of the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT). In its entirety, the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) is a proposed 25-mile rail trail between Lowell and Framingham, 3.5 miles of which is located in Concord.

The report objectively outlines the corridor's potential as a shared-use rail trail and assesses the key design issues involved with the rail to trail conversion process. The report documents existing site conditions along the corridor including available right-of-way, adjacent land uses, presence of environmental, cultural and historic resources and contamination issues. Based on a review of this information, a conceptual rail trail design was developed which includes the proposed rail trail cross section and surface materials, at-grade intersection treatments, bridge structures, underpass options, parking facilities and access points, mitigation measures and trail enhancements. The design of the rail trail is highly dependent upon the width of the rail bed, adjacent land uses, proximity of environmental, cultural and historic resources and the desired types of users. The preliminary cost estimate for the construction of the 3.5-mile rail trail is approximately \$4.1 million.

Two major issues identified and addressed as part of the report included the rail trail routing and crossing of the MBTA Commuter Rail Station in West Concord and the feasibility of diverting the rail trail away from White Pond in response to the concerns expressed by the White Pond neighborhood. To gain information on these issues, the Town and Consultant met with the White Pond Advisory Committee. Also, the Consultant met with the MBTA and the Town followed up with a letter to the agency requesting their review and input. Addressing these issues as part of the project planning process is advantageous for all involved parties.

Throughout the study process, input and information was gathered from town staff in the Town Manager's Office, Planning and Natural Resources Division within the Department of Planning and Land Management and the Engineering Division of the Concord Public Works Department. A number of State agencies were also consulted and provided their input, including the EOT, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program and the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

In addition, a Public Informational Meeting was held on the evening of June 16, 2005. The meeting was advertised in the local newspaper and abutters received direct mailings. The comments, concerns and questions raised at the meeting as well as electronic and written correspondence received prior to and after the meeting are part of the Town's project record. This information will help guide future project planning and design activities.

Based on a review of the information gathered as part of the study process, and the Consultants experience on previous projects, it was deemed feasible to convert the former railroad corridor to a rail trail. With proper rail trail design sensitive to the project setting and continued public involvement, the rail trail could serve a variety of community functions - transportation alternative, close to home recreational facility, community meeting place, historical and cultural attraction, economic engine for local businesses and an accessible means of enjoying the natural landscape. The report outlines the next steps the Town needs to complete (or coordinate) in order to move forward with the project. Additional follow-up research and agency coordination will be required to advance the project to the design phase. Most importantly, the Town needs to thoroughly assess its preparedness for implementation in terms of project funding and local support, possibly through the appointment of a representative task force.

The funds for the report were raised by the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (FBFRT), a local non-profit 501(c)(3) organization advocating the rail trail, supplemented with a Bikes Belong Coalition grant. No Town funds were expended as part of this study effort.

## **3 Railroad Right-of-Way**

### **3.1 History of Rail Service**

The rail line was chartered in 1870 as the Framingham and Lowell (F&L) Railroad and opened in November 1871. The north-south line crossed the Boston & Maine Railroad (1844) to create a rail junction at the Concord Junction Depot. The neighboring villages, Westvale, Warnerville (Concord Junction) and Reformatory grew together as the railroads helped foster industry and agriculture in the area.

Ten years later, the F&L Railroad was sold at foreclosure due to a lack of traffic. The railroad was reorganized into the Lowell & Framingham Railroad and subsequently merged into the Old Colony Railroad. In 1893, the company became part of the New Haven Railroad system. At this time, the railroad lines were important to the State Prison (1887), both for workers and visitors arriving by rail and the shipping of goods that were manufactured by prisoners. The Concord Junction Depot area continued to grow in population; and churches, schools and retail stores were soon established. It was not until 1928 that the Town of Concord formally adopted the name West Concord for this railroading area. Passenger service on this line ceased in 1933.

