

# MassTrails Conference 11-12-22

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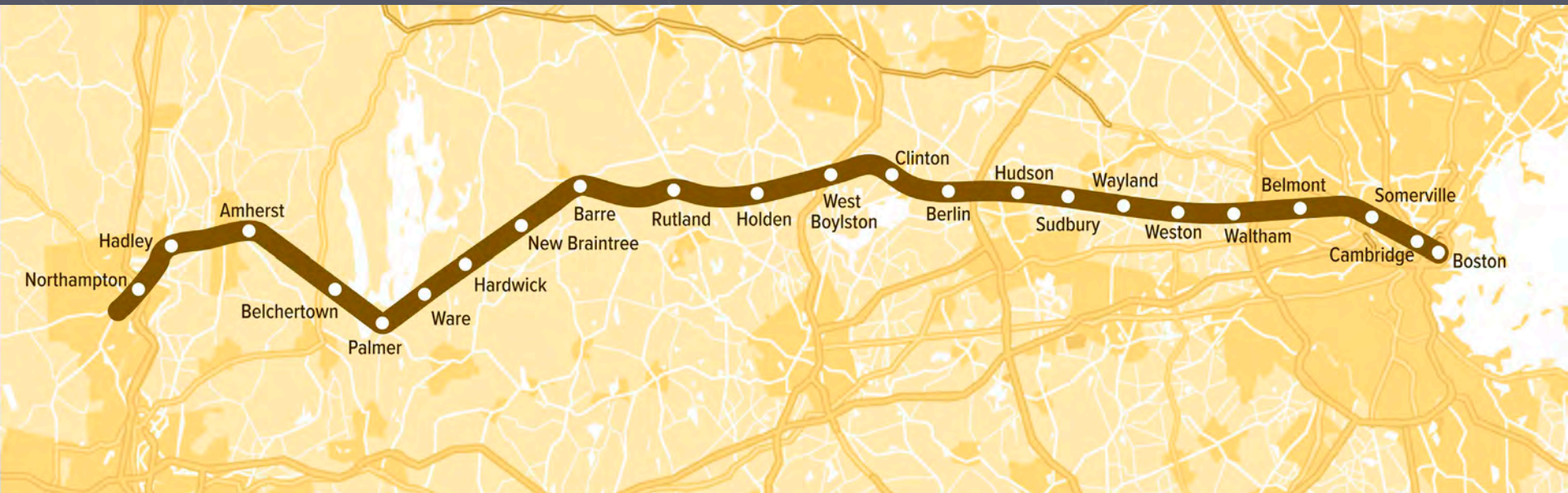
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# MassTrails Conference 11-12-22


## Building Trails – Creating Community As Connections






# But First


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## B-town Greenway Trestle Bridge



 Martha DuroShea is organizing this fundraiser.

You know that trail off Route 181 where so many people like to walk, run, and socialize???


Well, The Friends of the Belchertown Greenway is seeking your help to raise the funds needed to evaluate the trestle bridge that crosses over Ichish Brook.

**\$2,022** raised of \$2,000 goal


42 donations

[Share](#)


[Donate now](#)

 Anonymous

\$22 • 11 d

 Rob Kusner

\$102 • 27 d

 Anonymous

\$50 • 1 mo

[See all](#) [See top donations](#)

# Jabish Brook Wooden Trestle Bridge

# **BIG CHECK CEREMONY**

## **B-town Greenway Trestle Bridge**

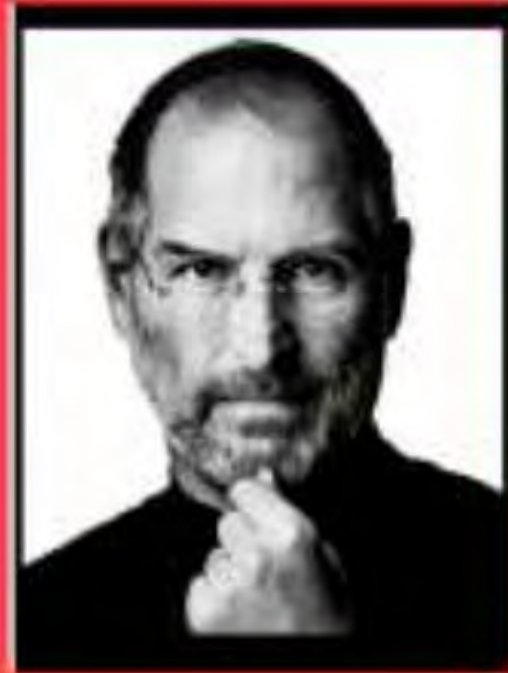




# I'm going to Connect the Dots for you

You can't connect the  
dots looking forward;  
you can only connect  
them by looking  
backward.

