

MEMORANDUM

To: Natick Board of Selectmen
From: Josh Ostroff, Chair, Cochituate Rail Trail Advisory Committee
Date: October 25, 2019
Re: CRT Advisory Committee status and pending work

cc: Melissa Malone, Town Administrator; Jeremy Marsette, DPW Director; William McDowell, Town Engineer; Mark Coviello; CRT Advisory Committee

The Board's agenda for October 28, 2019 includes an item on the proposed Trails committee and the CRT Advisory Committee.

To review, at its meeting of June 18, 2019, the CRT Advisory Committee voted the following recommendation.

- Move to recommend that the Board of Selectmen discharge the Cochituate Rail Trail Advisory Committee effective upon the establishment of a new, town-wide trails committee, and that said trails committee have a charge that includes advising the town on the planning, development, funding and operation of trails and other bicycle and pedestrian connectivity for transportation and recreation.

The proposed Trails committee appears to be focused on trails maintenance and not project planning. However, the Transportation Advisory Committee, staffed in part by the Director of Community and Economic Development, is prepared to consider transportation-focused trail connections as part of its work.

Among the noteworthy upcoming transportation-focused trail projects are the connection between the CRT and the Natick Center MBTA Station (in the MassDOT pipeline, and likely to be in design beginning in mid-2020 subject to a MassTrails grant), and a project in the conceptual stage under MassDOT authority, to construct a multi-use path from Hartford Street east of Speen, along the south side of Route 9, to connect with the CRT and the existing Route 9 sidewalk continuing east. Both projects will include public participation, particularly as regards abutters.

There are other regional connections in discussion, such as the LandLine initiative of MAPC that would connect the CRT and the Cochituate Aqueduct Trail, and future connections to the Sudbury Aqueduct. I expect ongoing collaboration between town staff and committees as these initiatives advance.

Anticipating that the Board will discharge the CRT Advisory Committee, I offer my continued service to the Town as the CRT project proceeds with construction in whatever capacity you desire.

In addition, for your reference, here are the outstanding issues for the CRT, all of which have been communicated to the Board.

1. Design modifications pursuant to a September 3 letter from the Town to MassDOT.
2. Sponsorship plan: work with the Friends of Natick Trails on sponsorship and naming rights opportunities, subject to a response from MassDOT.
3. Begin planning for a bikeshare program, potentially in cooperation with Framingham.
4. 294 Bacon St: resolve disposition of this Town-owned structure and its land.
5. LaGrange Street: confirm public access to the CRT, and design/construct a connection
6. Mechanic Street: resolve use of 11 Mechanic for parking, Connection from this lot to the CRT, and CRT access over Mechanic.
7. Willow Street: coordinate public access to the CRT with the need for construction access for the MBTA station.
8. Develop a CRT Operations and Maintenance Plan, including parking (which has not been planned in any way) and safety.
9. Execute an agreement with Framingham for stewardship of the Route 30 bridge.
10. Safety improvements on the Loker Street Bridge under the direction of DPW.

I want to underscore that these are all subjects that have been communicated to the Board and must be addressed. When the CRT Committee is discharged, there may be no Town agency with these matters on its agendas.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to be of service.