The Old Colony Railroad line operated as part of this system until 1969, when it was acquired by the Penn Central Transportation Company and renamed the Lowell Secondary. At that time, the Lowell Secondary served a nightly freight train traveling from South Boston to Lowell via Readville, Walpole and Framingham. It continued to service this route until Penn Central declared bankruptcy in June of 1970. Consequently, there was a move to increase the efficiency of the railroad by consolidating traffic onto fewer lines. As a result, the Lowell Secondary began to only service a local freight train between Framingham and Lowell in 1973.

In 1976, the Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) system was implemented to take over the operations of the key Penn Central lines. Because the traffic on most of the Lowell Secondary was below average, Conrail only acquired the 4.7 miles from Framingham Center to South Sudbury. The Boston and Maine Corporation purchased the 1.6 miles from the Lowell yard to U.S. Route 3 in Chelmsford that continued to serve several customers.

In the 1970's, most of the traffic on the Lowell Secondary constituted shipments of building materials to distributors in North Acton and Chelmsford. It was expected that traffic would continue to increase along the line and therefore the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) decided to subsidize service from South Sudbury to Chelmsford Center. The EOT leased the track from Penn Central and contracted with Conrail to provide service. Unfortunately, by 1979, it became clear that the line's traffic volumes did not develop due to a prolonged economic downturn in the building industry. The Lowell Secondary became the least cost-effective line in the EOT's rail subsidy program and freight service was suspended in April 1982. The EOT did however decide to purchase the segments of rail line in order to preserve the right-of-way for other public uses.

### **3.2 Title Conveyance**

The deed transferring ownership of the railroad right-of-way from ConRail to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, acting through the EOT was executed through two separate deeds. The first deed agreement was signed on May 3, 1982 and covers the section of railroad right-of-way from West Concord north to Bridge No. 9.83 over Nashoba Brook in North Acton. This deed is filed in Book 14609 / Page 302 at the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds. The second deed agreement was signed on November 23, 1982 and covers the sections of railroad right-of-way from South Sudbury to West Concord, Bridge No. 9.83 over Nashoba Brook in North Acton north to Route 3 on the Chelmsford/Lowell border. This deed is filed in Book 2579 / Page 256 at the Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds.

Rail operation has officially ceased along the Lowell Secondary Track right-of-way, United States Railway Association Line Code 4130. The right-of-way is managed by the EOT on behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The EOT has indicated that the Commonwealth has a strong interest in preserving the corridor for future transportation uses and is open to discussing its future with the Town.

### 3.3 Property Agreements

The EOT has reviewed their files to locate any legal agreements or correspondence between the Commonwealth and outside parties for private use of the railroad corridor within the Concord town limits. The result of this review is as follows:

**Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA):** In April 1991, the EOT granted a license agreement to the MBTA to permit the agency to use and maintain a parking area at the MBTA Commuter Rail Station in West Concord. The MBTA commuter parking lot is located on the north side of the West Concord rail junction, where the Lowell Secondary Track right-of-way crosses the active MBTA Commuter Line. The parking lot is situated entirely within the Lowell Secondary Track right-of-way, from approximately Valuation Map Station 607+18 to Station 613+42. This parcel contains about 24,800 square feet of land. A picture of the parking lot is shown to the right.



Figure 7: MBTA Commuter Parking Lot  
Looking North Along Rail Corridor

**VOA Concord Assisted Living, Inc.:** In March 2001, the EOT granted an access easement to VOA for perpetual rights and easements on three parcels of land within the Lowell Secondary Track right-of-way. This access easement permits access and utility rights across the commuter parking lot to the Concord Park facility on the west side of the right-of-way (See Sheet 3 of 9). In April 2001, the EOT granted a license agreement to VOA to install and maintain landscaping amenities within the limits of the railroad right-of-way. A picture of the VOA facility is shown to the right.

