

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study
Public Comments
deadline October 6, 2020

Time	Comment	First	Last
9/26/20 3:25 AM	I agree with State Representative Kay Khan that it is absurd to circumvent the obvious route through the Lower Falls neighborhood in the design of this project. Rather than wait years for this issue to wend its way through land court, based on the objections of just a couple of neighbors, how about a class action suit on behalf of the thousands of pedestrians and cyclists this will inconvenience vs. the land court's failure to resolve the case in a timely manner? Or an eminent domain taking by the Commonwealth? The neighbors should realize that being on a rail trail only increases the value of every house in the neighborhood, including theirs.	Robert	Persons
10/5/20 8:53 AM	I am writing to support the Lower Falls shared-use trail feasibility study. I live in Newton Lower Falls with my husband and two daughters. We have long been in favor of a shared use trail in our neighborhood. We anticipate that such a trail would have benefits to both our health and the environment. This particular trail proposal may also have social and educational benefits. The children of Lower Falls are districted to Angier Elementary School in Waban. Even though it is close by, there is no safe way to walk or bike to the school. This means that our children cannot participate in the "walk to school days" and requires car transportation for playdates with peers. Having a healthy transportation option for fair weather days would be wonderful. Please allow this proposal to pass so that it can improve our community.	Rebecca	Connor
10/5/20 8:59 AM	I wish to express strong approval for all efforts to make additional areas accessible for safe bike and pedestrian use, including marked roadways, barriers and lights that include bikes. More safe walking and biking is better for everyone.	Claudette	Beit-Aharon

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study

Public Comments

deadline October 6, 2020

Time	Comment	First	Last
10/5/20 6:26 PM	<p>I have seen your proposed trail plan, and frankly find it wanting in several respects that are probably already obvious to you.</p> <p>However, a better alternative has recently been identified by Dan Brody of the Newton Conservators.</p> <p>I am now sending this letter urging you to take advantage of his creativity and insight to build the bicycle element of the trail on the old railroad right-of-way that runs parallel to Saint Marys Street, rather than on a circuitous route on the Martin Golf Course.</p> <p>This alternative alignment of the southern end of the route would also follow the Charles River and cross the river on the existing Cochituate Aqueduct bridge.</p> <p>It is clearly better in many ways.</p> <p>Go for it!</p> <p>Sincerely, Robert Fizek 47 Forest Street Newton Highlands, MA</p>	Robert	Fizek
10/5/20 7:21 PM	<p>One of my primary concerns with the DCR trail system and proposed expansion is maintenance. The majority of maintenance of the Lower Falls trestle bridge appears to be done by volunteers who deserve credit for their great work. But there is more substantial maintenance and repairs that have not been done (water pools on the bridge walkway after a hard rain) or took a long time to complete (cleaning black spray painted graffiti, removing a downed tree limb from the railing, etc.).</p> <p>The Boston Globe once reported the DCR had a billion dollar plus backlog of deferred maintenance on its properties, in part, because it was chronically underfunded. I'd like to hear more about: a) whether the DCR's funding has changed and have they substantially reduced the backlog on deferred maintenance; b) the specific plans for the ongoing maintenance and repairs (that is, what they commit to versus what volunteers might do).</p>	J. Alan	Armstrong

