



Responses to Questions on the Dedham Heritage Rail Trail Feasibility Study

Please Note: Questions were assembled from all respondents who submitted them to the Town of Dedham by April 22, 2016 and are shown below broken out by category. Next to each question is denoted whether or not there is an answer to a particular question at this time. A question with a response of Feasibility Study (F.S.) means the Feasibility Study (FS) will answer that question. The FS is being conducted to answer questions that have been previously raised and without further technical analysis these questions cannot be answered in a meaningful way.

Maintenance

- 1) I would like to see a detailed maintenance plan with costs, both yearly and long term, as part of the study. The renderings I have seen have flowers and bushes which need a good amount of care. There will also be a significant amount of fencing and I am guessing it will be privacy fencing which is expensive should it need to be repaired. Trees will need to be maintained, lighting, trash removal, etc. (F.S.) **The study will look at different planting options, as well as materials for construction.**
- 2) What is the financial impact on the Parks Dept. for staffing and maintenance of trail going forward if completed? (F.S.)
- 3) The trail near my house is raised and the raised part is quite narrow. If the grade is not leveled, how will there be room for both a plow and an area that retains snowfall for skiers/snowshoers in the winter. (F.S.) **The feasibility study will evaluate how the trail will be used year round. The construction of the trail might be phased, which means use of the trail may change over time.**
- 4) Who will be responsible during the lifetime of the trail for the maintenance, upkeep of the trail and foliage along the abutters properties, including, but not limited to trash removal, landscaping, damage to railings, decking, support bankings, signage, surfacing, damage to abutter buffers by trail users and other long term maintenance issues that are not quantified in the feasibility studies for the development of the rail bed? (Town) **Park and Recreation, Friends of the Trail, Corporate Community Work Programs.**
- 5) What is the national average cost of maintaining a rail trail? How is this divided by grants and tax payers? Have these maintenance costs been identified by the Town? If so, how? If not, who is responsible for this item? (F.S.)

Cost/ Schedule

- 1) What are the cost estimates for this project? Part of being feasible, is cost. Will cost estimates be part of the feasibility study? (F.S.)
- 2) What is the timeline to this rail trail proposal? (Town) The F.S. will evaluate the feasibility of the trial which includes phasing, construction cost, construction materials, etc. which will develop a timeline.
- 3) How much Town money has been dedicated to the rail trail proposal since these discussions began? What Town staff is working on this project? (Town) Town Meeting appropriated \$10,000 for the creation of a Conceptual Plan by the Rails to Trails Conservancy in 2013. Multiple Departments are working on this project with the leads being the Environmental Coordinator and Planning Director. The Planning Director, working on this project is performing a general planning function of the position not under the direction of the Planning Board.
- 4) What elements or phases are expected to be funded from outside Town funds, such as, grants? What types of grants is the Town applying for, who is determining which grants are best for Dedham and who is writing the grants? By taxpayers? (Town and F.S.) The Conceptual Plan has already identified funding sources but the consultants for the F.S. will help advise the Town further on grants for various phases of the project and funding sources.

Security

- 1) Who is going to be responsible for vandalism to our properties done by kids loitering the trail at night? (Town) The responsibility for vandalism is no different than the property as it exists now or any other public space.
- 2) Oil trucks are stored in lots along the rail bed. As part of the Homeland Security act some of these businesses were instructed to secure parts of their property that were accessible to the public. Who is going to pay for the additional security that will be necessary now that the public will have access to the rail beds? (Town) The public currently has access to the rail bed so there won't be any change to access. The abutter meetings (residential/commercial) that are part of the feasibility intent, are to discuss screenings, options and preventive measures to discourage potential vandalism.
- 3) Will the police department be making regular patrols of the trail? Will the Town need to purchase additional equipment to patrol? (Town) The Police Department will use existing equipment to patrol. Patrol(s) will be developed by the Dedham Police Chief. The Police Department will be involved in the feasibility study to determine ways to help patrol the trail and provide general safety to users and abutters.
- 4) The Town has used the term "self-police" when talking with abutters and residents. What is meant by that term? (Town) Law – abiding citizens are a far greater deterrent to criminal behavior than law enforcement. This is true in any public space, including rail trails.
- 5) Will there be emergency request posts and how far apart will they be apart? (F.S. + Town) The Town will work with the consultants to determine the cost of emergency request posts and the

feasibility of installation along the trail, as well as investigating other options used on other trails.