---Steve Jobs





# Today, I'm going to Connect the Dots for you

**The Disappointing Years**

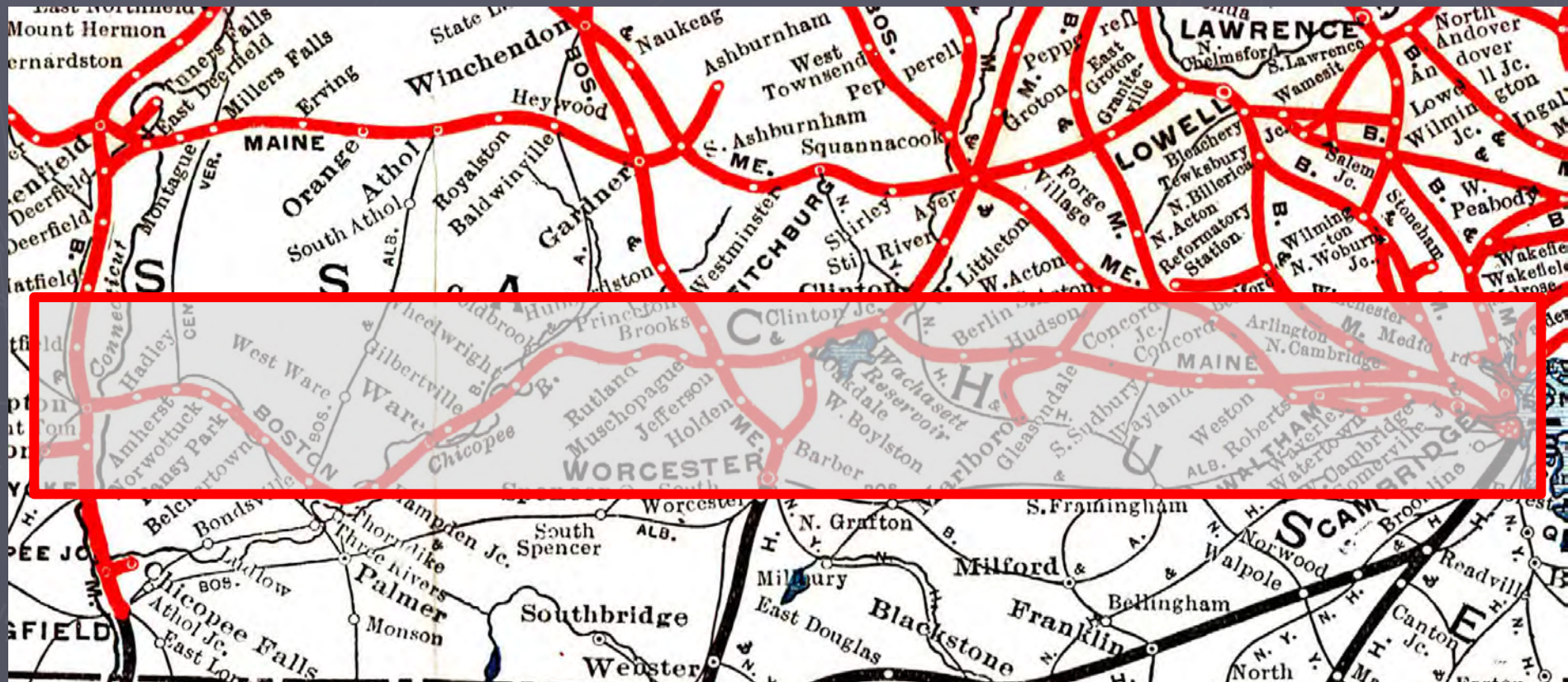
**The Regroup and Recover Years**

**The Tipping Point Years**

**The Breakthrough**

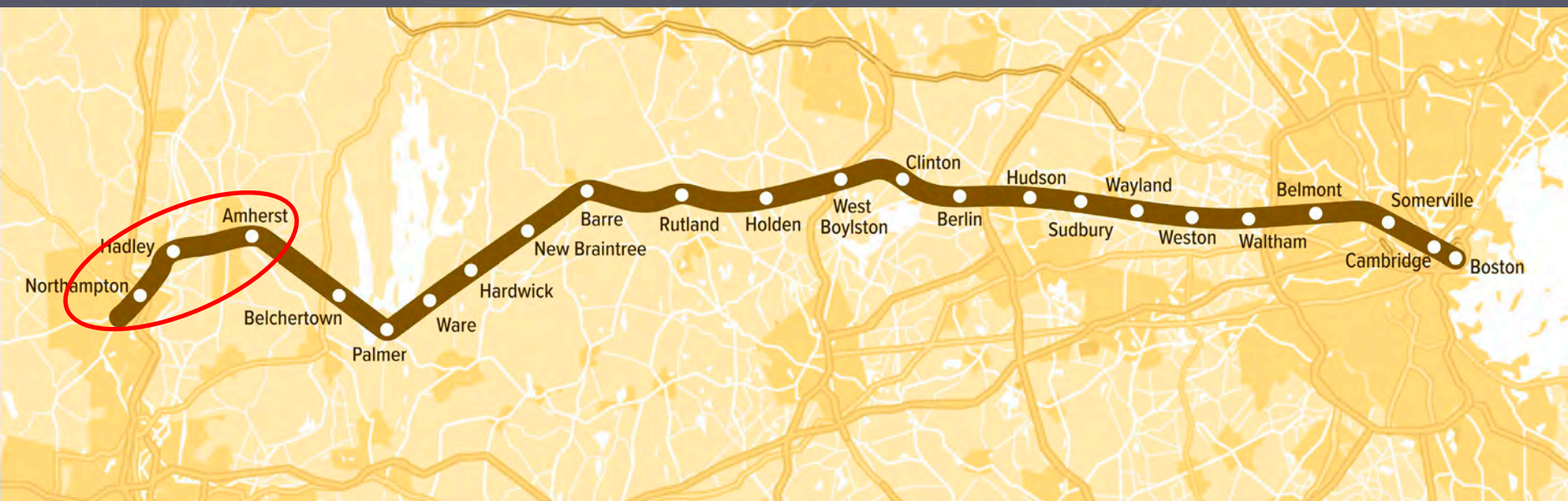


How the idea of a 104+ mile long trail came to be...



# A TIMELINE OF THE JOURNEY THUS FAR TO PIECE TOGETHER THE CORRIDOR

**1980:** The Mass. State Parks agency-DEM-purchases the western most 8.5 miles of the corridor and begins a 13-year process to plan and develop the corridor.

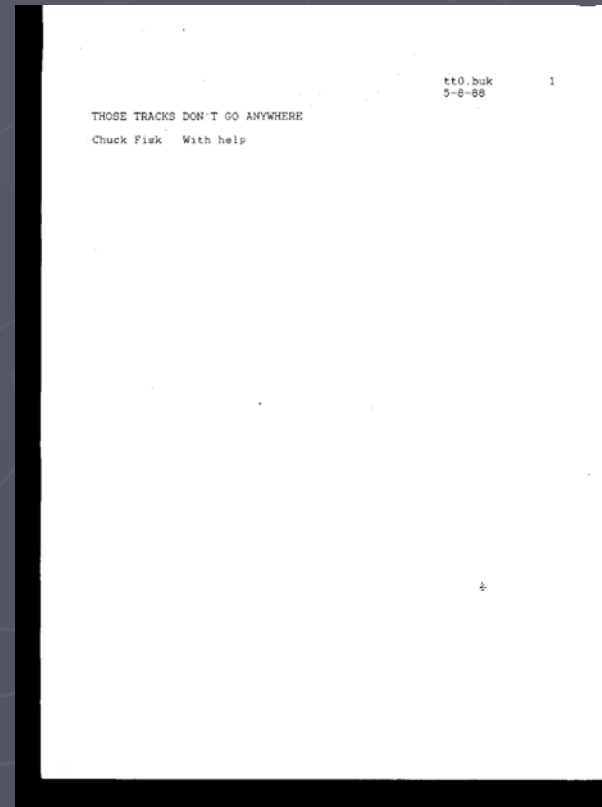




# A TIMELINE OF THE JOURNEY THUS FAR TO PIECE TOGETHER THE CORRIDOR

**1988:** The Fisk family completes a walk from Northampton Union Station to North Station Boston and they write a never-published manuscript.

A copy of this was given to a top DEM official, who kept a copy in his office and referred to it often.



# A TIMELINE OF THE JOURNEY THUS FAR TO PIECE TOGETHER THE CORRIDOR

31



CENTRAL MASS NOTES PAGE - 32

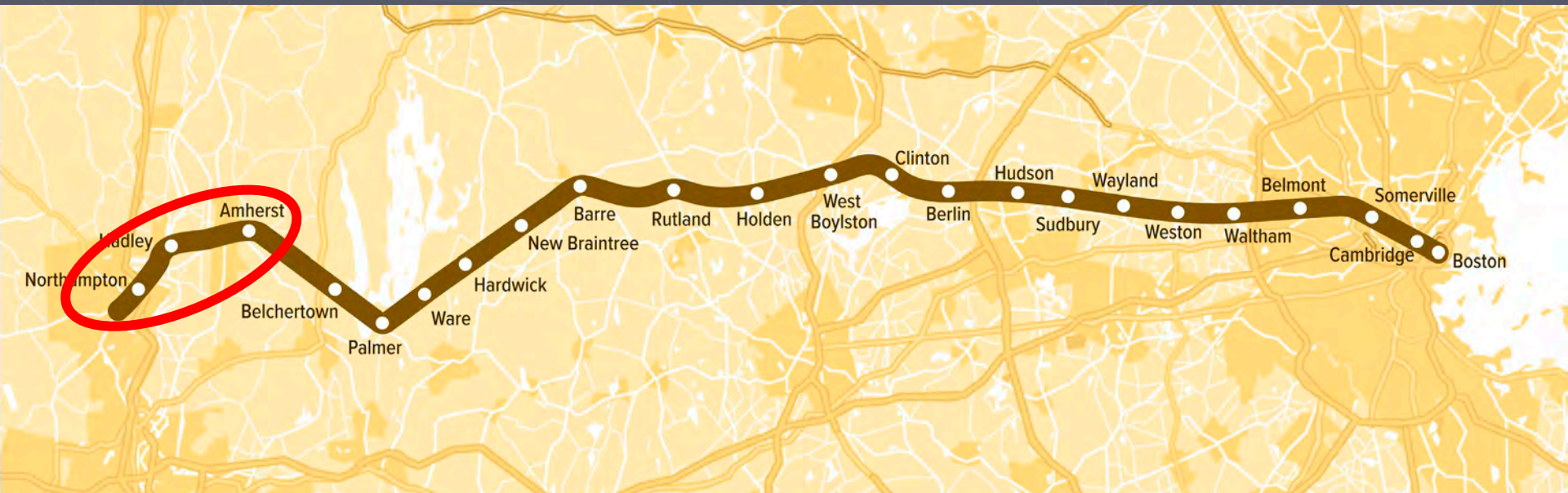
cm32.buk  
5-8--88

- 32A 8.58.....Clematis Brook Station. Known as Blue Hill for a short time around 1909. No known remains.
- 32Z This is, for all intents and purposes, the eastern end of the CM in modern times. Between here and Hill St crossing one can make out where the CM ran north of the Fitchburg....It was brought down in various stages up through the fifties until it was run entirely on the Fitchburg Branch...
- 32B 7.68.....Waverley Station. CM station was once at street level and CM employed three crossing guards. Still a stop on the Fitchburg Branch.
- 32C 6.70.....Belmont Station....Cellar hole remains of CM station and some roadbed remains although much of it is taken up by Pontiac, Renault dealerships and the like.