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study

Public Comments

deadline October 6, 2020

Time	Comment	First	Last
10/6/20 8:25 AM	<p>The trail from Pine Grove Ave to the Trestle bridge should follow the railroad right-of-way. I don't understand the lack of progress towards securing the right to build on this right-of-way since this plan was proposed more than a decade ago.</p> <p>Until building on the right-of-way is possible, DCR should defer its plan for a bicycle path in this area, and build only a pedestrian trail on the golf course. Bicyclists already have a perfectly usable route along St Marys St. Few bicyclists would be tempted by a circuitous route on the golf course. Building this path to accommodate cyclists would be a waste of money and would degrade its desirability for walkers.</p> <p>I urge DCR to relocate the southernmost section of the trail to follow the existing Charles River Path in Wellesley and cross the river on the Cochituate Aqueduct bridge. This route is far superior to the current plan, which includes a 400-yard walk along busy Quinobequin Rd.</p> <p>This web page describes my proposal: https://newtonconservators.org/lower-falls-trail-options/</p> <p>This route would require construction of two segments: from the top of the aqueduct bridge down to the riverbank, and along the riverbank under the I-95 bridge. It might be preferable to build this section in a way that is not ADA-compliant. A bicycle route could follow Walnut St to Quinobequin, with safety improvements as in the current plan.</p> <p>The recent DCR meeting about Quinobequin south of I-95 discussed the idea of splitting the bicycle and pedestrian routes, with a woodland path along the river for walkers and a safe, ADA-compliant route for bicycles along the road. If separate pedestrian and bicycle routes are possible in this section, they also should be considered in the section between Walnut Street and Quinobequin.</p> <p>My route would also provide a direct connection between the two trails that follow the Cochituate Aqueduct: the Crosstown Trail in Wellesley and the Cochituate Aqueduct Trail in Newton.</p>	Dan	Brody
10/6/20 10:18 AM	<p>To: MA Department of Conservation and Recreation</p> <p>From: Newton Conservators</p> <p>On behalf of the Board of the Newton Conservators (newtonconservators.org), I am writing to convey our appreciation for helping to move this Lower Falls Shared Use Trail project forward. At our recent board meeting on 9/30/20, referring to the "North Area - Two Bridges to Trestle Bridge", it was resolved to convey our support for a walking trail on the circuitous path along the river and a bike path along the railroad right of way. This includes the railway portion parallel to Saint Mary Street where a resolution in all haste of the legal issues is strongly encouraged.</p> <p>Best regards,</p> <p>Ted Kuklinski, President</p>	Theodore	Kuklinski

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study

Public Comments

deadline October 6, 2020

Time	Comment	First	Last
10/6/20 11:11 AM	<p>I support the pedestrian pathway section of this project--but not the bicycle pathway. I am a Director of Newton Conservators and its former president.</p> <p>I strongly support the recommendation of the Newton Conservators Board that the preferred alignment for the bicycle portion of this project is on the railroad right-of-way that runs parallel to Saint Marys Street.</p> <p>Until building on the right-of-way is possible, I believe that DCR should defer its plan for an off-road bicycle path in this area, and build only a pedestrian trail along the edge of the golf course. Bicyclists already have a perfectly usable route from Pine Grove to the Trestle Bridge, using Saint Marys Street.</p> <p>Few bicyclists would be interested in the proposed circuitous route on the Martin Golf Course. Building this path to accommodate cyclists would be a waste of money and would degrade its desirability for walkers.</p> <p>A great advantage of the proposed alternative for bicycles on St. Mary's Street is that it would provide a direct connection between the two trails that follow the route of the Cochituate Aqueduct: the Crosstown Trail in Wellesley and the Cochituate Aqueduct Trail in Newton.</p>	Elizabeth	Wilkinson
10/6/20 3:42 PM	<p>I am the Planning Director for the Town of Wellesley. Due to family issues I have not been able in the last two weeks to coordinate this response with other officials in the Town or prepare a more formal response, but I do wish to submit certain concerns by today's deadline. I am grateful for all the efforts you have made to improve trails and increase connectivity between Wellesley, Newton and other towns.</p> <p>The use of Leo J. Martin grounds for trails is most welcome. Efforts should continue though to use the right of way along St. Mary's Street.</p> <p>I also suggest that the examination of alternatives look to a connection with Wellesley's Crosstown Trail. Traveling a short distance west along Route 16 from the Trail's intersection with Route 16 will bring you to the Crosstown Trail, a crossing which is protected by an existing signal. At this point users can proceed west or east along the Crosstown Trail. Traveling east along the Crosstown Trail will lead to the Newton border. I have not explored the feasibility of connections to Newton at this point, but it should be explored. The proposed routing along Route 16 to the 128/16 intersection and the crossing across the Route 128 entrance ramps present very significance safety issues. These could well be alleviated by instead focusing on utilizing the Crosstown Trail.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>Don</p>	Don	McCauley