Schools

(Schools, Town + F.S.) The Town has asked the consultants to evaluate ways the trail users can go back and forth through the school campus for the hours the trail is open. There is an existing problem with the drop off and pick up between the Avery School and the High School that was brought to the attention of the Planning Board. Staff in consultation with the School Superintendent recommends that a consultant who has specific expertise with school drop-off and pick-up operation conduct a comprehensive review outside of the scope of this study. This type of study will need to be funded by the Town. This study should occur regardless of the trail project. If modifications are recommended with drop-off and pick-up they will need to be presented to the Planning Board in order to modify the existing site plan that was approved by the Planning Board.

1. What are the plans for student, staff, family and visitor safety at the High School, Avery School and Pool parking/driveways? Who is involved in these discussions?
2. Who is liable if an accident involving walkers/bikers at the High School/Avery School and Pool parking/driveway occurs while on the designated trail?
3. Explain the term "pedestrian circulation improvement."
4. What are the suggested parking area improvements in regards to school property?
5. What does the dotted yellow "line" through the parking lot, along Whiting Ave and through the entrance way to the Athletic complex signify?
6. Who is responsible in the event a violent incident occurs on the trail where there is not an access point (which prevents emergency responders access)?

Privacy

(F.S.) The following questions will all be addressed through the F.S.

1. How much say will abutters have in the style of privacy fencing installed?
2. When privacy fencing is installed, will removal of current fencing come at the cost of the abutting home owner?
3. Will abutters with access gates to the trail be allowed to have a new access gate installed in the privacy fencing?
4. How will abutters' privacy be protected?
5. How are our businesses going to be shielded from the general public? The rail bed is above our roof lines in many locations.
6. What is the planned buffer between the rail and the abutters to provide privacy? What has been suggested and by whom? Who will pay for the buffer?
7. How will the Town settle situations when one abutter may require an alternative solution for privacy and security from his or her neighbor?

Amenities

- 1) Will there be lighting in the tunnel and underpass (e.g. Walnut St bridge) sections of the trail, which would otherwise be pitch-black, to deter loitering after dark? Could the feasibility study look into the cost and possible funding sources to pay for trail-wide lighting – sort of a minimal

approach with energy-efficient LED lights and “dark-sky” lamps that won’t shine into neighbors windows. Maybe it’s out of reach, but it wouldn’t hurt to have a ballpark estimate of how much it would cost and whether such lighting would be eligible for federal or state funds. (F.S.)

- 2) In addition to a walking trail, a dog walking trail, joggers’ path, cross country skiing, what other activities have been discussed or identified by the Town or supporters? Will horses be allowed? (Town) No horses will be allowed.
- 3) Is there a plan to install gates to prevent people from using the trail between dawn and dusk? If so, who is responsible for opening and closing those gates? (Town) The expectation is that the rail trail will be closed from dawn to dusk. The specific policies will be the responsibility of the Park and Recreation Commission. Gates or other barriers will be developed into the plan as necessary.
- 4) Will the trail be in conformance with The American with Disabilities Act (ADA)? If so, how will that be addressed? Will the Town need to hire an expert? Will grant funds be used or taxpayer’s funds be used for accessibility purposes? (F.S.) The consultants will address any ADA requirements within the F.S. with no outside experts or additional funding being needed. It will be provided as part of the scope.
- 5) What type of signage is planned for the trail? (F.S. + Town) The Town will work with the consultants to identify typical signage used along rail trails and add additional signage that may conform to the Town’s bylaws.

Drainage

(F.S.) The below questions will be addressed by the F.S. Drainage will need to be reviewed and permitted by the Conservation Commission.