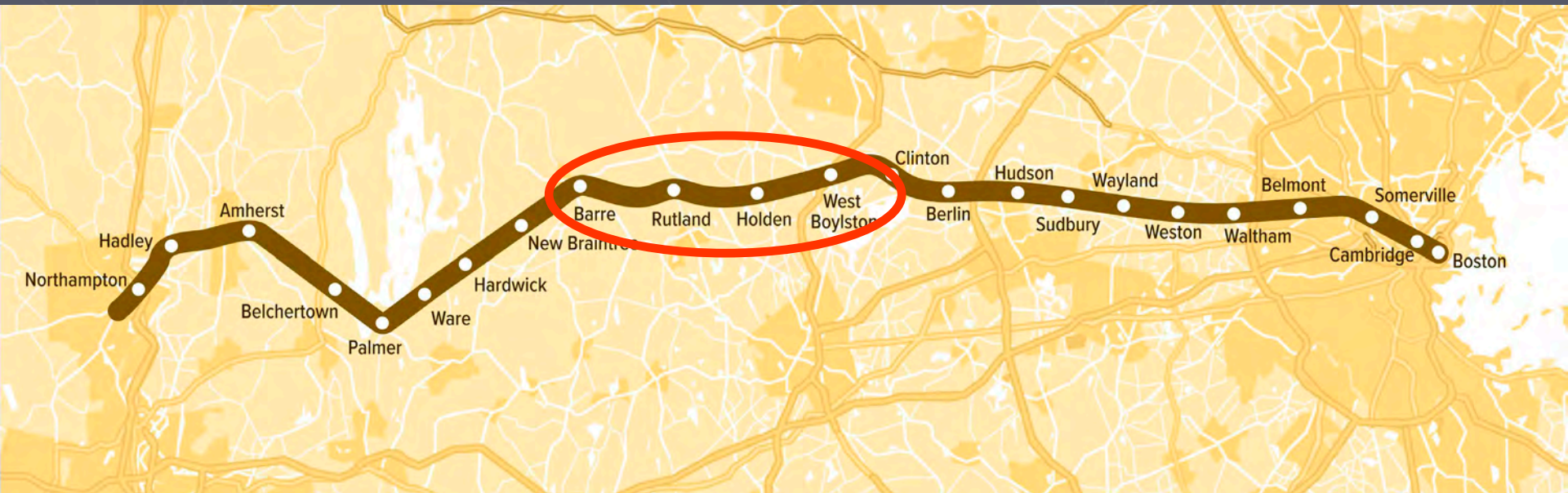
# A TIMELINE OF THE JOURNEY THUS FAR TO PIECE TOGETHER THE CORRIDOR

**1993:** The Norwottuck Rail Trail opened.



# A TIMELINE OF THE JOURNEY THUS FAR TO PIECE TOGETHER THE CORRIDOR

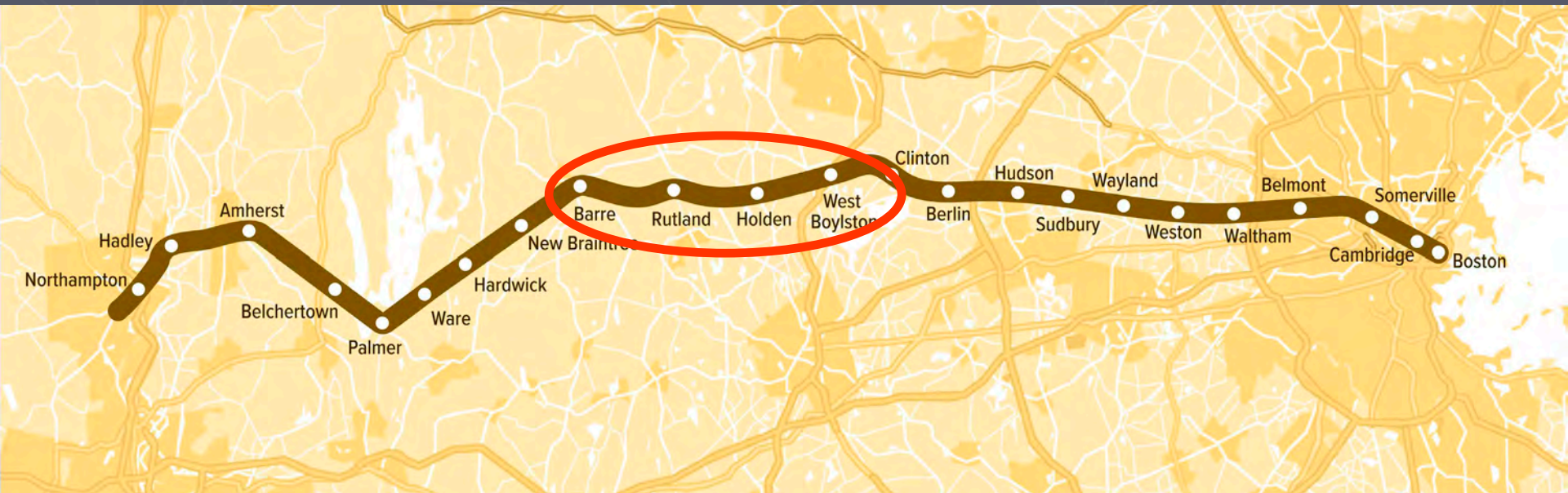
**1995:** Wachusett Greenways (WG) was formed and they purposely decided to build out their sections as a soft surface—stone-dust trail, and not a paved trail.





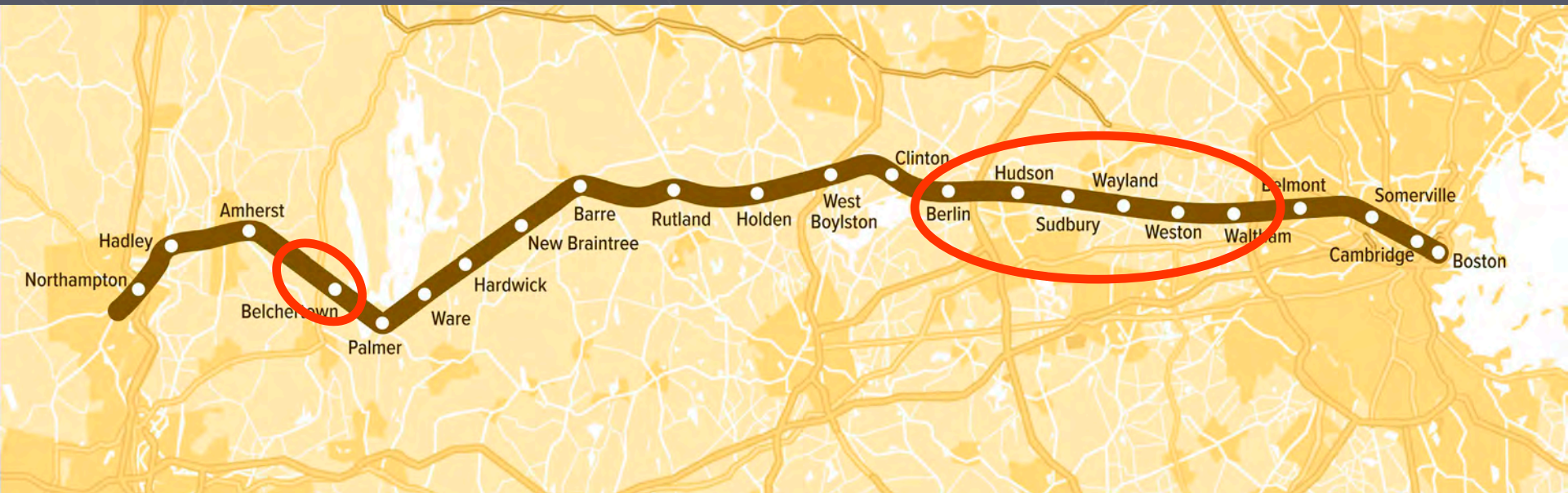
# A TIMELINE OF THE JOURNEY THUS FAR TO PIECE TOGETHER THE CORRIDOR

*1995: Their process avoided DOT type projects that take a longer time. Instead, they went for DCR, Rec-Trail, smaller \$\$ projects. Shorter segments. Volunteer-based projects.*



