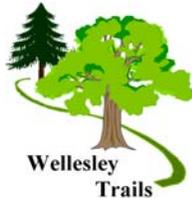




WELLESLEY TRAILS COMMITTEE

Natural Resources Commission, Town Hall, 525 Washington Street, Wellesley, Massachusetts 02482



Miguel Lessing, Chairman
Denny Nackoney, Vice Chairman
781-431-1019, Ext. 2294
Fax: 781-237-6495
trails@wellesleyma.gov
www.wellesleytrails.org

To: Planning Board
From: Trails Committee
Date: December 6, 2016
Subject: Trails Development and Improvement Plan for 2017-2022
CC: Advisory Committee
Board of Selectmen
Board of Public Works
Community Preservation Committee
Fuller Brook Park Committee
Natural Resources Commission
Recreation Commission
School Committee
Wetlands Protection Committee

Enclosed is our new Trails Committee five-year plan for 2017-2022. It covers major development and improvements projects planned for the Town's trails network.

This plan gives the status of two projects we are currently working on that were in the previous plan, followed by a prioritized list of nine additional projects, and the rationale for our selections. Included in the plan is a trails map showing project locations and routes. Detailed information on each project is contained in Appendix A. A summary of our progress for the previous plan is in Appendix B.

Estimated capital outlays for the first five projects range from High (in excess of \$10k) to Low (less than \$1k) and will require increase funding above previous year's levels.

Implementation of these projects will require support and assistance from other Town Departments and Boards, and we have included you on the distribution list so that you can keep abreast of our ideas and proposed projects.

Please review this plan and provide feedback on our choice of projects. Feel free to contact us if you have questions, comments, or suggestions about our proposed projects.

A copy of the plan is on our website at:

http://www.wellesleyma.gov/Pages/WellesleyMA_Trails/docfiles/projectplans3.pdf

Wellesley Trails Committee

Trails Development and Improvement Plan 2017 – 2022

Since 2005 the Trails Committee has prepared two 5-year project plans to improve and extend our trails network. This plan is an update to our 2011 plan and includes major projects planned for the next five years.

These projects are ideas proposed by 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

Project locations are shown on the attached map by project number. From our previous plan (Appendix B), we have two ongoing projects that we need to complete.

1. **Brook Path Improvements at High School:** Provide a continuous, well-defined path from State St to the trail off Paine St that maximizes off-road travel. This was to be part the Fuller Brook Park Restoration Project. But because most of the work planned for this improvement was deleted by FBPCC cost cutting, this project has been redefined as a Trails Committee project to complete what had been approved in the preliminary design.
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.

Of the nine new projects that are proposed in this plan, one (#10) is carryover from the previous plan. The new projects, in rank order of priority starting with highest, are:

3. **Sudbury Path Connection to Natick:** Extend the Sudbury Path from the Cheever House along Washington St to the Natick town line.
4. **North Forty Trails:** Preserve the Crosstown Trail along the Cochituate Aqueduct as an open space corridor, maximize open space retained for passive recreational use, and retain/establish trails connecting the neighborhood to the Crosstown Trail.
5. **Road Crossings Safety:** Work with the Traffic Committee to identify safety concerns and priorities for crosswalks at trail road crossings.
6. **Riverside Rail Trail:** Advocate for the completion of the rail trail connecting the new DCR bridge over the Charles River in Lower Falls to the Riverside MBTA station in Newton.
7. **Charles River Path Extension to Crosstown Trail:** Instead of ending the Charles River Path at the Weston town line, extend the trail through Indian Springs Park to the Crosstown Trail.
8. **Crosstown Trail Relocation in Hills:** Reroute the trail to avoid walking through congested areas along Washington St from Cliff Rd to Woodlawn Ave.
9. **Morses Pond Trail Relocation:** Instead of following the paved path along the beach access road, reroute the trail through the woods to the parking lot.
10. **Charles River Footbridge to Elm Bank:** Construct a footbridge across the Charles River that will connect the Waban Arches to Elm Bank. The bridge is inspired by the Blue Heron Bridge built by DCR across the Charles connecting Newton to Watertown.
11. **Crosstown Trail Crossing at Rt-9:** Currently the trail crosses Rt-9 at the Overbrook Dr traffic light. With the recent Town acquisition of Cochituate Aqueduct land north of Rt-9 , investigate options for a safe trail crossing where the aqueduct crosses Rt-9.

