

March 11, 2019

**An Update for the Lynnfield Community on the
Proposed WAKEFIELD-LYNNFIELD RAIL TRAIL PROJECT**

Prepared by the Recreational Path Committee
Town of Lynnfield

The Wakefield-Lynnfield Rail Trail project is a proposed recreational path/park that would use approximately a 4.4 mile rail corridor that begins at the Galvin Middle School on Main Street in Wakefield and extends to Pillings Pond Road near Jordan Park. Approximately 1.9 miles of the proposed path is located in Wakefield and 2.5 miles in Lynnfield. The path would be 12-foot-wide and paved, except for a raised boardwalk through the Reedy Meadow wetlands. The proposal is the result of many years of study and planning to identify safe, off-road alternatives for residents of Lynnfield and Wakefield to bike and walk. It is currently in the preliminary design phase, often referred to as 25 percent design. The Towns of Lynnfield and Wakefield are authorized to enter into a 99 year lease with the MBTA for the rail corridor at the cost of \$1 for the purpose of developing a rail trail. MassDOT oversees the planning, design and construction of the project.

The Town of Lynnfield Recreational Path Committee, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, has been evaluating rail trail opportunities in Lynnfield and reporting its findings to the Board of Selectmen, local print and online media, and on the Committee page of the Town of Lynnfield website. Attached is a summary of the Committee's findings in response to the questions it has heard about the proposed Wakefield-Lynnfield rail trail project.

The order of questions does not indicate their level of importance.

Frequently Asked Questions from the Lynnfield community	Recreational Path Committee findings and supporting information
What happens on April 9, 2019?	<p>Lynnfield residents will vote on a non-binding referendum that will read as follows: "Are you in favor of the Town of Lynnfield continuing to pursue efforts to develop a recreational path along the unused MBTA right-of-way, known as the Wakefield-Lynnfield Rail Trail Project?"</p> <p>A "Yes" vote from Town voters would encourage Rep. Brad Jones and Sen. Brendan Crighton to request state funding to complete the project design. A "No" vote would discourage them.</p>
When is the public hearing on the 25% design?	MassDOT will hold a public hearing on March 19, 2019 at the Lynnfield Middle School to review the 25% design results with Lynnfield and Wakefield residents.
What is the cost of this proposed project to the Town of Lynnfield?	<p>No costs have been incurred by the Town to date.</p> <p>State and Federal funds would be used to pay for all construction costs in Lynnfield and Wakefield; the current construction estimate is \$10.2 million. The acquisition of the right-of-way for the path construction is through a 99-year lease from the MBTA to the Town for \$1.</p> <p>Here are the latest estimates for the future costs for which Lynnfield will be responsible (1-3 are one-time costs).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. remaining design and permitting costs, \$337,000, unless offset by state funding (see below). The Lynnfield portion of the project has received a \$100,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and another \$250,000 may be made available for the Lynnfield portion of the project from a Massachusetts Environmental Bond Bill (funding is subject to appropriation). DCR and Bond bill funding would bring