# A TIMELINE OF THE JOURNEY THUS FAR TO PIECE TOGETHER THE CORRIDOR

**1995:** Both the six-community Wayside Rail Trail project and the Belchertown Rail Trail began to be talked about.





# Disappointing Years







# The Disappointing Years

1998: Commonwealth Magazine did a story about the “to-do” in both Belchertown and Weston.

<https://tinyurl.com/CommonwealthMagStory> (*This story, though well-written, missed these key, “behind the scenes” reasons why these losses happened.*)

## CommonWealth

NONPROFIT JOURNAL OF POLITICS, IDEAS & CIVIC LIFE

ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION POLITICS ENERGY OPINION HEALTH CARE CRIMINAL JUSTICE

## Derailed in Belchertown and Weston



DAVE DENISON

Apr 1, 1998

SHARE



7

# The Disappointing Years

Los Angeles Times

## Town Puts Stick in Spokes of Bikeway Plan

BY RICHARD LORANT

DEC. 14, 1997 12 AM PT

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**WESTON, Mass.** — Imagine: A bicycle trail through the state's wealthiest suburb. You have any idea what kind of people would be pedaling into town? Ruffian criminals--mountain bikers!

Something had to be done. And it was. A call to arms went out in this colonial town, where the average home sells for about \$1 million. Residents drew a line in the sand trap: "The bikes stop here."

A planned 23-mile bicycle trail that has already been approved by the five other Boston suburbs it passes through was rejected 690 to 410 by residents at a town meeting Dec. 8. Now, the bikes must stop at the Weston line.

<https://www.masscentralrailtrail.org/weston-oped>

In Weston, the lead opponent to the Wayside Rail Trail was a staffer for the American Farm Bureau. Back then, AFB, were always leaders in fighting a rail trail project, wherever, so it was easy for him to take the lead on this. The other Wayside communities were supportive of the rail trail idea, but the project went dormant for almost 10 years.

Endorsements

Weston's story makes national news in several newspapers



# Here's two more Op-Eds about Weston's vote

THE NEWS TRIBUNE EDITION • THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1997 • 11

## COMMENTARY

### Weston 'couldn't be a better neighbor'

At least as long as you don't actually want to go there

"This will ruin your property values?" I asked the woman from Weston, our state's richest community.

"Absolutely," she replied. "This will increase crime?"

"Yes."

"This will destroy your town's identity as a sumptuous rural haven?"

"I think so," she said. "I'm very worried."

What impending civic menace could cause this woman to worry?

A prison? A Wal-Mart? An invasion of the Radio City Rockettes led by Boston Mayor Tom

Menino?

Brace yourself, gentle reader. The woman, like so many of her fellow townspeople in Weston, is losing sleep over the proposed construction of a regional bicycle trail.

And you thought you had problems.

Six of seven communities — Belmont, Waltham, Wayland, Sud-

bury, Hudson and Berlin — have already signed on to the Wayside Rail Trail, a 25-mile pathway that will cut through those towns.

In those communities, the response has generally been enthusiastic.

In Weston, where they're voting on it at Town Meeting Monday, they're about to call in the National Guard.

Through letters to the Town Crier & Tab, Weston's paper of record, bicycle trail opponents are pouring out their anger and frustration.

"I would never feel the same degree of safety entering my home with so many people having direct access to my property," one trail-hater declares fitfully.

"People will use our land as rest room facilities," sighs another. "And we will be within easy reach of spray paint cans, car thieves and worse."

"Just imagine if you were an abutter," says a third. "Did you move to Weston to have literally hundreds of thousands of strangers pass by your backyard each year?"

Not to mention all those car thieves in that brutish pack. Why, they're liable to pedal up to your

backyard, tuck your Mercedes under their arm, and off they go!

A fourth writer says, "I do not suggest that we build a fence around Weston."

'I would never feel the same degree of safety

entering my home with so many people having direct

access to my property,'

one trail-hater declares

fitfully.

'People will use our land as rest room facilities,'

sighs another.

No, of course not. A fence would be so, well, so Waltham. How about a moat filled with hungry alligators instead?

You see, it's not just the bicycle trail that has these people on edge. As a student of Weston's zeitgeist, its essence, if you will — I can't help but think the bicycle trail is emblematic of a much deeper anxiety.

ty.

The fact is, many Westonians moved to the state's swankiest suburbs years ago when it was quiet.

In those days, a Weston bungalow could rightfully boast that he or she had as much privacy as someone in Dover or any of the other really hard-to-get-to havens for the truly beautiful.

But unlike Dover, Weston is perched precariously at the crossroads of some major thoroughfares.

And as the western suburbs grew, so did the demands placed on our ritzy rural retreat.

Commuter traffic coming through on its way to Boston and other spots increased exponentially. The town fought back, but today the ride can be as treacherous as downtown Boston's.

The state's water agency wanted to build a huge storage reservoir in Weston. The town fought back, but today the reservoir will be built.

And now this confounded bicycle trail.

For many in Weston, it's all part of the same equation, sparking the same Garbo-esque cry for help: VEE VANT TO BE ALONE!

I could actually have some sympathy for these downtrodden

swells. But then I run across letters to the editor like the one entitled, "How much more neighborly can we be in Weston?"

The writer in this case seems puzzled. She says supporters of the trail want to approve this civic monstrosity out of a sense of neighborliness.

However, she says, "as far as the neighborly issue is concerned, Weston couldn't be a better neighbor to its surrounding communities."

How so?

"Residents of Lincoln, Wayland, Wellesley, Waltham, and other nearby towns access our roadways every day to reach the Mass Pike and Route 128," she writes. "How much more neighborly can we be?"

Gosh, I never saw it that way. They let us use their roads.

If you think about it, their trees also generate oxygen that presumably wafts over into Waltham, Wellesley, even Newton or other places where residents just suck it up. And never so much as a "thank you" from any of them.

The ingrates.

(Tom Moroney is a columnist for the Community Newspaper Company.)

### The rail trail would have attracted riffraff

By Herbert L. Kahn  
TOWN CRIER & TAB COLUMNIST

It was F. Scott Fitzgerald who wrote: "The rich are very different from you and me."

"They sure are," W.C. Fields agreed. "For one thing, they have more money."

The same philosophy was expressed about 40 years ago in a Peter Arno cartoon, which showed two Park Avenue club-men staring resentfully at a line of pickets parading with signs in the street below their window.

"What is all this twaddle about underprivileged minorities?" one club-man is spluttering to the other. "Aren't we a minority?"

Despite the obvious truth in these assertions, there continue to be reckless attempts to blur such distinctions. At least two such efforts are currently in the news: The Clinton-Gore campaign finance scandals and the proposed bicycle trail through Weston.

Consider the Clinton matter. The issue here goes much deeper than the need to appoint a special prosecutor to determine whether the president committed a crime by making money-raising phone calls from the White House, instead of using a pay phone across the street. It goes to the entire basis of our two-party system, in which the Republicans are the party of the rich and the Democrats are the party of the less rich.