- 1) Currently there are areas of standing water due to poor drainage, dense brush and thick piles of wet discarded leaves and debris along the existing trail provide favorable habitat for large mosquito populations. Would the rail trail in any way address this problem?
- 2) Has the cost of properly protecting the wetlands to prevent flooding in the abutters’ properties been factored in the Feasibility study or any study or plan? If so, what are those plans?

Bridge

(F.S.) The below questions will be addressed by the F.S.

- 1) Could they provide more detail on the River Street Bridge options - and updated cost estimate?
- 2) Two bridges and a tunnel are proposed for this project. The bridges will have to meet state regulations for height to allow deliveries to the commercial areas in East Dedham. Is the bridge going up or is the road going down? If it is going up, are the businesses going to be compensated for down time due to construction and power interruption? If it is going down, how are the flooding issues going to be addressed? We have flooding now on River and Milton Streets due to sewer issues that have not been in the budget, to address.
- 3) Does the current feasibility study include the plans and specs for clearing out the Mt. Vernon Street tunnel? If not, what are the plans to conduct such engineering studies?
- 4) Is an inspection by engineers of the Mt. Vernon Street Bridge planned to ensure the structure is safe and sound?

Fill

(Town) The following questions were answered by the Town's Conservation Agent who is an expert in this field and is a Licensed Site Professional (LSP).

- 1) Where the trail is at a higher level than an abutter's property line, will the trail level be changed, will it be lowered to the height of the abutting property line? **Unknown at this time.** If yes, what will be done with the removed fill? **Wherever possible and appropriate, fill will be re-used onsite.**
- 2) Particularly for any locations where major landscaping or movement of dirt is involved, will a soil analysis be conducted to identify any potential contaminants? **Soil testing in select areas, such as industrial areas or other areas where non-railroad related sources have been identified, may be conducted. Recommendations for the soil testing will be based on the results of the Phase I initial site investigation.**
- 3) Before there is a feasibility study, will there be a 21E Phase 1 been performed for the entire rail bed? This property is listed on many of our 21E reports for our properties as a contaminated site that has been capped. Digging of any kind is not possible without the possibility of disturbing the contamination. **A Phase I Initial Site Investigation will be performed based on the results of the feasibility study. The results of such an investigation will be used to determine appropriate measures to implement, eliminate or reduce current and future exposure to the contaminated soils, if identified. Absent a specific identified industrial or other non-railroad related source, the Massachusetts Department of Protection's recommended best management practices of preventing and/or minimizing exposure to contaminants will be implemented.**

Connection to Boston

- 1) Will this connect to a trail in Boston? **(Town) Yes. There are plans by the City of Boston for trails that this trail can connect to in the future. When that could occur is unknown at this time. The (F.S.) is going to look at how it can be used without any connection to Boston. Previous discussions mentioned giving kids in multiple neighborhoods a safe route to walk/bike to school, as well as, connect to other neighborhoods outside school hours.**
- 2) How are people going to access the trail from the Readville side? Any access from the Readville side will require parking, where is the parking going to be? **(F.S.)**
- 3) At public meetings, Town officials have stated multiple times the rail trail will continue through the Readville Commuter Train station (Boston). Beyond the Dedham rail in Readville, there is a neighborhood, prior to crossing a street and reaching the Readville Commuter Train. **(Town)**
 - a. Has a written commitment or memo of understanding been created and formally approved between the Town and the City of Boston to connect this rail trail through a Readville neighborhood? **The Town of Dedham has had conversations with the City of Boston about connecting the two trails.**
 - b. If so, what was this process, who has been involved from the Town-side and volunteers-side? **The 1996 Town of Dedham Master Plan, the Town of Dedham 1998-2003, 2004-2009, 2010-2017 Open Space Plan, the regional planning agency Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) developed and these have been ongoing discussions over the past several years with the City of Boston and Town officials regarding connecting these trails. The City of Boston has identified the Dedham Trail on their Greenlinks map and**

sees the value in this connection as an expansion of the Greater Boston trail network, as it would connect to the Neponset Greenway.