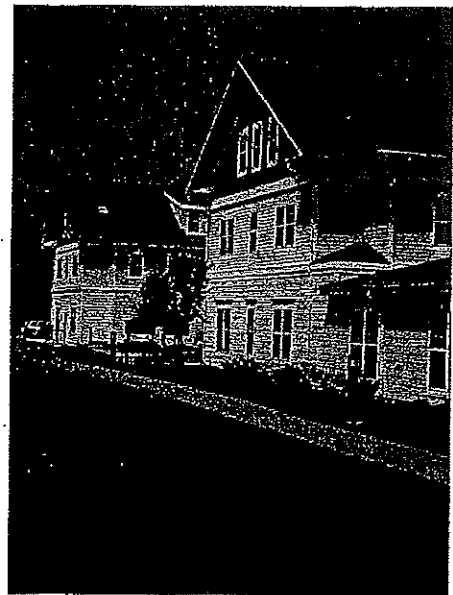


Figure 8: Concord Park Facility on  
East Side of Rail Corridor

**Town of Concord:** In July 1984, the EOT granted a lease agreement to the Town of Concord to construct and maintain a public park and pedestrian walkway within the Lowell Secondary Track right-of-way. The park is located on the south side of the rail junction, between the MBTA right-of-way and the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue with Main Street in West Concord center. The park, locally known as the Concord Junction Depot, contains approximately 7,954 square feet of land. A picture of Concord Junction Depot is shown to the right.



**Figure 9: Concord Junction Depot  
Park and Pedestrian Walkway**

**Corrections Special Unit:** As discussed in the next Section, Massachusetts Correctional Institution (MCI) -Concord, a facility of the Massachusetts Department of Corrections, is using a linear portion of the railroad right-of-way for an access drive. A picture of this access road is also included in the next Section. The Corrections Special Unit sent a letter to the EOT in March, 1989, in follow-up meeting held between the two agencies. The letter restated the Unit's interest in utilizing a 20-foot wide swath of the Lowell Secondary right-of-way to gain access to a parcel at the rear of the institution for additional parking. The letter specifically acknowledged that the railroad corridor was under study for use as a future bicycle path. The EOT's records do not indicate any follow-up correspondence or executed legal agreements between the EOT and Corrections Special Unit with respect to this issue.

The design of the rail trail should seek to permit the shared use of the right-of-way in order to avoid extinguishing the existing agreements signed with the aforementioned parties. If an existing agreement poses a problem to rail trail design and construction, the EOT will meet with all parties to see if an equitable solution can be reached to satisfy all parties. This issue will need to be reviewed in more detail during the preliminary design stages of the project.

### 3.4 Physical Encroachments

Based on a site walk by the consultant team and a review of existing legal agreements, there was only one significant encroachment identified along the corridor with the potential to impact the project design. This encroachment is located at the MCI-Concord facility.

**MCI-Concord:** MCI-Concord is currently using a linear portion of the railroad right-of-way for an access drive. This dirt road provides access between Commonwealth Avenue and a storage area at the rear of the prison. Use of the railroad right-of-way by MCI-Concord has not been legally authorized by means of a formal access easement granted. Rather, this use has occurred without prior approval from the EOT. Resolving the physical encroachment will require that MCI-Concord either enter into an agreement with the EOT for their use of the property, or vacate the property (remove the encroachment). Should this use be authorized by the EOT, it is recommended that the design of the rail trail include some form of physical



**Figure 10: MCI-Concord Access Drive  
Along Corridor**

separation for the safety of users. For example, an earthen berm, fence or vegetation could be used between the trail and the access drive.

Along the railroad corridor, there are also a series of "private crossings" shown on the railroad valuation maps. At the time the valuation maps were drafted, many of these crossings were likely cow paths, etc. While some of these crossings may no longer exist, others appear to still be used for private access across the right-of-way in the form of residential driveways and municipal access roads. The nature of the rights of these private crossings will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The only way to validate the legality of the private crossings as they currently exist would be to review the original deeds into the railroad (i.e., what rights were reserved by the original Grantor), as well as any dispositions / rights granted by the railroad after its initial acquisition, and to evaluate these documents in their current context. This additional reconnaissance should be included as part of a preliminary deed review, to be conducted prior to the design phase of the project. The design and construction of the rail trail will need to accommodate many of these private crossings.



