



# Town of Sudbury

Planning and Community Development Department

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TO: Select Board  
FROM: Beth Suedmeyer, Environmental Planner, Planning and Community Development  
RE: BFRT Design Project Update  
DATE: July 9, 2021

I am pleased to provide this summary of project status in response to the request for an update on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) Design Project (BFRT, Phase 2D, MassDOT ID 608164).

## Design Schedule

As you are aware, the 75% project design of the rail trail from the Concord Town line to near Station Avenue was submitted to MassDOT on May 12, 2021. The MassDOT has completed their comments and the Project Manager provided access to MassDOT's comments on July 8, 2021. Once the Design Team has compiled and reviewed MassDOT's comments we'll hold a comment resolution meeting with MassDOT. We anticipate the comments will be resolved and the 100% design process will begin in Mid-August.

The project design must be "shovel ready" by October 2022 to take advantage of the state and federal funds for construction. The project is on track to achieve this milestone. A revised project schedule is in development and should be available next week. The current estimated advertising date, the target final design date, remains June 11, 2022. The schedule will be further revised, if needed, following the full MassDOT comment review and resolution.

## ROW Process

As a result of the State and Federal funding through the Boston MPO, the ROW process is dictated by Federal Highway and not something the Town can advance prior to meeting required milestones. The Town still awaits information from the Rail Division and a draft lease from MassDOT. These are anticipated to be available later this month. The Town Meeting approval is needed to approve the Town entering into the corridor lease agreement and acquire or grant easements.

Based on preliminary comments from MassDOT ROW staff following their review of the 75% submission, the ROW process schedule will not warrant a fall Special Town Meeting. The 75% ROW plans must be approved and the lease and easement processes should further advance prior to Town Meeting votes being taken. The approval of the lease agreement and easements is presently planned for the May 2022 Annual Town Meeting, but the Design Team, with guidance from Town Counsel, will continue to evaluate the schedule and progress to make a recommendation to the Select Board if an earlier Special Town Meeting is preferable to optimally support the project.

We have already initiated discussions with the abutters who have private driveways crossing the corridor. As soon as the 75% design ROW plans are approved by MassDOT, we will begin to approach affected landowners about acquiring necessary easements.

I'll provide a few additional updates regarding the project's environmental permit process.

### **Notice of Intent**

The draft Notice of Intent was submitted to MassDOT for review on June 16, 2021. MassDOT will be the permit applicant and they have confirmed they are in the process of reviewing and providing input/changes to the draft application. We expect we will have their input by the end of July to begin preparing final applications. The current schedule shows the submission of the application to Conservation Commission in October, but if we are able to expedite this submission we will.

### **Chapter 91 Determination**

The request for determination is still under review by MassDEP, and it appears that a determination will be made in the next 30 days. MassDOT review of the modified design proposal for the Hop Brook Bridge resulted in no major comments or requests for changes.

As always, more information on the project and the 75% design plans may be found at the BFRT project webpage. <https://sudbury.ma.us/pcd/?p=354>