

Wellesley Trails Committee

Future Trails Development and Improvement Projects Plan

For the 2006 Wellesley Comprehensive Plan, the Trails Committee prepared a project plan to improve and extend our trails network. This plan updates our previous plan and presents new projects.

These projects are ideas proposed by the committee members and suggested by trail users. Although some of the projects are more feasible than others, because of either complexity or cost, we believe that these projects will enhance our existing trails network.

Projects

From our previous plan (Appendix B), we have three ongoing projects that we need to complete. The first project is still in the planning stage, and the other two projects are near completion:

1. **Brook Path Improvements at High School:** Part of the Fuller Brook Park Improvement Project. Provide a continuous, well-defined path from State St to the trail off Paine St that maximizes off-road travel. To date, our ideas have been incorporated into the Fuller Brook Park Improvement Project Phase 2 preliminary design plans, and we are working with the Fuller Brook Park Coordinating Committee on implementation.
2. **Charles River Path Extension in Lower Falls:** Extend Charles River Path from River and Washington Sts. to the new Charles River footbridge in back of the old Grossman's site. The footbridge was completed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) this year and provides a connection to Concord St in Newton. National Development expects completion of the path from Washington St to the bridge by the spring of 2012 which will complete the trail. Our vision also includes a picturesque bridge of flowers over the Charles.
3. **Charles River Path Extension to Boulevard Rd:** Extend the Charles River Path from the new DCR bridge along the Charles River to Weston. We have completed the trail from the National Development's site at 27 Washington St to the Leo J. Martin Golf Course in Weston. National Development expects the path along the Charles in back of 27 Washington street to be completed by spring 2012, which will complete this project.

Of the six new projects that are proposed in this plan, one is carryover from the previous plan and five are new projects. Project locations are shown on the attached map by project number. The new projects, in rank order of priority starting with highest priority, are:

1. **Crosstown Trail Extension to Natick:** From the west end of the trail at Rt-9, extend the Crosstown Trail along Rt-9 and Overbrook Dr to the Cochituate Aqueduct, and connect to Natick's aqueduct trail at the town line.
2. **Paintshop Pond Trail:** Create a new woodland trail at Wellesley College. The trail would follow existing trails between Pond Rd, Paintshop Pond and Lake Waban.
3. **Brook Path Extension:** Construct a short trail connector along Dover Rd from the end of the Brook Path on Dover Rd to the Sudbury Path on the Sudbury Aqueduct.
4. **Charles River Footbridge to Elm Bank:** Construct a footbridge across the Charles River that will connect Waban Arches to Elm Bank. The bridge is inspired by the Blue Heron Bridge recently built by DCR across the Charles connecting Newton to Watertown.
5. **Charles River Path Reroute:** Eliminate walking along Rt-9 by rerouting the Charles River Path from the Rt-9 and Cedar St interchange into the Town Forest off Madison or Hastings Rds.

6. **Ridge Hill Reservation Spur Trail:** Develop a connecting trail from the Sudbury Path near the RDF to new trails proposed for Ridge Hill Reservation in Needham.

Selection and Evaluation

Ongoing projects have been described and evaluated in our previous plan. For our new projects, details for each project are given in Appendix A and contain the following:

1. Purpose of the new trail or trail improvement.
2. Route of the trail or segment and connections to other trails.
3. Trail access issues that must be considered/resolved prior to startup.
4. Dependence on other town or state projects.
5. Betterments requiring town capital expenditures.
6. Expenses for town maintenance in subsequent years.

In setting our priorities, we compared key issues and cost. The projects are rated according to the following criteria:

1. Benefits to trails network: High, Medium, Low
2. Trail access issues*: Difficult, Moderate, Easy, None
3. Town capital cost: High (greater than \$10,000), Moderate (between \$1,000 and \$10,000), Low (less than \$1,000), None
4. Town ongoing expense: High (greater than \$1,000/year), Moderate (between \$100 and \$1,000/year), Low (less than \$100/year), None

Comparison of Trails Projects

Project	Benefit to Trails Network	Access Issues*	Capital Cost	Ongoing Expense
1. Crosstown Trail Extension to Natick	High	Moderate	None	None
2. Paintshop Pond Trail	High	Moderate	Low	None
3. Brook Path Extension	Medium	Difficult	Moderate	Low
4. Charles River Footbridge to Elm Bank	High	Moderate	None**	None**
5. Charles River Path Reroute	Medium	None to Moderate	None	None
6. Ridge Hill Reservation Spur Trail	High	Difficult	High	Moderate

* Access issues include permission from landowners, safety concerns, terrain conditions, parking availability, and trail route compromises (see Appendix A for details).

** It is assumed that the footbridge will be built and maintained by DCR and funded by the State, various grants and private donations.