Figure 11: Private Crossing Along Corridor

### 3.5 Rail to Trail Conversion

In order for the Town to pursue plans to convert the railroad right-of-way to a rail trail, the Town must submit a formal application to the EOT stating their desired use and plans for the railroad corridor. The EOT can supply the Town with access to the land but does not financially contribute to the project. Pending approval from the EOT, the Town would be granted a property agreement for the design, construction and maintenance of the rail trail. The EOT will consider such property interests as required to operate a rail trail along the corridor. It is anticipated that the terms of the agreement will be a use agreement, an access easement or a combination of both.

The EOT generally recommends that a full title review be conducted for the corridor. This review should be a coordinated effort of the Town and EOT and carried out by a consultant experienced in railroad right-of-way research. The title report will trace the title from when the railroad originally acquired the land, forward in time to the present. The nature of the rights of various interests in the right-of-way, including the legality of private crossings, will be clarified in the context of this title review.

### 10.3 MBTA Parking Lot

The north-south Lowell Secondary Track railroad corridor crosses the active MBTA Commuter Rail at Concord Junction Depot, in the heart of West Concord. On the north side of the rail junction is the MBTA commuter parking lot, on the south side is a small public park and pedestrian walkway (See Sheet 3 of 9).

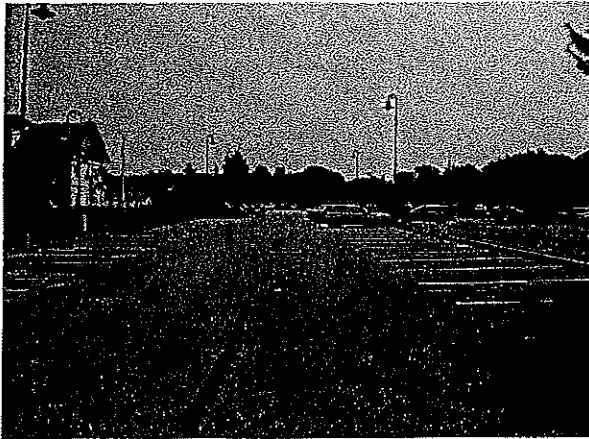


Figure 34: MBTA Commuter Parking Lot  
Looking South Along Rail Corridor

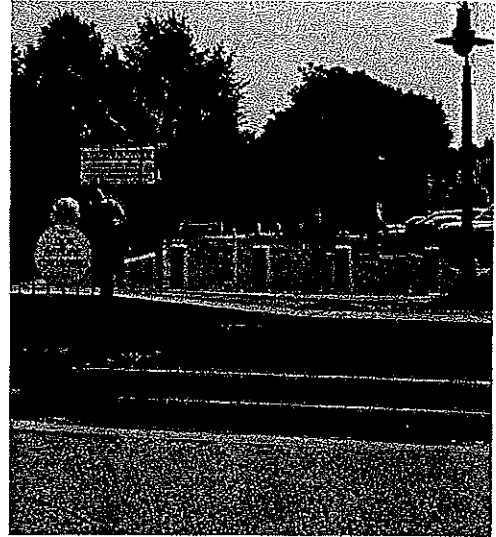


Figure 35: Existing At-Grade Pedestrian Crossing  
Looking South Along Rail Corridor

The rail trail might follow the alignment of the Lowell Secondary Track, through the MBTA commuter parking lot. It would then cross the active MBTA Commuter Rail in West Concord center at the existing at-grade pedestrian crossing, as shown in the photos above. A license agreement for this use was granted to the MBTA by the EOT in April 1991, as discussed in the Railroad Right-of-Way Section of this report.