<http://www.cityofboston.gov/transportation/images/GreenLinksOverview.jpg>

- c. What is the status of such mentioned agreement? Ongoing discussions.

Connections to Striar

- 1) What will be the possible connections with Striar? (Town + F.S.)
- 2) Recently, supporters have disclosed other additions such as looping rail trail with the Striar Properties and branding it “Emerald Bracelet.” Does the Town have plans for this proposal too? (Town + F.S.)

Parking/Access

(F.S.) The below questions will be addressed by the F.S.

- 1) Won't this create parking problems for neighborhoods abutting the trail? Spell out ways this can be addressed - existing parking lots near trail heads, increased signage for existing lots, signage prohibiting parking on side streets, etc. Also note that there are over 500 homes within 500 feet of the trail - so literally thousands of people can walk or bike to the trail without getting in a car. [Someone with downtime could play with the town GIS system to look at the number of houses within a mile. I'm guessing its half the town's population. Would be nice to know that number at some point.]
- 2) The Town has stated three different rail trail starting points; early on it was East Street, later Gonzales Field; and most recently, Providence Hwy in the feasibility study. What is the starting point?
- 3) The Town has stated three different rail trail ending points; early on it was Readville Train Station, later Boston; and most recently, the proposed Striar Property. What is the ending point?
- 4) What type of traffic and parking studies are planned to address the entire rail area? Who will conduct these studies? Will this be a separate study conducted by traffic engineering experts?
 - a. Traffic study should include morning and afternoon pick-up for High School and Avery School; weekend and evening outside functions such as dance recitals, Friday night football, track meets and summer programs

Process

(Town) The below questions will be addressed by the Town.

- 1) Why was the feasibility study not put out as an “Open” Bid? It was not required to under Procurement laws, Chapter 30B. However, the Town followed best practices and requested 3 written quotes, which complies with regulations for projects under \$35,000.
- 2) What was the process of choosing the firms which bid on the feasibility study? We sent the Feasibility Study guidelines to Weston & Sampson, Alta Design and Beals and Thomas. We conducted 1 meeting and site walk of the trail with each of the three consultants prior to them sending in their proposals. Weston & Sampson proved to be the most responsible bidder with

the most relevant experience to Dedham, having worked on the Somerville Community Path, which is most comparable in terms of surrounding home density and proximity to the trail to Dedham. They have in house engineering capabilities and Alta Design does not. After consulting with MAPC's Transportation Planner, David Loutzenheiser, who we have been working with on this project, Mr. Loutzenheiser confirmed our choice of Weston & Sampson to be a solid one.

- 3) Why was the request for funds for the feasibility study not brought before Town Meeting? **The Board of Health Director applied and successfully secured an \$8,000 Mass in Motion grant and the remaining funds for the study were able to be secured through existing budgets department budgets; therefore, a request for funding through the Town was not necessary.**
- 4) If the company that conducts the feasibility study is also allowed to bid on the project, would it not be in their best financial interests to state the project is feasible, whether it is or not? Isn't this an apparent conflict of interest (which may be best for Legal Counsel to advise and decide)?
 - a. Note: To ensure absolute impartiality, Weston & Sampson in agreeing to do the Feasibility Study should also agree to not participate in any bidding on any future services relative to the Heritage Rail Trail. **They would be allowed to bid on the project as would any consultant in any project who conducts a feasibility study for the Town.**
- 5) The rail trail proposal was tabled about 15 years ago.
 - a. What initiated the current rail trail conversation again within the Town Hall **Reviewing existing town plans it appears, the rail trail was introduced in 1996. The Sustainability Advisory Committee which is made up of Dedham residents picked up interest in this project.**
 - b. What month and year did this occur and by whom? **The Environmental Coordinator put in a request for funding through the Capital Improvement process in 2013 for the creation of a Conceptual Plan by the Rails to Trails Conservancy.**
- 6) At a Park and Recreation meeting, a Town employee mentioned funds being moved from other Town departments to the Environmental department to support the rail trail proposal.
 - a. What Town departments transferred monies from their budget to the Environmental budget to proceed with the planning of the rail trail? **Funds found in the Environmental Department and Planning Director budget will be used towards this study.**
 - b. Was this reallocation of money approved by Town Meeting? If not, why? **It was previously appropriated money within their budgets.**
 - c. Detail all the monies moved, the timeline associated of these transactions, who requested and approved this reallocation of Town funds? **No line item transfers were necessary.**
- 7) What is the plan by the Town to balance the monies required by a rail trail with the continuing pressure on the Town's priorities (fire and police station, senior center, schools) and finances and cost of property taxes to homeowners? **Fundamentally under the general operation of government multiple projects of different interest occur simultaneously.**