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study

Public Comments

deadline October 6, 2020

Time	Comment	First	Last
10/6/20 4:42 PM	Please avoid damaging the roots of the mature pine trees on the proposed route. Excavation for laying the path that would cut roots near the surface is one concern. Another is soil compaction over time from repeated pressure of walkers and cyclists, and depriving roots of oxygen if the grade is raised. Best to avoid root zones of significant trees if at all possible.	Julia	Malakie
10/6/20 4:43 PM	Lower Falls Trails_City of Newton_10-6-20.pdf	Andreaa	Downs
10/6/20 5:21 PM	<p>As a resident of Newton Lower Falls for more than 23 years, I am deeply concerned about the lasting and irreversible effects caused by the proposed shared-use trail. The proposed trail would cut through the neighborhood to provide an unnecessary thoroughfare for bicycle enthusiasts who don't live in the neighborhood. There are at least five reasons why the plan as proposed should not go forward:</p> <p>1. Loss to abutting property owners. There are at least seventeen families on Clearwater Road who will lose privacy and the quiet enjoyment of their property by the destruction and construction necessitated by this plan. Additionally, there at least ten more families on the private portion of Pine Grove Avenue who will suffer the same losses. The proposal makes no mention of these concerns.</p> <p>2. Disturbance of woodland wildlife. The wooded area encompassed by this plan has long been a pathway for indigenous animal species whose habitats will be unnecessarily compromised. Many deer, foxes, coyotes, owls, hawks, and other species depend on these woodland byways for their survival, only a few hundred feet from the Charles River. The proposed plan makes no mention whatsoever of the possible effects on wildlife.</p> <p>3. Dangers to and from the golf course. Much of the proposed trail encroaches upon and encumbers the Leo J. Martin Memorial Golf Course. The course was developed in the 1930s by legendary (and Newton-based) golf-course designer Donald Ross, giving the municipal course historical significance. Destroying trees along several holes will undeniably impact fare-paying players' enjoyment of the golf course. Additionally, future users of the proposed trail will be in danger of serious injury from the many errant golf balls that regularly tear through that area. The proposal contains no mention of any of the dangers to the course itself, nor to trail users because of the golf course.</p> <p>4. Unnecessary added burden to Lower Falls. Lower Falls is one of the smallest villages in Newton, and yet is already slated (along with Auburnadle) to bear the enormous burden of years of construction and disruption because of the Riverside Project. The Project is expected to add 100% as many families to the area as currently live in Lower Falls. Forcing the village to also absorb the unneeded interference of a trail for bicycle devotees is adding insult to injury. The proposal makes no mention of these concerns.</p> <p>5. Irresponsible use of state funds. At a time when so many residents of Newton and the Commonwealth are suffering as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and the accompanying recession, it seems cavalier and uncaring to divert valuable funds and resources that could be used for more important causes. The proposal makes no mention of this concern.</p> <p>That the proposal lacks any discussion of these concerns suggests that they were never considered, or were considered and summarily dismissed. For these and other reasons, the Department should reject this proposal in favor of a future plan that addresses all these issues.</p>	Jay	Shepherd

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study
Public Comments
deadline October 6, 2020

Time	Comment	First	Last
10/6/20 6:14 PM	<p>My comment is specifically centered on support of the Rail Road RoW, for a path, a transportation corridor, from the Trestle Bridge in Lower Falls, to the best and least complicated connection to crossing the two Bridges to Riverside, the beautiful Pony Truss Trail, the Pony Truss Bridge, and other potential amenities in the planning stages. This would also provide the least complicated connection to Quinobequin Road and trails on the other side of Washington Street.</p> <p>The Rail Road RoW abuts my property in Lower Falls and has been a proposal for 25 years. It is unfortunate that DCR has not been able to close the loop though the original lawsuit by 2 abutters was thrown out by the court.</p> <p>The path would also provide an off road bike and pedestrian opportunity to get Riverside for transportation or shopping at the site without the use of a car.</p>	Kay	Khan