FST's site reconnaissance revealed that there few, if any, other practicable or preferable routing alternatives in the general station area. In follow-up, the consultant scheduled a meeting with the MBTA and EOT to discuss the rail trail crossing of the commuter parking lot and active tracks at the West Concord MBTA Commuter Rail Station. Attendees at this meeting included the Town's Consultant (FST), MBTA Director of Planning, MBTA Director of Real Estate and an MBTA Project Manager - Planning Dept. and the EOT's Manager of Alternative Transportation, Property Manager - Rail Unit and Bicycle-Pedestrian Program Manager. Town of Concord staff were not in attendance at this meeting.

The joint issues discussed at the meeting included:

- Provision a safe and continuous bicyclist and pedestrian route through the area;
- Minimizing conflict with vehicular circulation in the parking lot;
- Improving existing signage and physical control at the rail crossing; and
- Implementing rail trail user regulations to indemnify the MBTA.

As a result of the items discussed at this meeting, the MBTA suggested that the Town submit a formal request to the MBTA describing the Town's interest in constructing a rail trail through the West Concord Station area. The letter should request approval to further consider a rail trail crossing of the active tracks and include accompanying graphics to clearly illustrate the rail trail alignment along with the existing and proposed conditions on land used by the MBTA. Upon receipt of this letter, the MBTA will begin an internal canvass and review process of the Town's request. The agency will seek input from its respective departments, including, but not limited to: Real Estate, Operations, Safety, Planning, Design & Construction and Revenue. An on-site

meeting will likely occur as part of the MBTA's review process, of which the Town will also be notified. The MBTA will issue a response letter to the Town once the agency has completed its review. It is advantageous for the Town to submit this request as part of the Town's preliminary study to allow the MBTA ample time to review and comment prior to the preparation of design plans.

A copy of this letter, without the exhibits, is contained at the end of this Section. Regardless of the status of this letter, the Town should continue to closely coordinate with the MBTA to reach a mutually satisfactory and safe solution.

**Recommendations:**

A multi-modal link at the West Concord MBTA Commuter Rail Station is essential. However, this link must be designed to balance the safety and mobility of station and rail trail users. The rail trail design through this area consists of two elements: its routing through the property and its crossing of the MBTA tracks.

Route:

The primary considerations in developing the final routing arrangement are to:

- Evaluate how to safely bring trail users through the commuter parking lot
- Determine the resulting impact, if any, on vehicular circulation

The design should seek to allow for the shared use of the parking lot by motorists and rail trail users. The parking lot within the Lowell Secondary right-of-way is rectangular, with two rows of parking spaces (approx. 9 feet by 18 feet) and a center travel lane (approximately 24 feet wide).

A low-cost design option with minimal physical impact would be to delineate a rail trail route segment through the parking lot with pavement markings, signage or special pavers. For example, the route could be painted a solid color supplemented with a bike stencil, similar to a bike lane. This route segment would provide a defined linear extension of the rail along the length of the parking lot. This lane would serve two purposes. First, it would help guide rail trail users through the parking lot and secondly, it would warn motorists about the presence of rail trail users. Safety concerns still remain related to rail trail user / vehicle conflicts, especially motorists backing their vehicles into this lane when trail users are present. While this problem cannot be prevented, it can be mitigated with additional signage directed at both motorists and rail trail users, using colored pavement or painting the lane a solid color to raise awareness. Locating this lane along the center of the parking aisle will improve motorist's visibility of trail users and provide additional time for motorists/users to safely react to a potential conflict.

Additional safety guidelines could be implemented in the station area to require rail trail users to dismount and walk through, as opposed to ride through, the station area. However, this guideline would be difficult to enforce. This issue will likely be considered as part of the agency's internal canvass and review process, especially in terms of indemnifying the MBTA from liability.

