

Dear Members of the Bruce Freeman Rail Committee:

We participated in your recent meeting at which several alternative reconfigurations of Junction Park were presented. First of all, we would like to say that is unfortunate that we, as a Town, find ourselves in the position of having to create a temporary and then permanent “solution” to BFRT’s path through Junction Park.

It was known by some, but apparently not the group that designed the Park, that the Rail Trail would be passing through the Park and that it was a requirement that it be 8 ft. wide and would endanger many vulnerable people who would enjoy walking in the Park. To remedy this planning oversight, many Town employees and especially Town volunteers are now spending hundreds of hours trying to solve the problem.

Schematic #1- Since it is necessary to create a temporary solution, we will only comment that dividing up the path into two unequal parts, one for bikes and one for pedestrians is **not a good solution, even temporarily**. The portion allotted pedestrians is too narrow and the crossovers in the park will be dangerous for those on foot going to and from West Concord Shopping Plaza. Please don’t choose Solution 1 even as a temporary solution. Rather, please find an alternative solution that physically forces bicycles to dismount through the use of some kind of barriers.

Schematic #2 & #3- We would prefer either of these options as they would remove the dangers of the mixing of bikers and walkers and would not add any asphalt to the Park. In the past, we have been able to **work with the MBTA toward mutually beneficial outcomes** and I would urge the Town’s representatives to work with the MBTA for the best effect for the Town.

Schematic #4- Moving the bio-retention area would be a **costly alternative both financially and environmentally**. We were given targeted funds from a private corporation to create this forward-looking way to protect our water. It is a model we should emulate in other projects. Moving this area means much more than moving some grass and plants; the bio-retention area is plumbed and that would have to be re-designed. I do not see any indication of where nor how the bio-retention area would be relocated.

Schematic #5 & #6- Adding **more asphalt** to the Park either for a new bike path or a new walking path are not good solutions. In addition, the new bike/walking path crosses close to the entrance to the shopping center. Many walkers enter the shopping center at that entrance and encounter bikers.

Schematic #7- This proposal has the same negative characteristics as Schematics #5 and #6 but the separation occurs closer to the entrance of the Park with **even more asphalt** being added.

Thank you for continuing to work toward the best possible solution to these problems. We would like a vibrant Junction Park that is safe and beautiful for everyone.

Patrick and Julie Hirschler