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study
Public Comments
deadline October 6, 2020

Time	Comment	First	Last
10/6/20 9:58 PM	<p>I welcome the linkage of Lower Falls. with the Upper Charles trail at Quinobequin Road.</p> <p>I also would ask that whatever plan that is taken up might not preclude or impede repair to the abandoned underdrain and sewer line that heads north and then west on Quinobequin Road and then up to Washington St.</p> <p>Sincerely</p> <p>Maureen Reilly Meagher</p> <p>342 Quinobequin Road</p>	Maureen	ReillyMeagher

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study

Public Comments

deadline October 6, 2020

Time	Comment	First	Last
10/7/20 12:00 AM	<p>I am writing to comment on the plan to create a bike path along Concord Street and Grayson Lane. My mother lives at 11 Grayson Lane; I grew up there. She bought the house in 1960 and has enjoyed the peaceful, quiet view of the woods behind the golf course for 60 years. The back yard of the house abuts the golf course and the proposed path. In fact, we were alerted to the existence of the path project by a guy walking in the woods immediately behind the house. We had never seen anyone there before, so we asked him what he was doing there; he said that he was surveying for the new path.</p> <p>I am a frequent bike path and trail user. I am very pleased with the addition of the trail over the trestle bridge, which in my youth was "the trestle," a place that kids dared each other to cross, one widely-spaced railroad tie at a time, watching their feet and looking at the water far below. It was pretty creepy! I was very glad to see the bridge restored as a walking and bicycle path. I think that connecting the trails together is a great idea, and I hope that the route using the old railroad bed becomes available as a bike path at some point in the future.</p> <p>I am concerned about the existing plan of running a bike path through the Concord Street woods and directly behind Grayson Lane. As a commenter at the recent meeting noted, sending a 14 foot wide path through the dense, mature Concord Street woods would cause significant damage to the mature forest there. In the past, there was a walking trail through that section, and I used to use it to walk our dog; the trail has since become overgrown, and the access from near the intersection of Grayson Lane and Concord has become a habitat for a great deal of poison ivy! It would be nice, perhaps, to see the walking trail restored, but I do not support running a large bike path through the woods.</p> <p>I also do not support having the path come as close to Grayson Lane as is proposed. Again, there are trees in the way that should not be taken down, and I see it as unfortunate and unnecessary that neighbors that have enjoyed a peaceful view for 60 years, should now be disturbed by a bike path, when there is plenty of land in the golf course to avoid creating such a disturbance. The houses on Grayson Lane have very small back yards, so the feeling of encroachment is, in my opinion, significant. That said, it would be nice to see the DCR improve maintenance of the area behind Grayson Lane, as some of the trees overhang houses, and some of the branches on those trees have landed on Grayson Lane houses!</p> <p>Would it be possible to consider another route through the golf course? During the meeting, a participant said that the DCR is planning the future of the golf course, and may include reconfigurations of the course in such planning. Perhaps the golf course and bike path planning could be aligned so that the proposed path is sheltered from most golf ball routes, does not infringe on mature forest, and does not encroach unnecessarily on houses?</p> <p>If the Concord route must be kept, another option that would avoid disturbing Grayson Lane might be to run a two-way protected bike lane down the 1 block of Concord Street that would be required to connect the Concord path to the trestle bridge entrance. I understand that this might have permitting issues, though.</p> <p>If the Concord/Grayson Lane alignment remains, I think that it should be designated as a hiking trail. This would narrow the trail significantly, so that trees could be spared and disturbance reduced. For biking, the DCR could mark St Mary's St as a bike route to allow connection to the trestle bridge, until a bike path could be run along the old railroad bed. As another commenter during the meeting noted, St Mary's provides the most practical connecting route for a cyclist wishing to save time. As for the railroad bed, unlike the area behind Grayson Lane, the railroad bed has been a transportation right of way in the neighborhood for decades if not centuries. I personally remember trains running along the line in my very early childhood. Neighbors of the rail bed may be more aware of its past and potentially future use as a transportation corridor. I believe that Grayson Lane</p>	Simon	Rakov