Although, routing the trail through the parking lot is a feasible alternative, it would be preferable to provide a physical separation between parked cars and the rail trail. This separation would likely require some modifications of the current parking lot layout (i.e. reducing the aisle width and shifting a parking row). Another option could be to bring the rail trail along the railroad spur track shown in the photo to the right. This spur track would bring rail trail users from the northern

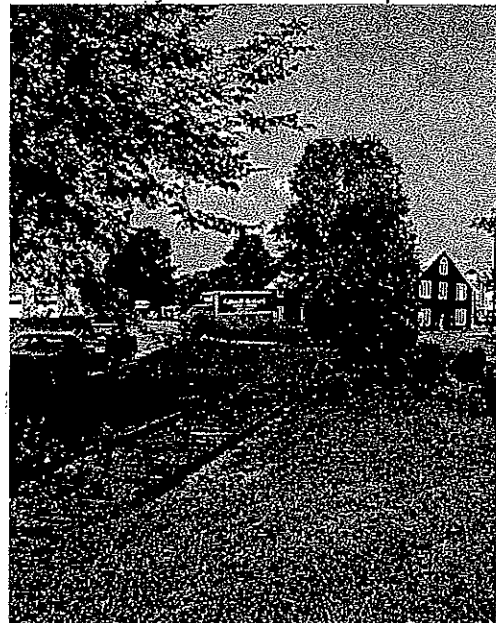


Figure 36: Looking South Along Spur Track

end of the commuter parking lot close to the existing gate controlled crossing of the active rail line at Commonwealth Avenue. However, it must still be recognized that rail trail users will seek to find the most direct route through this area, which in this case would be to travel straight through the parking lot. The feasibility of these options will need to be further evaluated when more detailed survey is available. During the preliminary design phase, it is also recommended that a traffic study be conducted to document current circulation patterns in the parking lot and investigate changes to improve safety on this segment of the trail.

The rail trail design in this area must accommodate an access easement granted to VOA Concord Assisted Living, Inc. This easement provides vehicular access and utility rights across the commuter parking lot to the Concord Park facility (on the west side of the right-of-way). Stop signs currently control this cross connection. This easement agreement was granted to VOA by the EOT in March 2001, as discussed in the Railroad Right-of-Way Section of this report.

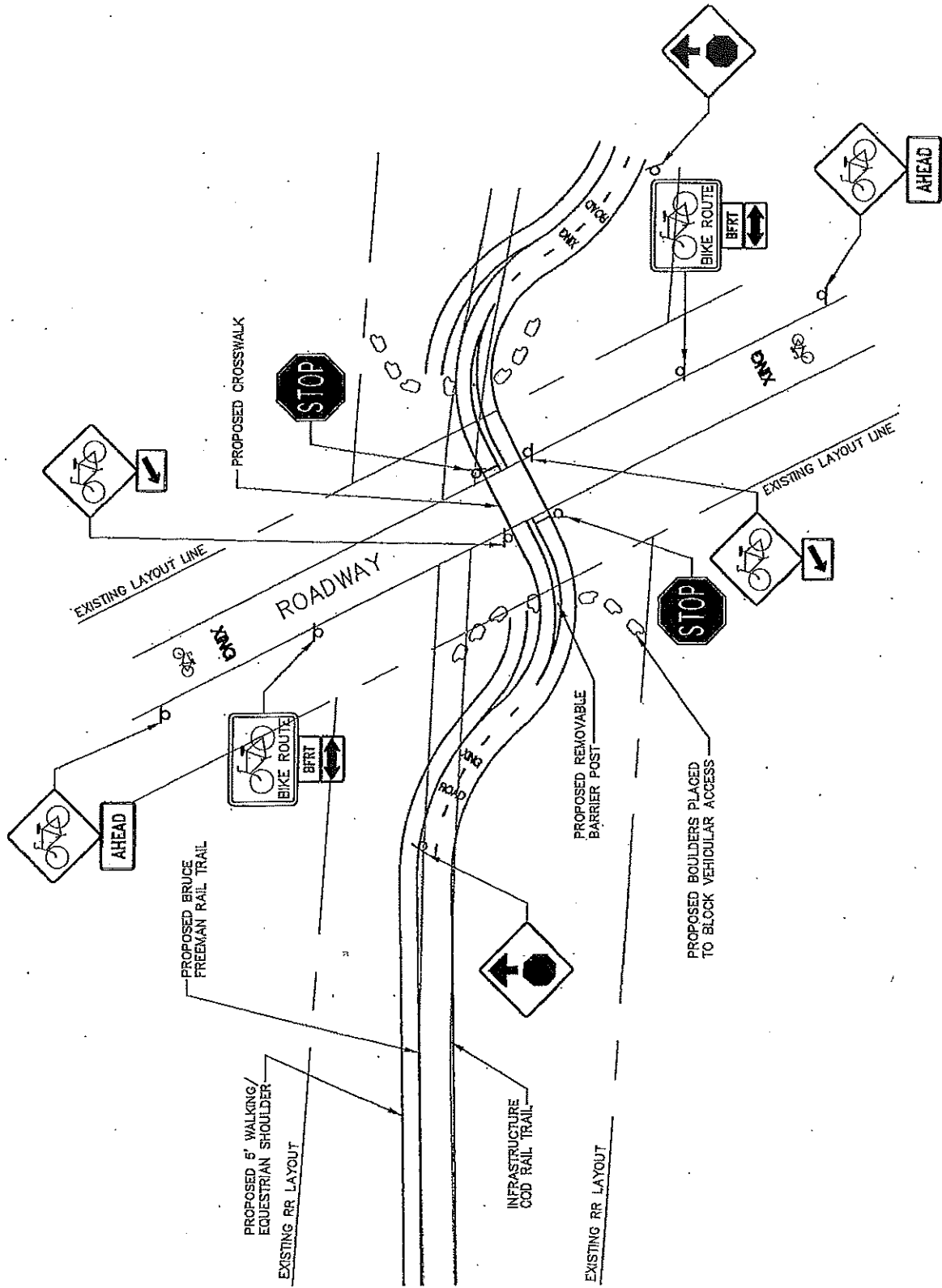
Crossing:

The primary considerations in evaluating a rail trail crossing of the active line are to:

- Determine the feasibility of utilizing the existing at-grade pedestrian crossing
- Assess the adequacy of existing physical controls at this location

The existing pedestrian crossing at the station is an at-grade crossing between the inbound and outbound platforms in the center of the station. The commuter trains stop directly at the crossing to discharge and pickup passengers. Existing signage at the crossing instructs users to "Look Before Crossing." Additional signage and markings could be added at this location to formally state and require rail trail users to dismount and walk across the at-grade crossing and to direct trail users through the station property.

Black iron fencing between the inbound and outbound tracks acts as a physical control to restrict people to cross at the designated location. The rail trail will bring increased pedestrian and bicyclist traffic through this crossing. The MBTA may require special safety controls be erected at this crossing as part of the rail trail design. Such controls and other safety considerations will likely be considered as part of the agency's internal canvass and review process in response to the Town's letter. In accordance with the Town's June 25, 2005 letter to the MBTA, it is recommended that a study of pedestrian control devices for crossings of active railroad tracks be conducted to determine an appropriate treatment to improve the safety of users at this crossing.



# BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL / ROADWAY INTERSECTION

TYPICAL TREATMENT TO IMPROVE SIGHT  
DISTANCE AND SAFETY AT INTERSECTIONS

NOT TO SCALE



TAY, SPORFORD & THORNDIKE, LLC  
ENGINEERS • PLANNERS • SCIENTISTS  
BURLINGTON, MA



**DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2009**

**AT**

**Concord Town House**

**Concord, MASSACHUSETTS**

**7:00 PM**

**FOR THE PROPOSED**

**BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL, PHASE 2C  
Project File No. 605189**

**IN THE TOWN OF CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS**

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

**LUISA PAIEWONSKY  
COMMISSIONER**

**FRANK A. TRAMONTOZZI, P.E.  
CHIEF ENGINEER**

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

**NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING**

**Project File No. 605189**

A Design Public Hearing will be held by MassHighway to discuss the proposed Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT), Phase 2C project, in the Town of Concord, Massachusetts.