Selection and Evaluation

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 issues¹: 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), None³

Comparison of Trails Projects

Project	Benefit to Trails Network	Access Issues¹	Capital Cost	Ongoing Expense
1. Brook Path Improvements at High School	High	Moderate	High	Low
2. Paintshop Pond Trail	High	Difficult	Low - Moderate	None
3. Sudbury Path Connection to Natick	High	Difficult	Moderate	Low
4. North Forty Trails	High	Difficult	Unknown	Unknown
5. Road Crossings Safety	High	None	Low - Moderate	Low
6. Riverside Rail Trail	High	Difficult	None ²	None ²
7. Charles River Path Extension to Crosstown Trail	Medium	Easy	None	None
8. Crosstown Trail Relocation in Hills	Medium	None	None	None
9. Morses Pond Trail Relocation	Medium	Easy	None	None
10. Charles River Footbridge to Elm Bank	High	Difficult	None ³	None ³
11. Crosstown Trail Crossing at Rt-9	High	Difficult	None ⁴	None ⁴

-
1. Access issues include permission from landowners, safety concerns, terrain conditions, parking availability, and trail route compromises (see Appendix A for details).
 2. Ongoing DCR project and funded by the State.
 3. Assumed to be a DCR project and funded by the State, various grants and private donations.
 4. Assumed to be a MassDOT project and funded by the State.

Additional Information

The following websites provide additional information:

1. Wellesley Trails Network: www.wellesleytrails.org
2. Routing of Brook Path at High School (10/9/13):
http://www.wellesleyma.gov/Pages/WellesleyMA_Trails/docfiles/brookpathmemo.pdf
3. Recommendations for North 40 Land Usage (7/27/14):
http://www.wellesleyma.gov/Pages/WellesleyMA_Trails/docfiles/north40memo.pdf
4. Trail Utilization along Western Section of Cochituate Aqueduct (2/19/13):
http://www.wellesleyma.gov/Pages/WellesleyMA_Trails/docfiles/cochituatememo.pdf
5. Future Trails Development and Improvement Project Plan (12/19/11):
http://www.wellesleyma.gov/Pages/WellesleyMA_Trails/docfiles/projectplans2.pdf
6. Aqueduct Trail Network: <http://www.mapc.org/aqueducts>
7. Riverside Rail Trail: <http://www.newtonconservators.org/railroadbridge.htm>

WELLESLEY TRAILS COMMITTEE

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



Appendix A

Detailed Project Information

1. Brook Path Improvements at High School

Background:

1. Because most of the work initially planned for the Fuller Brook Park Restoration Project was deleted by FBPCC cost cutting, this project has been redefined to complete the work as planned in the Master Plan's preliminary design:

Purpose:

1. Enhance Brook Path usage
 - a. Make it compatible with other sections of path.
 - b. Provide a more scenic and off-road route through playing fields.
 - c. Provide a shorter, more direct route.
 - d. Make it clear that path continues and that it neither starts or ends at the State St parking lot.
2. Improve user safety
 - a. Provide a standard stone dust path along the edge of the parking lot so walkers, joggers, bicyclists and children do not have to go through the parking lot.
 - b. Eliminate using the service driveway and sidewalk along Rice St.
3. Restore historical area and pathway
 - a. Path was originally conceived as getting pedestrian and equestrian traffic away from roadways.
 - b. Restores original path connection between the Caroline and Fuller Brooks.
 - c. Provide continuity of the original greenway.

Route:

1. Trail will go eastbound from the State St parking lot, run in back of the stadium and along the edge of the baseball field, and go across the grassed area to Rice St.
2. At Rice St the trail crosses on the crosswalk, continues along the Caroline Brook along Paine St, and ends at the high school driveway.

Access Issues:

1. The NRC, Wetland Protection Committee, School Committee, and the Athletic Department signed off on the preliminary design plan, and we have been working with them for permissions to proceed with our plan.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. Fuller Brook Park Restoration Project, that will be completed in early 2017.

Betterments:

1. Install stone dust path along the complete route. Note: Section behind the stadium is done and strip along edge of parking lot needs to be widened to 6-ft with a 3-foot lawn edge.
2. At State St parking lot, move edge away from the trail, convert to parallel parking, and move light standard to new location.
3. Re-establish greenspace between the travel lane on Paine St and the Caroline Brook that is currently used for parallel parking. Remove cement sidewalk and replace with stone dust path.