Additional Information

The following websites provide additional information:

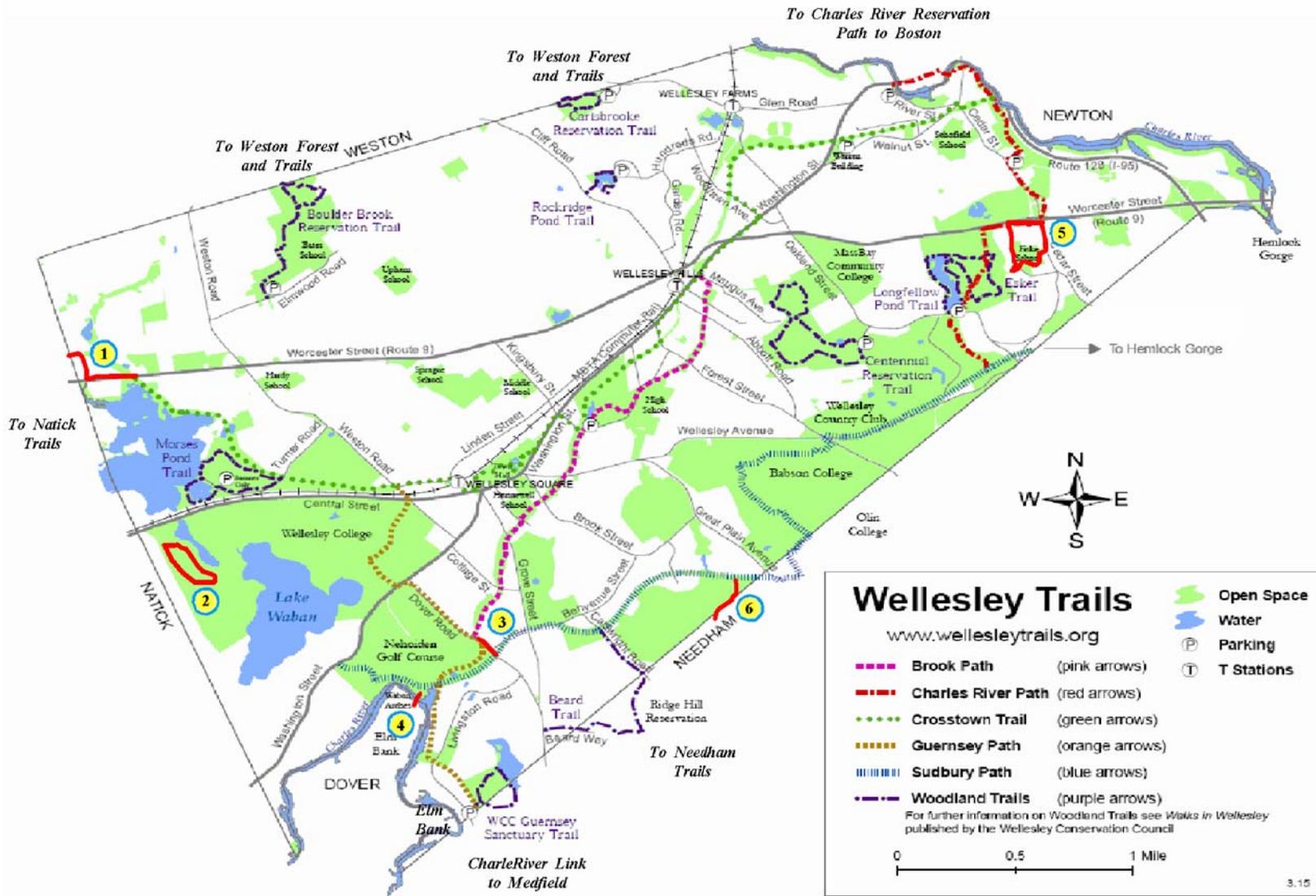
1. Wellesley Trails Network: www.wellesleytrails.org
2. Natick Cochituate Aqueduct: http://www.boston.com/yourtown/news/natick/2010/08/mwra_offers_

- natick_use_of_its.html
3. Elm Bank: <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/metroboston/elmbank.htm>
 4. Charles River Bridges: <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/news/publicmeetings/materials/Charles%20River%20Res%20Footbridges%205-7-09.pdf>
 5. Needham Ridge Hill Reservation Trails: <http://www.needhamma.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=2350>

WELLESLEY TRAILS COMMITTEE

Bob Brown
Jason Curtin
Joan Gaughan, NRC Board representative
Diane Hall
Miguel Lessing, Chair
Denny Nackoney, Vice Chair
Jared Parker
John Schuler
Bob White

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Location of Proposed Trail Projects

— Trail development or improvement (solid lines)

Appendix A

Detailed Project Information

1. Crosstown Trail Extension to Natick

Background:

1. Natick has recently acquired Cochituate Aqueduct property from MWRA/DCAM and plans to build a trail along the length of the aqueduct.

