

Good afternoon, members of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee,

Below are comments related to your suggestions for possible permanent paths for cyclists and pedestrians through Junction Park. I have already offered comments on Item #1—Short Term.

One point which needs to be included for ALL and any paths, #1-#7 is that any Bicycle path must not be able to be entered or exited at **any** point between the beginning and the end of the path. This is obviously directed at preventing ANYONE, child or adult, from entering a bike path mid-way and thus offering a hazard to themselves or bikers. This is **essential**.

Comments for the various plans:

#2 and #3—I will treat both of these plans, and to some extent #4 the same way. Before proceeding to any discussion with the MBTA, it must be determined (using the skills and training of CPW Engineers) the needed minimum required turning radius for all cars now parking in the MBTA lot. Once that has been answered, next steps will be clearer. There is absolutely NO reason to delay in asking for this information.

It is likely that some changes to the Bioretention area may be necessary, but they should be as minimal as possible. Again, Town Engineers will have that information since the grant for the Bioretention area was processed through that

department. Also, please note that the correct term is Bioretention and not just "Retention."

Once the info is obtained, THEN, a meeting with the MBTA should take place. Please note that before setting up such a meeting it is critical that good contacts, with experience with Concord and the MBTA be set up. For example, Pete Sutton at MADOT noted in our phone conversation that he has good "T" contacts! And Concord made excellent contacts when an agreement was made with the MBTA to renovate the Club Car Café using CPA funds. As it turns out, I coordinated that partnership along with a former member of the Planning Department and am trying to locate our very helpful contacts. (By the way, current contacts may not be helpful, since the Town has been unsuccessful in persuading the MBTA to follow through on its agreement to keep the condition of paint in good repair!!!)

It would be appropriate to work with Concord Public Works and the original design team of the Green Thumbs in making changes to JP landscaping. Both groups can and should work cooperatively, and it should be noted that the Green Thumbs is aware that changes to Park plantings will likely be necessary to keep Junction Park safe for All.

Another issues with these three plans is that there must be a connection to the unsafe, but nevertheless most used

northern entrance to the Park. It is critical that those entering this way be connected to any proposed path within JP. Perhaps setting up Chicane gates at north and south ends of Park could be considered?

Finally, and I will not keep repeating this, there cannot be any midway entrances or exits from the Bike Path for the reasons noted in my introduction.

#5 should be considered **only** after numbers **#2- #4** have been ruled out. It would require a complete change in orientation and design of the Park with considerable expense, and would require added and considerable effort in maintaining the green space on the left side of the Park, but it does remain a possibility. And, to repeat, no entrance to Bike path should be possible mid-path, and there is no connection to the Northern, very much used entrance to the Park.

#6 This plan is completely disqualified because there should NOT be an exit/entrance between the Bike Path and the Shopping Plaza, and there is need for such an access because so many users, both pedestrians and cyclists, need access to the stores and services in that area.

#7 We can certainly do better than this—for SO many reasons: it would be hugely expensive, cuts up the harmonious design, and damages this important green space in the center

of West Concord, without accomplishing **any** of the benefits which may be possible in the previous designs..

Finally, may I add a comment about this space as central to West Concord. When Junction Park unofficially opened in 2012, Chris Whelan, former Town Manager, noted that he loved to drive by the Park on his way home from the Town House. He noted that "It is the best used public space in all of Concord!" He referred not to the numbers using it, but for the variety of its users: elderly from Junction Park (reduced during COVID, but who will return), children from the Children's Center at Harvey Wheeler, commuters, kids who bike to the 7/11 to buy snacks and then go back to the Park to munch and enjoy, teenagers who gather at the round stone wall to chat, pedestrians on errands etc.etc. Safe space for bikes is a use which **must and should** be provided for. But the cost (monetary, safety, aesthetic and comfort) must not be ignored.

Thank you all for your consideration of my comments. I hope that you will soon reach out to those who work for the Town since their experience as engineers is critical so that you can discover if any or all of your proposals have potential.

Dorrie Kehoe

March 20, 2022