Ongoing Expenses:

1. Maintenance of stone dust path.

2. Paintshop Pond Trail

Purpose:

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

Route:

1. Currently there are 3 miles of woodland trails between Paintshop Pond, Lake Waban and Pond Rd.

2. The actual routing will be determined in discussions with Wellesley College. One route 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 old pine groves.

Access Issues:

1. Permission from Wellesley College. The land and trails are currently open to the public, but we need approval from the college to mark and publicize our trail on their land.
2. Location of trailhead. Ideally the trailhead should be located near a parking area. Possible suggested locations are:
 - a. Playing fields parking lot off Rt-135 would provide access to trails south of the stadium.
 - b. Service Drive parking lot off Rt-16 would provide access using the established trail around the north shore of the Lake Waban on college land.
 - c. Dirt parking lot off Pond Rd (needs to be built) would provide direct access to established trails.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. None.

Betterments:

1. Installation of a map house at the trailhead.
2. If built, possible partial payment for establishing small parking area on Pond Rd.

Ongoing Expenses:

1. None

3. Sudbury Path Connection to Natick

Background:

1. The MWRA is developing an aqueduct trails network in MetroWest.
2. Natick has recently opened a new trail along the Sudbury Aqueduct that ends on Rt-16 at Leach Ln.

Purpose:

1. Provide a connection from the Sudbury Path to the Sudbury Aqueduct Trail in Natick. Currently there is a 0.7 mile gap in the trail between the two towns along Rt-16.
2. Provide a safe pedestrian crossing for the Sudbury Path from the south side of Rt-16 to the north side.

Route:

1. Along the Cheever House driveway approximately 100-ft from Rt-16, the trail would enter the woods west of the driveway and exit to Rt-16 at the northwest corner of the property.
2. The trail would follow a wide shoulder on the south side of Rt-16 to a new crosswalk to the north side where there is a sidewalk.
3. After a short section of sidewalk, the trail would continue along Rt-16 using an existing natural surface path on the north side of the roadway to the Natick town line.

Access Issues:

1. Wellesley College permission. Wellesley College owns the Cheever House, and we would need permission to reroute the Sudbury Path to the northwest corner of their property. This is needed because the roadway shoulder between the driveway and the corner of the property is too narrow.
2. Historic Commission approval. The stone wall is probably historical and on Town land, and we will need their approval to breach the wall for pedestrian passage.
3. Traffic Committee approval. BETA Group has done a traffic analysis and recommends this as a safe crossing, and we would need to get the Traffic Committee approval for the crosswalk installation.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. None.

Betterments:

1. Natural surface trail on Cheever House land will be installed by volunteers at no cost to the Town.
2. Breach stone wall along Rt-16 for trail access to roadway shoulder.
2. Crosswalk across Rt-16. Standard zebra striping with signage or flashing pedestrian signal.
3. Leveling sections of dirt pathway along Rt-16 east of Pond Rd.

Ongoing Expenses:

1. Maintenance of crosswalk.

4. North Forty Trails

Background:

1. The North Forty is part of a 113 acre, contiguous open-space corridor along Morses Pond from Rt-9 to Weston Rd with 5.3 miles of walking trails with only two road crossings.
2. Currently there are 0.9 miles of trails in the North Forty, which does not include the Crosstown Trail section along the Cochituate Aqueduct that is 0.5 miles long.

Purpose:

1. In the next five years, it is anticipated that there will be multiple proposals for developing the North Forty, and the Trails Committee will be advocating for retaining open space and the woodland trails.
2. Protect the Crosstown Trail with at least a woodland buffer to serve as a visual and sound barrier between the aqueduct and any development along the north side of the trail from Turner Road to the Weston Road electric substation
3. If developed, retain parts of the existing trails and add new trails as needed to supplement loss of existing trails.

Route:

1. The Crosstown Trail alignment will remain unchanged along the Cochituate Aqueduct, and the rest of the trail routes are undetermined at this time.

