A photograph of a snowy forest path. The path is covered in snow and leads through bare trees and bushes. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. A semi-transparent text box is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

Status Report to Town of Lynnfield Board of Selectmen

Lynnfield Recreational Path Committee
Presentation to Lynnfield Board of Selectmen
Lynnfield, MA
March 5, 2018

Mission of the Lynnfield Recreational Path Committee

The mission of the Recreational Path Committee is to identify linear corridors that offer opportunities for conversion into trails, assess potential for development and study the feasibility and design of such a trail conversion. The Committee is to help identify and address the many questions and concerns that the residents of Lynnfield may have regarding any potential project.

Adopted by the Lynnfield Board of Selectmen, March 2017

Lynnfield Recreational Path Committee

- ✧ Our Goal is Objectivity

 - Be Objective

 - Be Factual

 - Be Relevant

- ✧ Our Work

 - Collect facts

 - Distribute facts to Selectmen and residents

 - Address questions and concerns of Selectmen and residents

 - Facilitate among other town committees

 - Advise the Town on path forward

- ✧ This report

 - Was prepared to summarize our work to date

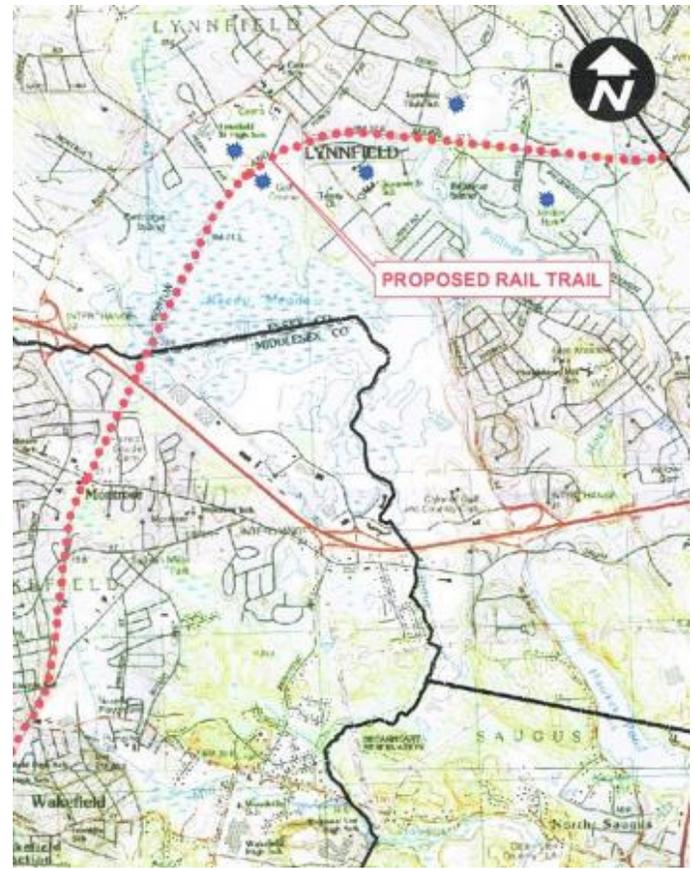
 - Drawn from publicly available sources

Key Points of this Status Report

- Wakefield-Lynnfield Rail Trail
 - Existing railroad track
 - Only feasible recreational path opportunity
 - Extends from the Downtown Wakefield toward the Lynnfield/Peabody Town line (terminus TBD)
- This trail opportunity is the primary focus of current work
 - Advanced through alternatives analysis
 - Completed conceptual planning,
 - Currently undergoing 25% design
- Key studies are posted on the Town website

<https://www.town.lynnfield.ma.us/recreation-path-committee>

Where is the Wakefield/Lynnfield Rail Trail?