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study

Public Comments

deadline October 6, 2020

Email Address	Address	City	zip	
rpersons@rcn.com	2396 Commonwealth Ave	Auburndale	MA	02466
RFConnor@gmail.com	135 Cornell St	Newton lower falls	MA	02462
Claudette.beitaharon@gmail.com	566 Centre St	Newton	MA	02458

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study
Public Comments
deadline October 6, 2020

Email Address	Address	City	zip	
rjfizek@gmail.com	47 Forest Street	Newton	MA	02461
easthambarn@gmail.com	17 Baker Place	Newton Lower Falls	MA	02462

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study

Public Comments

deadline October 6, 2020

Email Address	Address	City	zip	
danielsbrody@gmail.com	15 Brewster Road	Newton	MA	02461
president@newtonconservators.org	24 Henshaw Terrace	Newton	MA	02465

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study

Public Comments

deadline October 6, 2020

Email Address	Address	City	zip	
Bethwilkinsonson@mac.com	14 Trowbridge Street	Newton	MA	02459
dmccauley@wellesleyma.gov	525 Washington Street	Wellesley	MA	02482

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study

Public Comments

deadline October 6, 2020

Email Address	Address	City	zip	
jmalakie@newtonma.gov	50 Murray Road	West Newton	MA	02465
adowns@newton.gov	1000 Commonwealth Avenue	Newton	MA	02459
jay@jayshep.com	Submitted via email			

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study

Public Comments

deadline October 6, 2020

Email Address	Address	City	zip
kaykhan7@gmail.com	18 St. Mary's Street	Newton	MA 02462

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study

Public Comments

deadline October 6, 2020

Email Address	Address	City		zip
mreillymeagher@aol.com	342 Quinobequin Road	Waban	MA	02468

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study

Public Comments

deadline October 6, 2020

Email Address	Address	City	zip
simonrakov@gmail.com	Submitted via email		



Department of Conservation & Recreation
Public Comment on Lower Falls Trails
c/o Jennifer.norwood@mass.gov

Dear Ms. Norwood & DCR:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DCR Lower Falls Shared Use Trails Feasibility Study as presented Sept. 22, 2020.

As advocates for walking and biking in this region, we are excited about the additional off-road access provided by this plan. We share DCR's goals for a quick-build, safe recreational and active transportation connections in this area.

However, we urge you to improve the plan for all users. People using the trails for transportation, whether on bikes or on foot, will want a more direct connection from the Concord St./Wellesley bridge to Riverside. The current proposed route is too circuitous. An inexpensive, quick alternative would be directing such users from Concord St. to St. Mary's St. to connect to the multi-use path along the golf course at Pine Grove and Clearwater (see diagram).

To accommodate recreational users—which we expect will be mostly those out for a longer walk—allows DCR to create a more scenic path nearer to the river—and thus sparing the root systems of the mature pines along Pine Grove (again, see diagram). This re-routing also gives users a more rustic experience, on a narrower and softer trail, away from vehicles.

Finally, we strongly favor final designs that enable a future multi-modal connection with the southern half of the rail right-of-way. As this is 20' and change along its length, DCR can address neighbors' privacy concerns with planting and screening.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. We look forward to seeing the next iteration of this study!

Andreae Downs, Ward 5
Alicia Bowman, Ward 6
Alison Leary, Ward 1

City Councilors

North Area - Two Bridges to Trestle Bridge

Lower Falls Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study
Quinobequin Road to Leo J. Martin Golf Course