- 8) Today, Dedham is home to green space, trails and water ways which would greatly benefit from the same resources being directed to the proposed rail trail. Within the past five (5), has the Environmental or Planning departments accessed Mother Brook, Dolan Property, Wigwam Pond or Wilson Mountain to identify ways to improve these natural attributes to make them more accessible and appealing to residents? **The Environmental Coordinator has initiated cleanups of Mother Brook, as well as the construction of Mill Pond Park and trails surrounding Mother Brook. The Environmental Coordinator was the lead on the construction of the canoe launch and associated trails at the Dolan Center, which led to the creation of the Water Trail and Dedham Trails (visit www.dedhamtrails.org for more information). The Planning Director, Conservation Agent and Environmental Coordinator are currently working on improvements to Wigwam Pond. Wilson Mountain is owned by DCR, not the Town.**
- 9) Originally Town's Legal Counsel decided Park and Recreation has "care, custody and control" of rail property. Now they have stated the Town owns the property. Is there a legal difference in meaning between "care, custody and control" and "owns" the property? **Town Counsel came back with an opinion that the trail care and custody and control is - Town of Dedham, Board of Selectmen and School Committee.**
- 10) What in the process which led to Legal Counsel changing decision from Park and Rec to Town ownership? What was the basis for this finding? What and where are the supporting documents to prove this decision? **The Park and Recreation Commissioners, as well as the Board of Selectmen requested Town Counsel to research further the care, custody and control of the abandoned rail bed. Town Meeting votes and deed were reviewed that led to this finding. There most likely will be additional research on this issue in the near future. The documents are all public record and can be supplied to individuals upon request.**
- 11) What is the Town's plan to oversee the feasibility study to ensure its objectivity; since the supporters are hiring and paying the consultants with partially self-donated funds? **All studies commissioned by the Town are overseen by the Town.**
- 12) The Town recently secured a \$100,000.00 grant for open space/recreational Town needs with the intention usage dedicated for the area around Wigwam Pond. It has been stated by Town staff and rail trail supporters these funds would be appropriated to a rail trail. **The use of the funds was broadly described and after consultation it was decided that the funding would be used for the rail trail project, given there are other funding sources for Wigwam Pond improvements.**
- 13) The Town has stated three different measurements 1.3, 1.4, now the rail trail measures 1.5 miles. **The exact measurement of the trail will be determined by the feasibility study and will be marked along the trail for runners and others to determine the distance they have exercised. These markers are also important for safety if there was a medical emergency.**
- 14) What is the measured width of the rail trail and the green space/buffer between the walking/biking trail and abutters? What are the recommendations of such measurements by

the Rail Trail Conservancy? Preliminary measurements are 14 feet total, which is comprised of a 12 foot paved section and 2 ft on either side as a grass or gravel buffer.