	<p>Lynnfield's share of the engineering and permitting cost down to roughly \$43,000.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. acquisition of construction (temporary) right of way, \$6,000 3. environmental hazard insurance, \$50,000, 4. maintenance costs, \$8,000/year (no winter plowing will be done), and, 5. Long-term repair costs for the Reedy Meadow boardwalk ((paving and boardwalk repair), not yet estimated. Experience in other rail trail projects suggests such repairs would not occur for at least 10-15 years. <p><i>Maintenance cost estimates have been verified with the Town Engineer and easement and insurance costs with DOT and insurance providers, respectively.</i></p>
If the rail trail site is found to be contaminated with hazardous materials, will residents and the Town be negatively impacted?	<p>The site will be safer than it was before construction of the rail trail because potential contamination that was unknown will be isolated or removed. The Town is required to have environmental hazard insurance which would pay for most of the cost of cleaning up any serious contamination. The Lynnfield portion of the rail corridor was a "rural rail line" and has no history of spills or contamination in Lynnfield.</p> <p>Construction of the rail trail project will follow well-established protocols developed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, "Best Management Practices for Controlling Exposure to Soil during the Development of Rail Trails". According to these Best Management Practices, low levels of contamination are capped/immobilized in place, while serious contamination is removed from the site using standard practices. Testing for contamination along the right of way is permitted once Lynnfield and Wakefield enter into the lease agreement and environmental insurance is in place.</p> <p>https://www.town.lynnfield.ma.us/sites/lynnfieldma/files/uploads/recreational_path_committee--best_management_practices_for_controlling_exposure_to_soil_during_the_development_of_rail_trails_2018.pdf</p>
Will there be sufficient parking to accommodate trail users?	<p>The Committee has identified potential parking areas sufficient to meet the anticipated parking needs. The final design will provide additional information about accommodating parking for trail users. The Committee expects that a more detailed parking plan will be developed during the Final Design phase.</p> <p>The parking experience of other similar trails can be used to provide guidance on what the likely use patterns will be for this trail. For example, both Lynnfield and Wakefield are above the 20-50 spots per mile recommended by Beals and Thomas for a study by the Town of Medfield.</p> <p>https://www.town.medfield.net/DocumentCenter/View/1236/Bay-Colony-Rail-Trail---Medfield-Section---Conceptual-Planning--Design-2017-04-21-PDF</p> <p>In Lynnfield, over the span of roughly 2.5 miles there are a potential 819 spots and in Wakefield over the span of 1.9 miles there a potential 270 spots. In Lynnfield, parking lots at the high and middle schools abutting the proposed trail may made available for trail users during non-school hours. Additional parking may be made available at other locations such as Town Hall, the Municipal Golf Course, and area churches.</p> <p>Parking design and implementation (including signage) will be coordinated with Town departments and the owners of potential parking areas on private property. The Lynnfield Police Department would be responsible for enforcing any parking regulations associated with the parking approach adopted by the Town. The Recreational Path Committee anticipates there will be posting on the Town website and at kiosks at main path crossings where recommended parking is available at various times throughout the week.</p>

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I am an abutter. If the project is approved, do I have a say in fencing and screening decisions to protect my property?	Among details to be incorporated into the next phase of design (the so-called 75% design stage) are design details of screening along private property and the terminus within Lynnfield. A range of screening options can be considered.
How will the value of my home be impacted if I abut or live near the rail trail?	<p>Slightly positive or no impact.</p> <p>The presence of a bike path/rail trail may slightly increase property values and ease of sale, or it may have no effect. Whether or not a recreational path is generally beneficial for a community depends on a number of factors. Overall success depends on attention to design and maintenance and addressing issues that may arise with property owners.</p> <p><i>http://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/Trail_Study_51-propertyvalue-bike-paths-residential-areas.pdf</i></p> <p>The Boston Globe Real Estate Address section has profiled homes abutting or near existing rail trains in the Greater Boston area, citing this proximity as a positive feature of the home.</p> <p><i>See for example May 7, 2017 and June 25, 2017</i></p>
What is being done to ensure the street crossings are safe?	The final rail trail design will incorporate/satisfy MassDOT safety standards to provide safe street crossings. The Town may choose to reduce the posted speed limit where the rail trail crosses town streets.
Will crime increase?	<p>Recreational paths have not been found to increase crime.</p> <p><i>Lynnfield Police Chief Breen, based on consultation with other local communities that have recreational paths.</i></p> <p><i>Rail-Trails and Safe Communities: The Experience on 372 Trails.</i></p> <p><i>https://www.railstotrails.org/resource-library/resources/rail-trails-and-safe-communities-the-experience-on-372-trails/</i></p>
Will the rail trail become a “tourist trap”, particularly at Reedy Meadow?	The rail trail design does not include commercial amenities along any portion of the trail.
Will there be informational signs on the rail trail?	The design will include signage to inform people of where they are on the trail and where resources (parking, dog waste bags, etc.) are located.
What are the terms in the MBTA Lease?	<p>A detailed analysis of the lease can be found on the Committee's web page; Town Counsel has also reviewed the Committee's analysis.</p> <p><i>https://www.town.lynnfield.ma.us/sites/lynnfieldma/files/uploads/recreation_path_committee_legal_summary_of_wakefield_lynnfield_trail_october_2018_1.pdf</i></p> <p>From the perspective of the Lynnfield community, perhaps the most important element of the lease is the requirement that there can be no fees or no restrictions against its use by residents of other communities.</p>
If I have additional questions, how do I get in touch with the Recreational Path Committee?	You can email the Recreational Path Committee at recpath@town.lynnfield.ma.us . The Committee meets monthly; the next meeting is March 26, 2019 at 7:00 PM in Lynnfield Town Hall.