Purpose:

1. Provide a connection from the Crosstown Trail to Natick trail. Currently there is a 1/4-mile trail in Natick along the Cochituate Aqueduct from Oxford St to the Wellesley town line.
2. Extending the Crosstown Trail to the Natick town line will eventually provide a network trail connection to Lake Cochituate.

Route:

1. Trail will go westbound on Rt-9 sidewalk to Overbrook Dr, and cross Rt-9 at the traffic light, which has a pedestrian light crossing.
2. Trail will go northbound on Overbrook Dr to the Cochituate Aqueduct, and turn left onto the mowed grass area adjacent to Edgemoor Rd to the town line.

Access Issues:

1. DCAM currently is holding that section of the Cochituate Aqueduct for potential sale.
2. A Wellesley abutter is currently maintaining the lawn and has a small garden plot on the aqueduct land, and walkers use the grassed area to cross from Overbrook Dr to the trail in Natick

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. None.

Betterments:

1. None.

Ongoing Expenses:

1. None.

2. Paintshop Pond Trail

Purpose:

1. Provide a woodland loop trail along existing trails in this picturesque wooded area of Wellesley College along Paintshop Pond.

Route:

1. Currently there are 3 miles of woodland trails between Pond Rd, Paintshop Pond and Lake Waban.
2. The actual routing will be determined in discussions with Wellesley College. One trail that looks promising runs on a long esker that parallels the edge of Paintshop Pond with good views of the pond, and another trail returns off the side of the esker through forest and groves of old pine trees.

Access Issues:

1. Permission from Wellesley College. The land and trails are currently open to the public, but we need to contact the college about putting in a marked trail on their land.
2. Location of trailhead. A possible place to start the trail would be at the junction of the trail that goes around the pond and the trail that crosses over Waban Brook from the playing fields.
3. Parking for trail users. A possibility would be to clear a small area for a dirt parking lot off Pond Rd.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. None.

Betterments:

1. Installation of a map house at the trailhead.
2. Partial payment for establishing small parking area on Pond Rd?

Ongoing Expenses:

1. None

3. Brook Path Extension

Background:

1. The section of roadway between the Brook Path and the Sudbury Path is a popular walking route, and many walkers use it to connect to the Brook Path from the residential area south of the aqueduct. Pedestrian safety is a serious concern because the roadway is very narrow with no shoulder approaching the aqueduct. Dover Rd is a connecting street and sees plenty of traffic. Sight lines are not good, and some vehicles travel too fast for conditions.

Purpose:

1. Provide a safe pedestrian walkway on Dover Rd connecting the Brook Path to the Sudbury Aqueduct.

Route:

1. Along the east side of Dover Rd.

Access Issues:

1. There are no sidewalk access issues along Dover Rd between the end of the Brook Path and Benvenue St.
2. Roadside access from Benvenue St to the aqueduct will be difficult because there is a steep drop-off from the roadway to the adjacent residential property. Also, there is a guardrail along that side of Dover Rd.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. None.

Betterments:

1. Complete sidewalk along east side Dover Rd from Fuller Brook to the Sudbury Aqueduct.

Ongoing Expenses:

1. Town sidewalk maintenance.

4. Charles River Footbridge to Elm Bank

Purpose:

1. Provide a scenic bridge over the Charles linking open space in Wellesley and Dover.
2. Connection from Sudbury Path in Wellesley to extensive trail system in Elm Bank.

Route:

1. Bridge connecting existing trails around Waban Arches to DCR trails in Elm Bank.

Access Issues:

1. Permission from Wellesley College for footbridge. Wellesley side of footbridge is located on Wellesley College property west of Waban Arches.
2. Buy-in from DRC for footbridge
3. Permitting from Wellesley and Dover Wetlands.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. DCR bridge building projects

Betterments:

1. No cost to Town. It is assumed that the footbridge will be built by DCR and funded by the State, various grants, and private donations.

Ongoing Expenses:

1. None. It is assumed that DCR will maintain the footbridge.

5. Charles River Path Reroute

Background:

1. Currently the Charles River Path runs from the Rt-9 Cedar St overpass down the southwest ramp, and follows Rt-9 west to the trailhead at the entrance to the Town Forest.