Access Issues:

1. The Town has agreed to retain the Crosstown Trail on the Cochituate Aqueduct. This has been Town owned land purchased from the State in 1962.
2. Retain at least two trail pedestrian access points from the neighborhoods, one from Turner Road and one from Weston Road. In addition, there are the two access points for the Crosstown Trail along the Cochituate Aqueduct at the Morses Pond Access Rd and at the Weston Rd electric substation.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. Unknown

Betterments:

1. Unknown

Ongoing Expenses:

1. Unknown

5. Road Crossings Safety

Background:

1. There are a total of 77 road crossing for trails in our trails network.

Purpose:

1. Assess road crossing where there are fast traffic, high density traffic, poor sight lines, and/or high user volume.
2. Work with Traffic Committee to address safety concerns and corrective action for high priority locations.

Route:

1. Road crossing occur on all five of our 18 miles of interconnection trails.

Access Issues:

1. All are Town or State roadways, so no access issues.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. None.

Betterments:

1. Installation of zebra striping and crosswalk warning signage.
2. Installation of flashing pedestrian signals when necessary.

Ongoing Expenses:

1. Normal painting and upkeep.
2. Normal flashing light replacement and maintenance.

6. Riverside Rail Trail

Background:

1. Development of a rail trail from Wellesley Lower Falls to the MBTA Station in Newton has been a high priority project for the Trails Committee since our inception in 1993.
2. With the completion of the Waterstone complex and renovated railroad bridge across the Charles River by DCR in 2012, the trail section in Wellesley is now complete.
3. Because of strong opposition by a few Newton Lower Falls abutters, completion of the Newton section has been stalled.

Purpose:

1. Support this pedestrian and bicycle path from Lower Falls to the Riverside MBTA station in Newton.
2. Keep this project alive and advocate for Town involvement to get DCR and Newton to complete this project.

Route:

1. Washington St is the start of the DCR Charles River Reservation trail (granite post with heron). Follow the sidewalk along edge of parking lot to the bridge across the Charles River and continue on a stone dust path to Concord St in Newton. This section has been completed.
2. Cross Concord St on crosswalk, and follow the abandoned railroad right of way to the Rt-128/I-95 bridges crossing the highway and ramp roadway to the MBTA property.

Access Issues:

1. Objections by a few Newton Lower Falls abutters have tied this up in the courts for over 15 years.
2. DCR owns the railroad land, and the bridges over Rt-128/I-95 are intact and ready for installation of the pathway.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. Riverside Development Project. New office, residential, and retail space at the station is being planned and the connection to the rail trail needs to be incorporated into the plans.

Betterments:

1. DCR will clear the right of way and provide 0.7 miles of rail trail from Concord St to MBTA Station. This is an ongoing project and is funded by DCR.

Ongoing Expenses:

1. The rail trail will be maintained by DCR.

7. Charles River Path Extension to Crosstown Trail

Purpose:

1. Provide a trail connection for the northern end of the Charles River Path. Currently the end is at the Weston town line at the edge of DCR's Leo J. Martin golf course.
2. Create a loop section of trail by connecting to the Crosstown Trail at Indian Springs.

Route:

1. At the intersection of Boulevard and Riverdale Rds, head south along Riverdale Rd to Glen Rd. Take a jog to The Waterway road, and go past The Waterway Park to Hillside Rd. Take the established trail up through Indian Springs Park to the Cochituate Aqueduct where it meets the Crosstown Trail.

Access Issues:

1. Most of the new route is along public roadways.
2. Indian Springs Park is only off-road section, is owned by the NRC, and no new trail is required.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. None.

Betterments:

1. None.

Ongoing Expenses

1. None.

8. Crosstown Trail Relocation in Hills

Background:

1. The Crosstown Trail follows the Cochituate Aqueduct as closely as it can. At Cliff Rd, the aqueduct runs under Washington St south of Rt-9 and under the DPW facilities north of Rt-9. At Woodland Ave it then reemerges as open space. Thus the Crosstown Trail is on sidewalks through one of the most built-up and congested parts of town.

Purpose:

1. Relocate the Crosstown Trail to avoid the traffic congestion along Washington St between Cliff Rd and Woodlawn Ave.

Route:

1. At the intersection of Washington St and Cliff Rd, take Cliff Rd north over the railroad tracks bridge and under the Rt-9 bridge to Garden Rd.
2. Follow Garden Rd to Colburn Rd, and continue on Colburn Rd past Philips Park to Woodlawn Ave.
3. Turn right onto Woodland Ave, go over the railroad bridge, and continue to the steps leading down to the aqueduct.