Clearly, this leads to an equal contest, because the party of the less rich almost automatically has a larger membership, while the party of the rich can spend much more on TV ads. Clinton is deviously trying to upset this equilibrium by trying to raise excessive amounts of money. Moreover, he does not seem to be doing it for the understandable and perhaps even praiseworthy purpose of enriching himself, but in order to further his political aims and principles.

ples.

This must be stopped. Fortunately, Clinton's political principles, if they exist at all, are scarcely noticeable. The danger, however, is that some future Democratic president might use the same underhanded fund-raising methods and simultaneously have distinct and unshakable aims and principles.

#### ONE MAN'S OPINION

HERBERT KAHN



A similar if by some judgments less significant item is the Rail Trail, a proposed 25-mile bicycle trail connecting my town of Weston with six other towns along some discontinued railroad tracks. Because the state is picking up the entire construction cost and the expected expenditures by the towns are minimal, many unsophisticated people have been surprised by the storm of protest arising from Weston.

**Because the state is picking up the entire construction cost and the expected expenditures by the towns are minimal, many unsophisticated people have been surprised by the storm of protest arising from Weston**

Included among the protesters are some environmentalists who are disturbed by the inconvenience that such a trail might cause to the rabbits, blue jays and field mice that have taken up residence along

the tracks during the past 15 years. A more important reason, however, is the probability that a bicycle trail would attract hordes of undesirable people from outside the town.

Such people would cycle (or rollerblade, or walk) through Weston, peering into the windows of houses that are built on large, secluded acreage at least partly to escape such intrusions. Such people might trespass, litter and even steal. Even worse, such people stand a real chance of reducing the real estate values of adjacent houses, or even throughout the town.

Those who claim that the bicycle trail through Lexington has produced no such problems miss the point. The Lexington trail attracts desirable people from Weston, whose presence acts to raise real estate values. Obviously, the reverse would not be the case.

It is therefore no wonder that at Weston's Monday night Town Meeting on Dec. 8, there was heavy debate before the trail proposal was overwhelmingly defeated.

In retrospect, however, there should have been a compromise, in which the town would have set certain minimum requirements.

For example, cyclists from out of town might have had to carry written evidence that their bicycles had cost more than \$1,200 and been purchased within the past two years. Alternatively, they could be required to provide notarized copies of their most recent 1040 forms, to show that their incomes fall within the nation's top 3 percent. Either of these requirements would protect the citizens of our town from problems which they have not sought and do not deserve.

Herbert L. Kahn is a high-tech marketing consultant who lives in Weston.

<https://tinyurl.com/WestonOpEd>

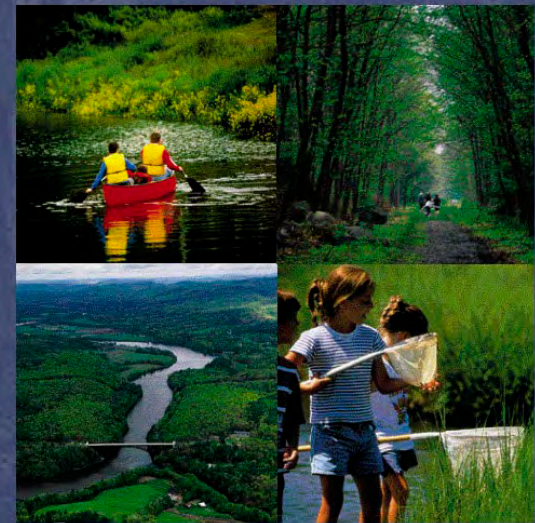
# The Regroup and Recover Years

1997-99: Mass DEM, released a report that called for more trail projects and encouraged piecing together the \*Mass Central Rail Trail\* corridor. The first time a 100 mile, cross-state trail began to be talked about at such a high level.

<https://tinyurl.com/GreenwayVision>

## COMMONWEALTH CONNECTIONS

A greenway vision for Massachusetts



Department of Environmental Management



# The Regroup and Recover Years

As of 2022, only some are accomplished now.

## STRATEGIES

- Integrate and link ecologically significant areas into the state greenway network, incorporating priority areas identified in the state's BioMap where appropriate.
- Support research to more accurately identify the locations of priority corridors and to identify and evaluate critical gaps in the system.
- Make critical greenway corridors identified in this plan a priority for land acquisition, landowner outreach, and funding.
- Develop a competitive grant program to support regional initiatives that connect population centers to the Massachusetts greenway and trail network.



# The Regroup and Recover Years

As of 2022, only some are accomplished now.

4

## Create a cross-state multi-use trail reaching from Boston to the Berkshires.

Most of the established long-distance trails in Massachusetts run north-to-south with only a handful running east-to-west. Over the past several years, there have been a wide range of local and regional efforts to create a cross-state multi-use trail along the Central Massachusetts rail line reaching from Boston to the Connecticut River Valley and perhaps, beyond. Being able to walk or ride a bike along a continuous trail reaching from Boston to the Berkshires is an idea that captures the imagination of many people and one that is gradually becoming a reality.

Given the length of the proposed cross-state trail and the complexity of issues surrounding the funding of such an endeavor, it is critical to remain focused and provide support and encouragement to the many organizations and efforts forging the way for this trail.

# The Regroup and Recover Years

As of 2022, only some are accomplished now.

## STRATEGIES

- Designate the cross-state trail as a statewide initiative and secure key segments for trail use by 2003.
- Make state, municipal and grassroots efforts along the cross-state trail a priority for state grant funds and technical assistance.

# The Regroup and Recover Years

- ▶ 1999: Wachusett Greenways hosted the first Golden Spike event, in West Boylston, where Congressman Jim McGovern spoke enthusiastically to the vision for a statewide, E-W trail.

<https://tinyurl.com/GoldenSpike1>

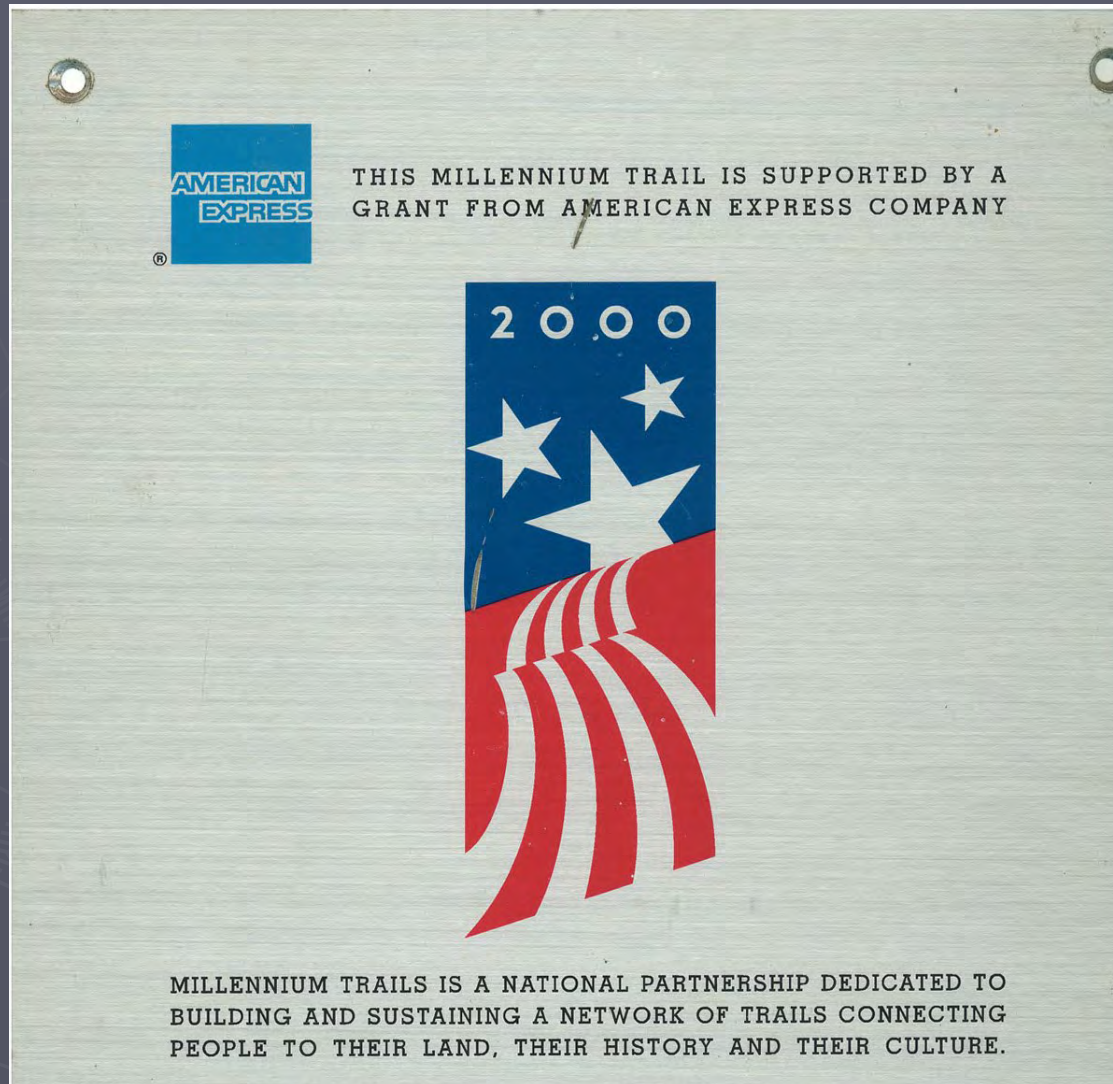
- ▶ Our 8th GS event was 7-30-2022 in Gilbertville.
- ▶ The largest with over 400 people was in Waltham during the gubernatorial campaign that year.