2. Walkers have complained about walking along Rt-9, and have suggested rerouting the trail away from the traffic noise.

Purpose:

1. Provide a better walking environment on the Charles River Path at Cedar St and Rt-9.

Route:

1. There are several possible ways to reroute the Charles River Path into the Town Forest:
 - a. Continue on Cedar St to the crosswalk to Fiske School, cross Cedar St and follow the school path/hardtop to and around the school building to Madison Rd, and enter the Town Forest at the Madison Rd trailhead.
 - b. Take the trail down the Rt 9 ramp to Hastings St, follow Hastings St sidewalk to Madison Rd, and enter the Town Forest at the Madison Rd trailhead.
 - c. Take the trail down the Rt-9 ramp to Hastings St, follow Hastings St sidewalk and cut through commercial property to the Town Forest
2. Once in the Town Forest, the Charles River Path would have to be rerouted toward the Longfellow Pond parking lot, and there are multiple options possible on existing trails.

Access Issues:

1. For Route 1-a, permission from Fiske School for routing the trail through school property and around buildings. This was the initial routing for the trail, but was changed to the current routing in 2005.
2. For Route 1-b, none.
3. For Route 1-c, permission from commercial property owner.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. None.

Betterments:

1. Possible trail reroute down the hill off of Madison Rd because existing trail is too steep.

Ongoing Expenses

1. None.

6. Ridge Hill Reservation Spur Trail

Background:

1. Needham is planning to improve their trail system at Ridge Hill Reservation and extend trails to the Wellesley town line just south of the RDF.

Purpose:

1. Provide a connection from the Sudbury Path through the RDF facility to Ridge Hill Reservation trail system in Needham.

Route:

1. There are difficult routing issues because of the narrow RDF access road, wetlands, Fuller Brook crossing, and off-hours RDF entry.
2. Options need to be identified and studied for feasibility.

Access Issues:

1. Permission from DPW/RDF.
2. Wellesley Wetlands permitting for construction of wetland crossings.
3. Needham Wetlands approval may be required.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. None.

Betterments:

1. A footbridge and/or boardwalk would be required to cross Fuller Brook and wetlands.
2. Additional fencing may be required to prevent entry into RDF.

Ongoing Expenses:

1. Maintenance of footbridge/boardwalk.

Appendix B

Status of 2005 Proposed Projects

In our previous plan - Future Trails Development and Improvement Projects, March 4, 2005 - we listed ten ideas for proposed projects. We have completed three of the projects, three are ongoing, one has been retained and carried over to our new plan, and three have been removed. The projects as described in the 2005 plan and the current status of the projects are:

1. Sudbury Path: New trail along the Sudbury Aqueduct from the Needham town line at Hunnewell St. to the Wellesley Research Center on Washington St.
Completed: This was completed in 2005.
2. Brook Path Improvements at High School: Part of the Fuller Brook Restoration Master Plan. Provide a continuous, well-defined path between the State St. parking lot and the trail off Paine St.
Ongoing: This has been incorporated into the Fuller Brook Park Improvement Project Phase 2 preliminary design plans.
3. Weston Road Trail Parking: Parking and a safe pedestrian crossing at Weston Rd. and Linden St.
Completed: This was completed in 2010 as part of the Weston Rd roadway improvement project.
4. Guernsey Path Extension: Extension of the current trail from the Waban Arches to the Crosstown Trail.
Completed: This was completed in 2007.
5. Charles River Path Extension in Lower Falls: Part of the Wellesley Lower Falls Riverway Project. Trail extension from Washington St. to the Charles River will provide the Wellesley link for the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) plan to develop a foot and bike path along the old railroad right-of-way to the MBTA Riverside station. Our proposal includes a picturesque bridge of flowers over the Charles.
Ongoing: DCR completed the bridge over the Charles in 2011, and National Development is in the process of finishing the landscaping and path from Washington St to the bridge.
6. Charles River Path Extension to Boulevard Rd: A continuation of the Lower Falls Charles River Path Extension in Lower Falls. Trail will run along the Charles River, beginning in back of the former Grossman's site and proceeding along DCR land to the end of Boulevard Rd.
Ongoing: Trail to Weston on DCR land has been completed, and National Development is in the process of finishing the path from bridge through the back of 27 Washington St to the DCR trail.
7. Elm Bank Trail: A new trail along the Charles River from the Waban Arches to Cheney Dr.
Removed: This has been removed because access permission to pass through private property along the river will be very difficult to secure.
8. Rosemary Brook Trail: New woodland trail through the Town Forest north of Rt-9.
Removed: This has been removed because of poor access along Rt-9 and the ramps, and no reasonably close parking.
9. Overbrook Trail: New woodland trail through the Overbrook Reservation.
Removed: This has been removed because of limited access points to a trail, very wet conditions south of Boulder Brook, and excessive expense to develop a sustainable trail through the area.
10. Charles River Footbridge to Elm Bank: Proposed footbridge across the Charles River that will connect open space near the Waban Arches to Elm Bank. The bridge is inspired by the Blue Heron Bridge recently built by DCR across the Charles connecting Newton to Watertown.
Retained: Carried over to new plan.