- 15) The Town Planner stated during a Park and Rec meeting, the Dedham rail trail project is one of the most complicated he has seen. What exactly is meant by this statement and the word “complicated”? The statement was made because the trail project includes 2 bridges, maybe a tunnel, a school built on the railroad right of way which goes through a school campus, existing problems with a drop-off and pickup for the Avery School, abutters that are in close proximity, and existing drainage channel that crosses the rail bed.
- 16) Is the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) involved in the design or any aspect of this plan? If so, what part(s) of the plan? Who from the Town is in talks with from MassDOT and whom from MassDOT? Are there minutes from this meeting(s)? There have been no talks with MassDOT relative to specific design issues. Peter Sutton, Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Coordinator has walked the trail with Town Staff and is aware of the project. As the feasibility study progresses there may need to be conversations with MassDOT as a possible funding source.
- 17) What other organizations or contractors within the State or within the country are assisting or advising the Town with the rail trail? Are any of these organizations or contractors being paid? If so, how much, and how much has been paid too date? No other contractors or organizations are retained at this time to assist on this project.
- 18) The Town announced publicly for the first time at a Park and Recreation meeting (4/2016), the Rail Trail Conservancy (RTC) conducted a cost study of rebuilding the River Street Bridge (which Town removed years ago for safety reasons).
 - a. Who from the RTC conducted such study? What was his or her background and qualifications?
 - b. Was there a cost associated with this study?
 - c. What was the RTC response, i.e. design, costs to rebuild the Whiting Ave. Bridge?
The Rail Trail Conservancy study was completed in 2014. The Environmental Department requested \$10,000 in funding for the creation of a Conceptual Plan to be done by the Rails to Trails Conservancy. This study has been posted online since 2014 and can be found at www.dedham-ma.gov/environment.
- 19) Is the Town aware of NAPRO and their findings on railroad ROW? No, but we will discuss this with our consultants.
- 20) When did Weston & Sampson walk the rail trail? Who accompanied Weston & Sampson when they walked the rail? What part of the rail did they walk? All of the potential consulting firms walked the trail with the Parks and Recreation Director, Conservation Agent, Environmental Coordinator and Planning Director prior to submitting proposals to the Town. The entire length of the trail from East Street/Avery to the end at Readville Yard was covered. January 5th and 7th in 2016.

- 21) Were the funds raised to pay for the feasibility procured from public/private companies and /or individuals? How will this affect the outcome of the feasibility study? **The funding of the study was a mix of State funding that the Board of Health secured, Town budgets and private funding. The funding sources will not impact the study.**
- 22) Will making the trail accessible to the abutters (i.e.: installing fences) disturb potentially contaminated soil used to build rail embankments and compromise the support structure of the developed rail bed? If no, please explain. If yes, please explain your solution to prevent this occurrence. **See above response regarding fill.**
- 23) Will the Town be putting out a bid for the Builders? What is that approval process? Will the Town be able to review those bids and what the bids involve before a builder is approved? **Yes, the Town will need to go out to bid for a Design and Engineered plan and construction of the trail. The town will put out an RFP and due to the size of the project it will go through the Capital process and Town Meeting.**
- 24) Will there be water fountains or restrooms available along the trail? Who will maintain the restrooms if made available? **No water fountains or restrooms along the trail are anticipated.**
- 25) Will there be proper cell phone reception in case of an emergency? **Yes.**
- 26) How will the wildlife be transported to another location? **No wildlife will need to be relocated.**
- 27) Is there a “salvage” value to the rail trail? **There is value in the steel, but in Dedham’s case, the rail line has been already ripped up when the area was capped.**
- 28) Will the rail bed be paved? **Yes. It is already partially paved in sections.**
- 29) What about the possibility of Federal Lawsuits filed by adjacent property owners? **This question is vague and therefore not fully understood or addressable at this time.**
- 30) How can one stay up to date on the trails progress? **Updates on the trail will be posted at www.dedham-ma.gov/environment**
- 31) What is to protect the Town from the Railway retaking the land at a future date? **The Town of Dedham owns the land as the result of a transfer from the Commonwealth. There is no risk of the State of Massachusetts moving to re-take the land.**
- 32) Does the Town have a “public use condition” and/or a “notice of certificate of interim trail use? **Conditions for the use of the trail will follow Park and Recreation guidelines.**
- 33) Does the Town of Dedham have a strategy for managing a multiple use rail trail? **The Town will follow recommendations for management of the trail as suggested in the feasibility study.**

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