**WHERE:** Concord Town House  
22 Monument Square  
Concord, MA 01742

**WHEN:** **Thursday, June 25, 2009 @ 7:00 PM**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed BFRT Phase 2C project. All views and comments made at the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

**PROPOSAL:** The proposed rail trail project will extend from the limits of the proposed Concord Rotary Project (Phase 2B) at Commonwealth Avenue and continue through West Concord to Powder Mill Road for an approximate total length of 2.5 miles. The construction will include: a new 10-foot paved asphalt multi-use rail trail with 2-foot stabilized shoulders, trail pavement markings and signing, passively actuated flashing beacons at trail/roadway crossings, new roadway pavement markings and signing at trail crossings, rehabilitating two existing bridge superstructures over the Nashoba Brook, a new bridge superstructure over the Assabet River; replacement of the Powder Mill Road culvert, earthwork, landscaping and other items incidental to the construction of the rail trail.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The *Town of Concord* is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassHighway's policy concerning land acquisitions will be discussed at this hearing.

Written views received by MassHighway subsequent to the date of this notice and up to five (5) days prior to the date of the hearing shall be displayed for public inspection and copying at the time and date listed above. Plans will be on display one-half hour before the hearing begins, with an engineer in attendance to answer questions regarding this project. A project handout will be made available on the MassHighway website listed below.

Written statements and other exhibits in place of, or in addition to, oral statements made at the Public Hearing regarding the proposed undertaking are to be submitted to Frank A. Tramontozzi, P.E., Chief Engineer, Massachusetts Highway Department, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116. Such submissions will also be accepted at the hearing. Mailed statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public hearing transcript must be postmarked within ten (10) business days of this Public Hearing.

The community has declared that this facility is accessible to all in compliance with the ADA / Title II. However, persons in need of ADA / Title II accommodations should contact Angela Rudikoff by phone at (617) 973-7005 or email [angela.rudikoff@eot.state.ma.us](mailto:angela.rudikoff@eot.state.ma.us). Requests must be made at least 10 days prior to the date of the public hearing.

In case of inclement weather, hearing cancellation announcements will be posted on the MassHighway website <http://www.mass.gov/mhd>.

LUISA PAIEWONSKY  
COMMISSIONER

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## FINAL REPORT

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### Proposed Bruce Freeman Rail Trail/MBTA Commuter Rail Crossing Alternative Analysis

Alternative 3A places trail users in a tunnel underground with sight distance issues. In an ideal situation, trail users should be able to see the other end of a tunnel when they enter it. This is not possible with this tunnel. Alternative 3B introduces a switch back ramp system and then has trail users sharing the roadway with vehicles on Westgate Road. Alternative 4 introduces a very long tunnel and potentially a switchback ramp system. Alternative 5 introduces a bridge with switchback ramps. If trail users do not dismount their bikes as instructed by signing, there is potential for collision with other trail users on the blind corners.

Alternative 6 introduces a switch back ramp section and proposes that trail users share the road with motor vehicles along Main Street. Alternative 7A proposes that trail users share the road along Baker Avenue and Main Street. Alternative 7B proposes that trail users share the road along Baker Avenue, Cottage Street and Old Marlboro Road.

Alternatives 3 and 7 would require a more extensive environmental permitting process than the other alternatives since they will most likely involve work in floodplain and in wetlands. They both propose work in the vicinity of the Assabet River which would require review by the RSC. The remaining alternatives all involve the same amount of permitting.

Therefore, based on cost, safety and environmental factors, GPI recommends Alternative 1C – a wider sidewalk on Commonwealth Avenue as the Preferred Alternative. There are of course other factors to take into consideration including the effectiveness of the route and project abutters. The hope is that through discussions with the various stakeholders, the desired Alternative can be identified and a consensus Preferred Alternative can be presented to MassDOT.

Excerpt from GPI Alternatives  
Analysis