Center--Congressman Jim McGovern  
Left –Colleen Abrams, President Wachusett Greenways.



# Millennium Trail Plaque back in 2000





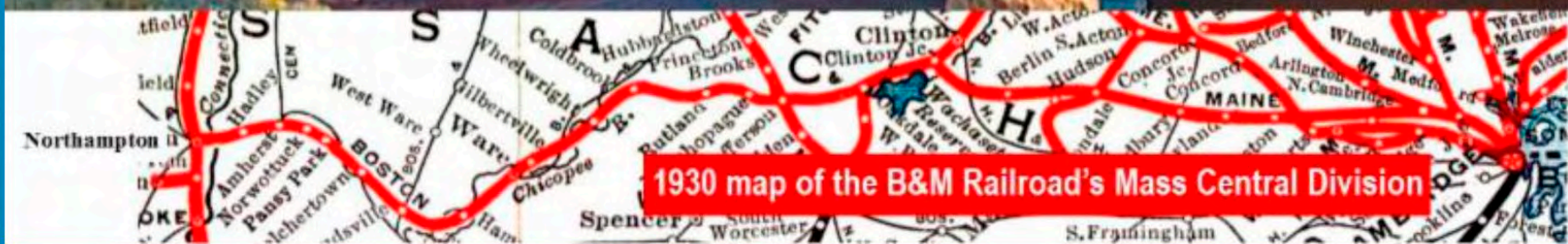
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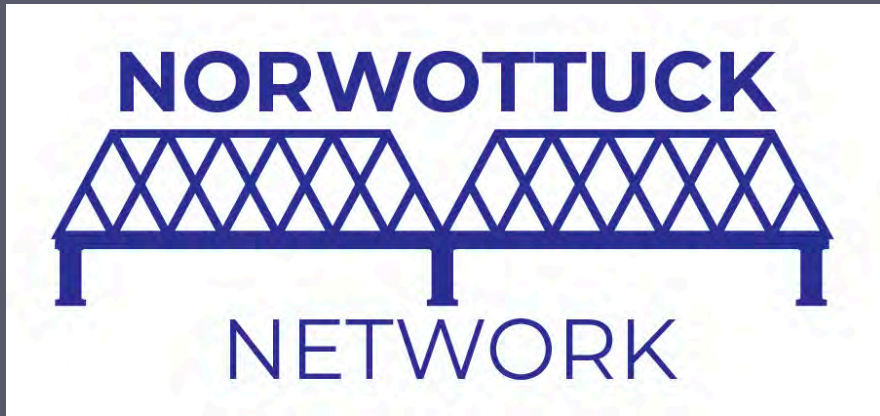
# NORWOTTUCK NETWORK



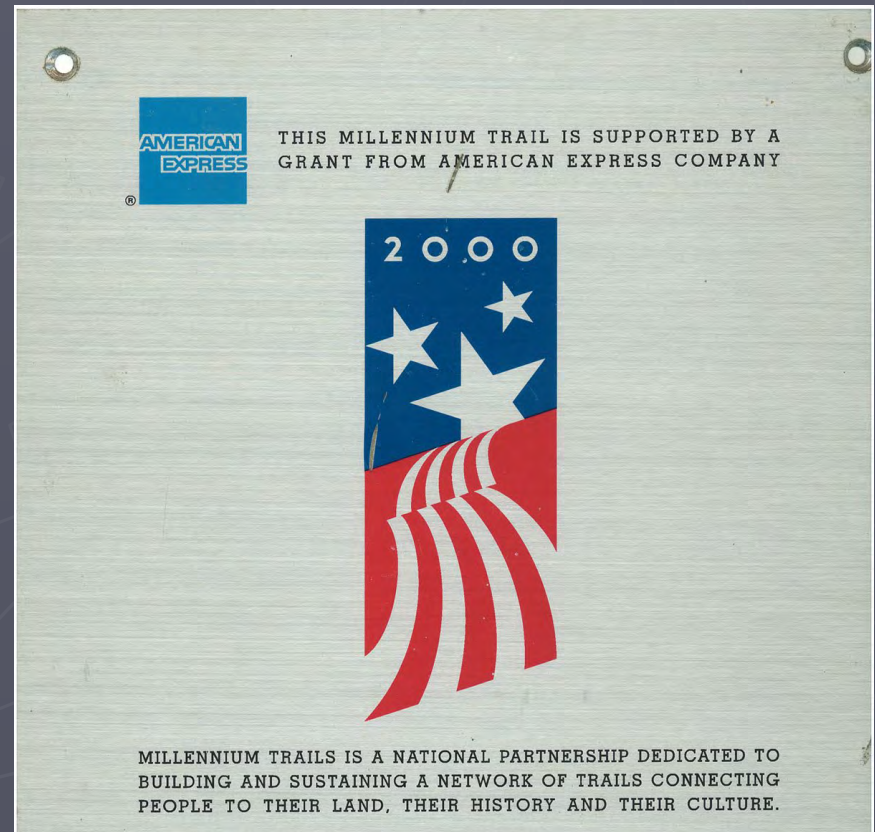
1930 map of the B&M Railroad's Mass Central Division



# Millennium Trail Plaque back in 2000



Along with our  
2019 logo.



# The Regroup and Recover Years

1999: The State Senate's Post Audit and Oversight Committee came to Wachusett Greenways West Boylston section of the MCRT.

They brought staffers from the Office on Disabilities to tour a stone-dust section.

Back then, Massachusetts was the only state in 50 to require paving on a rail trail.





# The Regroup and Recover Years

1999: That directive touched off 'to-dos' in several suburban places that caused the trail projects to be voted-down.

To be sure, there were always a shotgun blast of reasons why a place couldn't or shouldn't have a trail, but paving a pathway in the country wasn't seen with favor.





