



**THE RAIL TRAIL CONVERSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
TOWN OF SUDBURY  
(Voted to establish September 7, 2004 by Sudbury Board of Selectmen)**

**Mission Statement**

It is the intention of the Selectmen, in creating a Rail Trail Conversion Advisory Committee (RTCAC), to provide a mechanism for the Town to examine the conversion of an existing unused rail line in Sudbury to a recreational path and alternative transportation corridor. The Selectmen are committed to developing an overall project and vision for this rail trail conversion that can be supported by the entire community and are looking to this committee to help identify and address the many questions and concerns that residents of Sudbury may have about this project, as well as support the efforts of Town staff as they begin the technical process of studying the feasibility of such a rail trail conversion.

At this time, the Town of Sudbury is examining the conversion of both the Lowell-Sudbury rail line, owned and controlled by the state Executive Office of Transportation and Construction (EOTC) and the CSX owned rail line that runs south from the Lowell-Sudbury trail line into Framingham. These lines are continuous, even though each segment is owned by a different entity. This new Committee will not have any responsibility at this time for looking at another potential rail trail conversion in Sudbury, the so-called Wayside Trail on the MBTA-owned rail line but may be asked to work on conversion of this line at a later date.

**Background**

**EOTC owned rail line:** The portion of rail line in Sudbury that is to be addressed by this committee is part of a larger 22-mile unused railroad right-of-way that was purchased by the EOTC in 1982, which will continue to own the land even after the entire length of the rail line has been converted. Planning has been underway for a number of years to create a recreational path on the entire 22-mile length of the rail line, which has been named the Bruce N. Freeman Memorial Rail Trail, after a late state representative from Chelmsford, who was an ardent supporter for the creation of a bicycle path along this rail line and was key to getting State legislative endorsement of the project in 1987. The trail conversion will occur in two phases.

- Phase 1 begins in Lowell and goes through the towns of Chelmsford and Westford. This phase has been designed, permitted and received funding from state and federal sources. The project is currently out to bid, with construction likely to begin in the spring of 2005 and take two years to complete.
- Phase 2 would continue the path south from Route 225 in Westford, continue for a mile in Carlisle, and then travel through Acton, Concord and Sudbury, ending just short of Route 20. Phase 2 has not been designed, permitted, or funded, but the towns involved in Phase 2 are all involved in some level of study and planning activity for the potential of the rail line within their borders and trying to determine future actions that best meets the needs and desires of each town.

CSX owned rail line: This portion of the rail line has been taken out of active use and CSX had been discussing with Sudbury and Framingham officials their interest in converting this unused rail line into a recreational path. Framingham has set up a committee which has produced a draft feasibility study.

In order for Sudbury to pursue plans to convert the railroad right-of-way to a recreational path within our borders, the Town must conduct feasibility studies and develop proposed uses and plans to submit to the owners of the lines. If the plans are acceptable to the line's owners, we believe they will grant Sudbury permission to develop the recreational trails.

The Board of Selectmen has voted to take two crucial steps that will allow Sudbury to move forward on this project:

- The Town Manager has been directed to identify alternatives for obtaining the estimated \$25,000 funding necessary for undertaking a feasibility study, including applying for grants and/or funding from the Community Preservation Act.
- The Town Manager has been directed to create this committee, which will work with Town staff under the direction of the Town Manager, to begin serious planning and discussions on how Sudbury should be developing the section of the rail that is located in Sudbury.

### **Responsibilities and Functions**

There are a number of issues on which the Town must come to a consensus that will affect how the rail trail conversions will proceed. These issues include, but are not limited to:

- Conceptual design of the path, including dimensions of the path and materials used to construct the path,
- Financial resources to design and construct the path,
- Environmental issues,
- Impact on and concerns of abutters to the rail line,
- Engineering and safety concerns, including street crossings and bridges,
- Parking and other amenities needed to support a recreational rail path
- On-going maintenance and other costs the Town must consider
- How Sudbury will coordinate with the five others towns involved in Phase 2 development activities.

The Committee will work with Town staff to develop a process for addressing all these issues and concerns, through the commission of a formal study to be conducted by an engineering firm specializing in rail trail conversions, and through other meetings and public hearings.

### **Membership and Officers**

The RTCAC shall have 9 members - all at-large. (Amended 9/21/11) All appointments shall be indefinite, until the Board of Selectmen feels the mission of the Committee has been accomplished, or that membership needs to be changed in order to keep the work progressing. The Town Manager or her designee shall chair the Committee until a Chair has been elected from the membership of the Committee. A clerk of the Committee shall also be elected to ensure that all meetings are properly posted and that minutes of each meeting are kept. Minutes of the Committee's work shall be prepared and made public by the Committee promptly, with copies filed with the Town Clerk and sent to the Board of Selectmen on a regular basis.

### **Compliance with State and Local Law**

The Rail Trail Conversion Advisory Committee is responsible for conducting its activities in a manner which is in compliance with all relevant state and local laws and regulations including but not limited to the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law, and Conflict of Interest Law.

9-24-04

Rev. 3-07-07, 6-10-09, 9-21-11