Status of Design Effort

- Undergoing initial design (“25% Design”)
 - Under the direction of MassDOT.
 - Design team led by the engineering consultant WorldTech.
 - Draft 25% design has undergone DOT review.
 - DOT questions/comments being addressed by WorldTech.
 - Meeting: March 27, 2018 @ 7:00 PM – Lynnfield Middle School
- DOT public hearing on the 25% design in spring 2018;
 - In advance of the meeting, a Public Workshop to receive input to improve on the design
 - 25% design report due July 1, 2018

Completion of Engineering and Permitting

- Next phase is called the 75% design
 - Refine/complete the engineering design
 - Obtain various permits
 - DOT review and approval
- Final engineering to incorporate permit conditions.
 - incorporated into a “bid package”
 - basis for construction

Financial Responsibility, Design and Construction

- The Towns (Lynnfield and Wakefield)
 - 75% design and permitting costs and final design costs
 - Estimated both towns total \$500,000
- DOT
 - full funding for construction of the final design including increases in the original estimates
 - As of March 1, 2017, the cost of construction is estimated at \$9.2 million.
- Construction Costs in the 2021 Transportation Improvement Program
 - Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Additional Funding Issues

Undergoing research by the Committee

- Temporary (construction-related) easements
 - Appraisal and easement agreement
 - Limited in time and location
- Maintenance
 - Annual Maintenance (brush trimming, cleanup)
 - Long Term Maintenance (repaving and walkway replacement)
- Insurance and public safety
- Other issues
 - Potential contamination

Environmental Review for the Project

- National Environmental Policy Act
- Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act
- Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and implementing Regulations
- Lynnfield Wetlands Protection By-Laws
- Federal Clean Water Act and implementing Regulations
- Massachusetts Clean Water Act and implementing Regulations
- Massachusetts Endangered Species Act and implementing Regulations

Likely Permits

- Section 401 Water Quality Certification
- Authorization under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (if needed)
- Filing pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act
- Permit or Variance from the Lynnfield Conservation Commission
- NPDES General Permit for Discharges from Construction Activities

- Typical for transportation projects.
- Permits must be obtained prior to commencement of construction.

Safety Considerations—Physical Safety

- Recreation safety is a issue for our community
 - Lynnfield's narrow roads not optimal for bicycle transportation
 - Distracted drivers, bike-car collisions a serious risk factor
- Sidewalks a challenge to maintain
 - Not appropriate for bicycle transportation
- Alternative transportation routes to address safety
 - Under development for years
 - Proposed project deemed best alternative
 - Proposed project would connect middle and high schools
- Conclusion: Rail trail would improve transportation safety

Safety Considerations—Crime

- Focus of Committee research
 - Past studies, survey results, letters from law enforcement officials,
 - *Rail-Trails and Safe Communities (The Experience on 372 Trails)*
 - Concludes rail-trails are safe compared to other public spaces.
 - FBI crime statistics indicate rail trails provide safe places for recreation.
- Conclusion: crime can happen anywhere
 - The data suggest that crimes happen much less frequently on rail trails.

Safety Considerations—Fire Damage

- Lynnfield Fire Department
 - Collaborating with WorldTech (design engineer)
 - Current access is exceptionally difficult
- Reedy Meadow will be accessible by fire-fighting equipment
 - The boardwalk across Reedy Meadow should be fire resistant
 - Boardwalk to support emergency response equipment

Impact on the Adjacent Neighborhoods

Experience in areas where rail trails have been constructed suggests:

- Those recently moving into areas near bike paths are generally more favorable to them than those who have lived in neighborhoods before the construction of a trail.
- Many abutters are happy with the trails, even some who were originally opposed to their construction.
- Examples indicate overall success depends on attention to design and maintenance and addressing issues and problems with property .
- Neighbors of many bike paths/rail trails believe
 - The trails are a good use of open space
 - In the case of abandoned railways are an improvement from before
 - Quality of life of their neighborhood has been improved

Quote from Governor Baker

“Our administration has prioritized the statewide trails system, which connects our communities and improves quality of life throughout the state, and I am grateful to our partners for working to ensure these trails are available for generations to come.”

September 9, 2017

Next Steps & Recommendations

- Lynnfield Town officials should direct the Committee to maximize community input on the design and operation of the Wakefield-Lynnfield Rail Trail project.
- Recreational Path Committee recommends that the project should progress through the 75% engineering and permitting phase.
- The Recreational Path Committee recommends that Town officials develop a funding strategy and secure funding, working cooperatively with officials in the Town of Wakefield.
- The Board of Selectmen should consider bringing the project to voters for approval of funding for completion of the next phase of design and permitting.
- The Committee will continue to gather information related to these topics and as findings are located share with the community.
- Our Monthly Meetings are posted on the Town Website
 - Next Meeting: March 8 at 7PM in the Maney Meeting Room

Questions?

Reminder:

Community Workshop
March 27, 2018 @ 7:00 PM
Lynnfield Middle School

Note: Also posted on Town Website