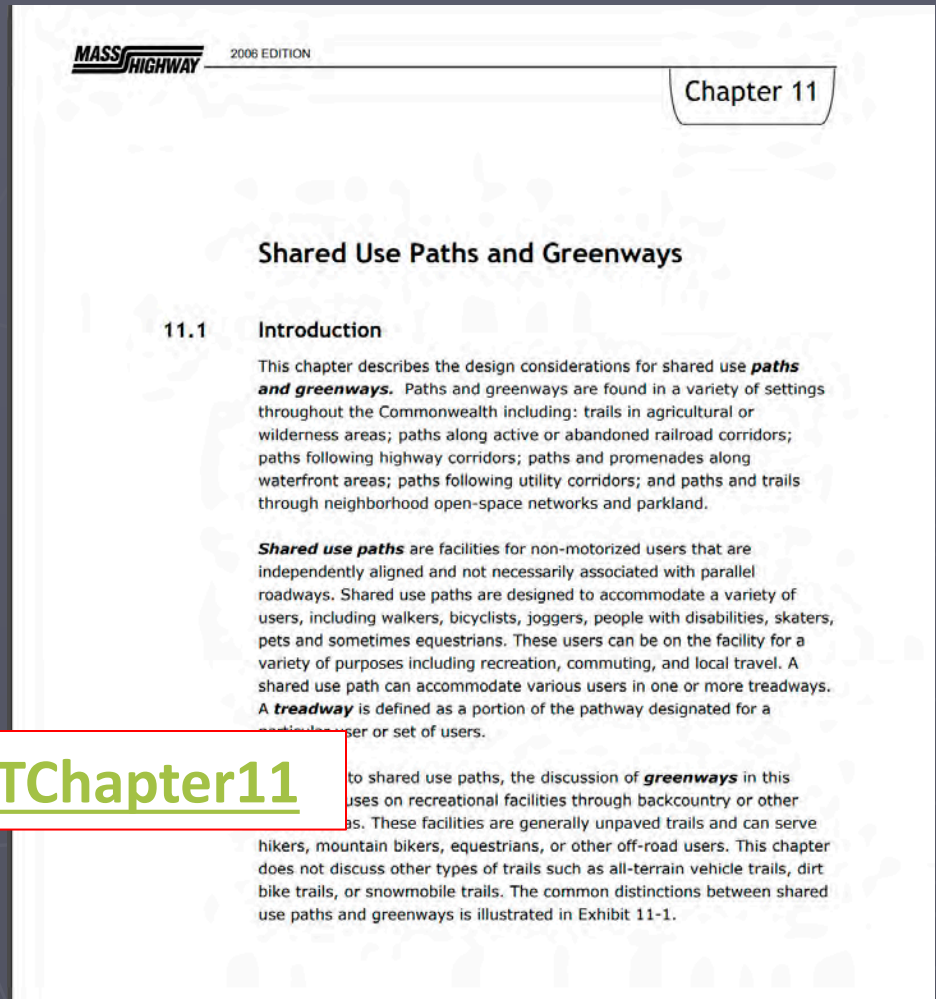
# The Regroup and Recover Years

1999: This tour was the 1<sup>st</sup> step in getting the unusual rule relaxed.

It took several years but when the new design guidebook was written, it now allows for a soft-surface trail.

Check it out.

<https://tinyurl.com/MassDOTChapter11>

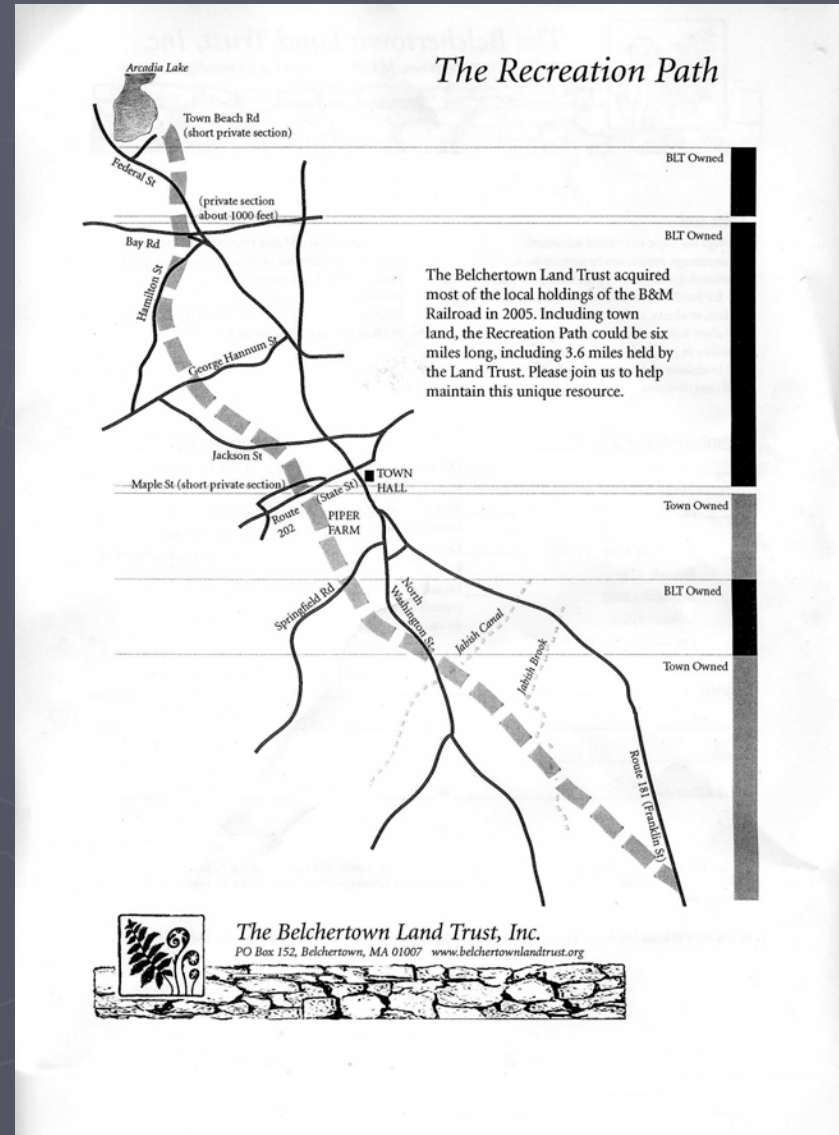


# The Regroup and Recover Years

**2000:** The Belchertown Land Trust—a linear-thinking land trust—was formed and they purchased their first section of the MCRT, A 2.5 mile section for \$100,000.

They continued on for 15+ years. Quietly buying sections of the dead RR, where they could, when they could.

