

A Needham Rail Trail??

Benefits of a Rail Trail

- A natural trail for exercise
- Ability to observe wild-life and plants
- Easy access to natural assets including Charles River and Town Forest
- A non-motorized form of transportation, away from traffic and noise
- A sense of community

Possible Trail

- 2 miles from Needham Junction station to the bridge across the Charles River
- 3.5 miles from the bridge on the Charles River, through Dover and to the Medfield border
- 1.5 miles through Medfield to Ice House Road, near the Medfield Senior Center

Discussing a Possible Rail Trail

The Needham Board of Selectmen have been in discussions with Needham residents regarding the possibility of creating a rail trail on abandoned track.



In 2009, the Bay Colony Rail Trail Association (BCRTA) was formed by residents of Needham, Dover and Medfield. The purpose of this association was to study the possibility of creating a 7 mile accessible multi-use greenway trail for hiking, walking, running, biking, cross-country skiing and other non-motorized recreational activities. Town officials from Needham, Dover and Medfield have been meeting since 2011 to discuss issues common to each community.

Brief History

In the mid-1800's, the rail line between the Needham Junction commuter rail station extending into Medfield was part of track system that extended between Boston and Woonsocket, Rhode Island for passenger and freight trains. The MBTA became owner of

The Board of Selectmen and the Park and Recreation Commission are working with the BCRTA to complete a study of the possibilities of the rail trail and the majority of the documented information has been gathered by volunteers.

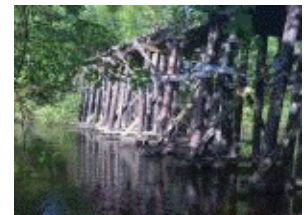
The Selectmen from Needham, Medfield and Dover requested a study from the Boston region of the Metropolitan Planning Commission. This study is intended to identify the history of the area, demographics, benefits related to transportation, and environmental issues, among other topics.

In July, 2012, the MBTA agreed to consider entering a 99 year lease with the Town of Needham if requested. The Board of Selectmen is in the process of gathering additional information to determine if such a lease should be recommended to Town Meeting.

In November, 2012, BCRTA was awarded funds by Town Meeting through the Needham Community Preservation Fund to work with a consultant to gather information specific to the 2 miles in Needham.

This study, starting this winter, will have public input and, among other topics, will review:

- Access to the trail;
- Delineation between active rail and pathway;
- Parking options;
- Surface options;
- Two at-grade crossings;
- Bridge over Charles River;
- Wetlands review;
- Neighborhood issues



the line in the early 1970's and eventually leased the portion from Medfield to Newton to the Bay Colony Railroad as a freight line. With the decline of rail dependent industries in the industrial areas of Needham and Newton Upper Falls, the need for the freight lines de-

creased. By 2008, Bay Colony had ceased operations. The MBTA retains ownership of the lines, and based on a 2008 transportation study has determined that the abandoned rail will not be used for commuter rail purposes for the foreseeable future.

Register for:

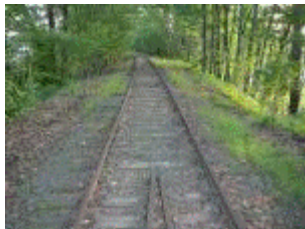
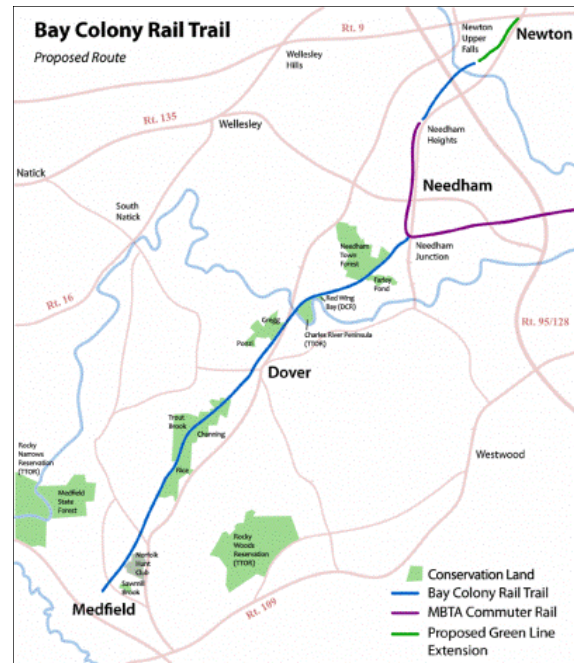
**“NOTIFY ME”
Trails Information**
on the Town’s website to
receive e-mails about
upcoming meetings or
other information.

<http://www.needhamma.gov/index.aspx?nid=4>

Map

The section currently under review is the area in **blue** between Needham Junction through to Medfield. Each community is studying its own section, and sharing information with the others. The Needham section ends at the Charles River. The **purple** areas are the active commuter rail line, and are not available for rail trail use.

The small sections of **blue** and **green** on the Newton end are part of a separate discussion between the City of Newton and the Town of Needham. The Board of Selectmen has committed to evaluating that stretch of rail right-of-way after the “southern” portion.



Newton Section

As seen on the map in the previous section, there is a section of abandoned rail that begins beyond the Needham Heights Commuter Rail station and extends into Newton.

The Town of Needham and the City of Newton are working on a study with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to review this section and potential

uses that would benefit the business areas in each town, as well as alleviate some of the traffic concerns on Highland Avenue and Needham Street. Newton city officials meet regularly with the other three towns.

This section of rail was part of the freight line utilized by Bay Colony Railroad. It crosses

Webster Street and Gould Street, a rail bridge over Route 128, and a bridge over the Charles River before entering Newton.

The Board of Selectmen is concentrating its study of a rail trail on the “southern” section near Dover, and continuing to review all the options on this “northern” portion near Newton.

Finding Out Additional Information

**Attend the 1st Public
Workshop**

**Monday, March 4, 2013
7 PM
Town Hall—Powers Hall**

Share your ideas, comments, questions, and your concerns

Contact the Town of Needham

The Park and Recreation Department is the primary contact for this study:

(781) 455-7550

Press 3 at the recording
OR send e-mail to pcarey@needhamma.gov
www.needhamma.gov



Bay Colony Rail Trail

Check out the research and photos on the Bay Colony Rail Trail Association’s website:
www.baycolonyrailtrail.org