Access Issues:

1. None. This reroute will be completely on sidewalks along roadways.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. None.

Betterments:

1. None.

Ongoing Expenses:

1. None.

9. Morses Pond Trail Relocation

Purpose:

1. Currently the beginning of Morses Pond Trail runs on a paved path along the Morses Pond Access Rd. The trail will be rerouted off the paved path onto woodland trails to avoid traffic and railroad noise along the access road.

Route:

1. Shortly after the beginning of the trail on the paved pathway, enter the woods on an established trails that lead to the back of the parking lot for beach users.
2. To avoid walking through the parking lot, construct a new trail in the woods that parallels the eastern edge of the parking lot.

Access Issues:

1. Permission from DPW/Water Dept for installing a new 300-ft trail in woods along edge of parking lot.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. None.

Betterments:

1. Natural surface trail will be installed by volunteers at no cost to the Town.

Ongoing Expenses:

1. None.

10. 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 will connect to 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. DRC approval for footbridge connecting to Elm Bank.
3. Permitting from Wellesley and Dover Wetlands.
4. Access permissions for construction vehicles.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. Other DCR bridge building projects.

Betterments:

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

Ongoing Expenses:

1. It is assumed that DCR will maintain the footbridge.

11. Crosstown Trail Crossing at Rt-9

Background:

1. The Town recently acquired the Cochituate Aqueduct land north of Rt-9 adjacent to the expanded Dunkin Donuts, and the previously overgrown trail from Overbrook Dr to Rt-9 has been opened for use.
2. The Crosstown Trail follows the Cochituate Aqueduct and starts from the Natick town line. But to cross Rt-9, the trail uses Overbrook Dr to cross at the traffic light that adds substantial road walking along busy roadways.

Purpose:

1. Investigate options for a safe pedestrian and bicycle Rt-9 crossing.
2. Options under consideration are: Under Rt-9 using the existing aqueduct tunnel, bridge over Rt-9, or a flashing pedestrian signal. Of the three, using the aqueduct tunnel seems the most feasible and cost effective approach at this time.

Route:

1. Rt-9 crossing at Cochituate Aqueduct.

Access Issues:

1. Permission from the Selectmen, landowners of the Cochituate Aqueduct that it will connect to.
1. Permission from MassDOT and Wellesley DPW.
2. Permitting from Wetland Protection. This is in a wetlands buffer zone.

Dependence on Other Projects:

1. Rt-9 Enhancement Study and Plan.

Betterments:

1. It is assumed that this will be a MassDOT project with State funding.

Ongoing Expenses:

1. It is assumed that MassDOT will provide maintenance .

Appendix B

Status of 2011 Proposed Projects

In our previous plan - Future Trails Development and Improvement Projects, December 19, 2011 - we listed nine ideas for proposed projects. We have completed three of the projects, two are ongoing, one is retained, and three have been removed. The projects as described in the 2011 plan and the current status of the projects are:

1. **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: Because of Fuller Brook Restoration project budget cuts that eliminated building this new section of trail, we are completing this section of the Brook Path with Trail Committee planning and funding.
2. **Charles River Path Extension in Lower Falls:** Trail extension from Washington St. to the Charles River to 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.
Completed: National Development completed the pathway in 2012 between Washington St and the new DCR bridge.
3. **Charles River Path Extension to Boulevard Rd:** Trail extension along the Charles River, beginning in back of the former Grossman's site and proceeding along DCR land to golf course in Weston..
Completed: National Development completed the pathway in 2012 from bridge through the back of Waterstone to the DCR trail.
- 4.. **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.
Completed: The new trail was marked in 2012.
5. **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.
Ongoing: Initial discussion have been held with Wellesley College about formalizing a trail, and a feasible route is under consideration.
6. **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.
Removed: Because of excessive expense for constructing a sidewalk, this project has been dropped.
7. **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
Retained: Stalled because of the magnitude of the project and uncertainty of a major funding source.
8. **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.
Removed: Rerouting options were considered, but it was decided to retain the trailhead off Rt-9.
9. **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.
Removed: Area around RDF was explored, and no feasible routing was found that didn't require extensive board walking and expense.