<https://tinyurl.com/Old-BLT-Map>

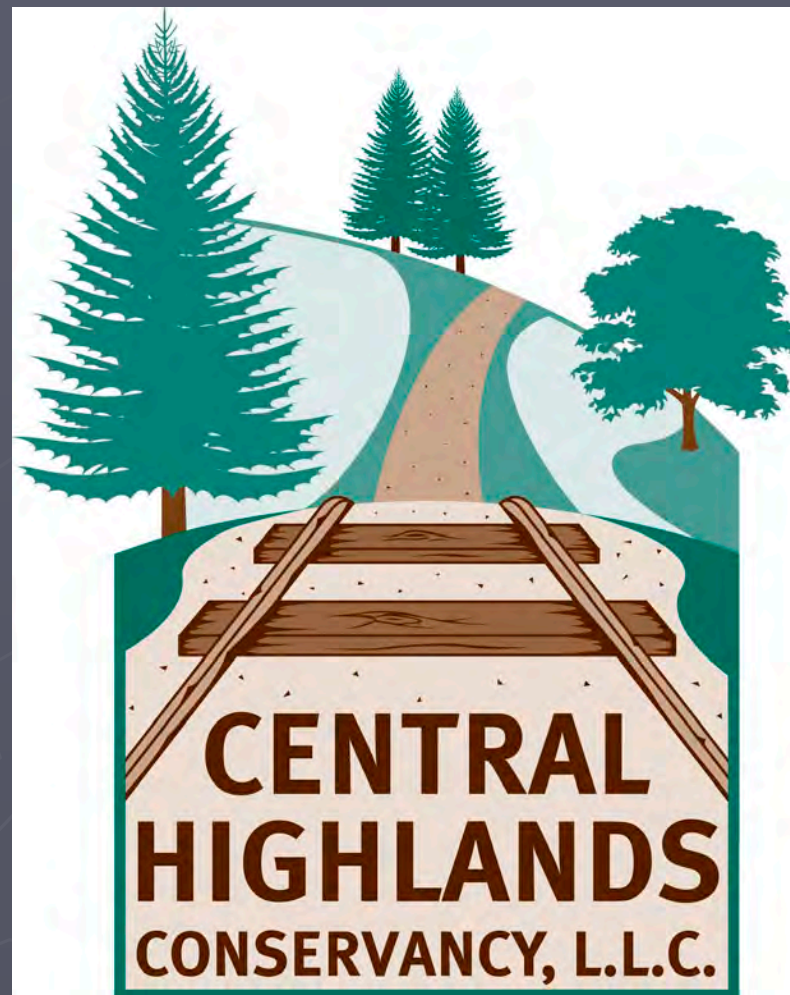


# The Regroup and Recover Years

**2005:** 3.2 miles of the corridor in Hardwick was purchased by the Central Highlands Conservancy who held it for 2 years to give the East Quabbin Land Trust time to go into a capital campaign to buy out CHC.

**For costs + expenses. No mark up**

**2007:** East Quabbin Land Trust buys out CHC and begins to improve the bridges and buildout the trail.





# The Regroup and Recover Years

This section of the MCRT includes 3 rare bridges. One was the last of its type still standing in New England.

All would have been scrapped-out had this creative deal not taken place.



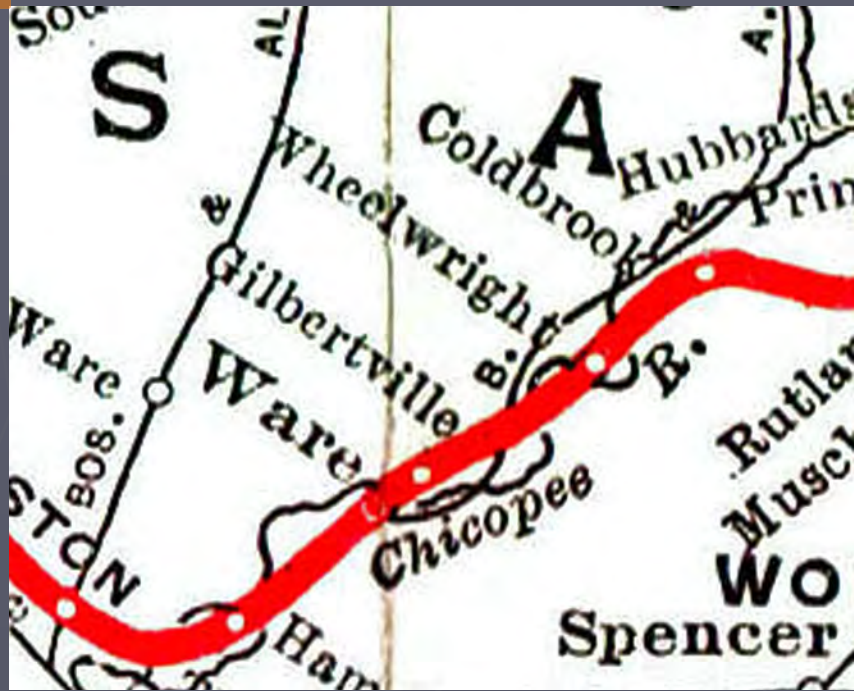
# After the renovation



# Annual New Year's Day hike









# The Regroup and Recover Years

**2006:** Shortly after the discovery of a theft of a short section of the former railroad corridor in Berlin; the MBTA offered up a lease to DCR—to lease the 24 mile long, Wayside section of the MCRT.

## Track and about 6 feet of fill height removed



# More behind the scenes items

2009: The state creates improved Rec-Use Statutes that makes it easier to:

- Partner with electric utilities. In fact, National Grid officials were at the bill-signing ceremony.

## Chapter 21/Section 17C Mass General Laws

Any person having an interest in land including the structures, buildings, and equipment attached to the land, **including without limitation, railroad and utility corridors, easements and rights of way,** wetlands, rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, and other bodies of water, who lawfully permits the public to use such land for recreational, conservation, scientific, educational, environmental, ecological, research, religious, or charitable purposes without imposing a charge or fee therefor, or who leases such land for said purposes to the commonwealth or any political subdivision thereof or to any nonprofit corporation, trust or association, shall not be liable for personal injuries or property damage sustained by such members of the public, including without limitation a minor, while on said land in the absence of wilful, wanton, or reckless conduct by such person. Such permission shall not confer upon any member of the public using said land, including without limitation a minor, the status of an invitee or licensee to whom any duty would be owed by said person.

(b) The liability of any person who imposes a charge or fee for the use of his land by the public for the

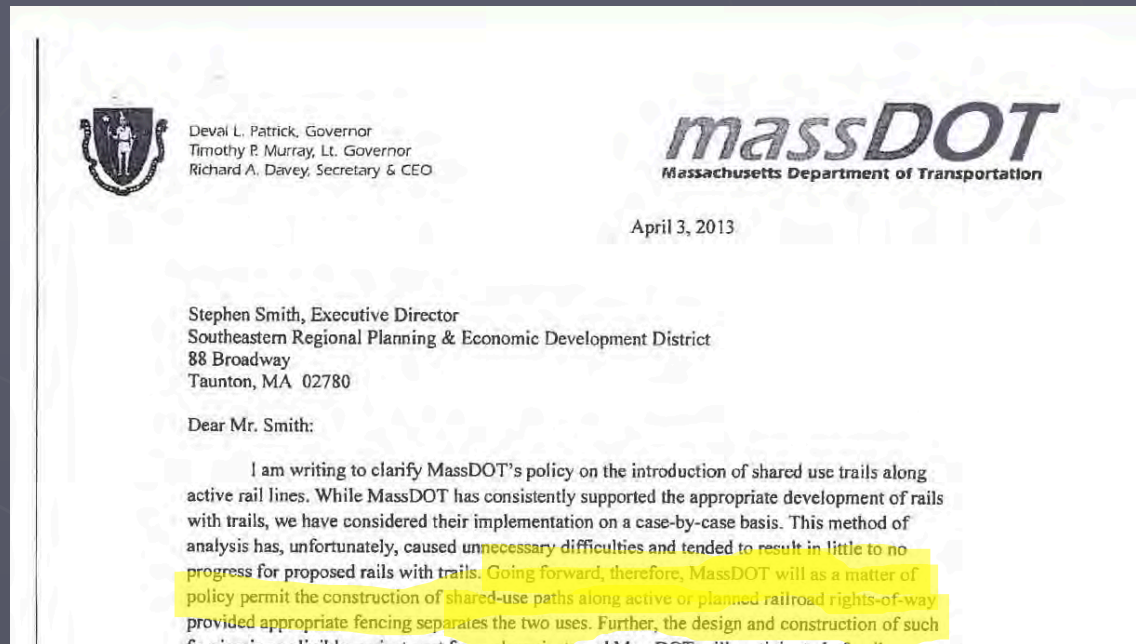
<https://www.norevisionisthistory.org/rec-use-statutes>



# More behind the scenes items

2009-2013: The state creates improved Rec-Use Statutes that makes it easier to:

- ▶ Partner with railroads to build rail with trail projects.
- ▶ 2013: The Secretary of MassDOT also made it easier to develop more rail-w-trail projects.



<https://www.norevisionisthistory.org/rail-w-trail>

# The Regroup and Recover Years

2017: Norwottuck Network (NN) launched a free, monthly E-newsletter about news along the MCRT, that quickly ramped up to over 10,000 readers in 8 states.



## Rail Trail e-Newsletter November 2022 #72

Hello all,

In this issue we have a few notable stories. The Mass DCR's Watershed Protection team recently held a presentation about **Public Access** in the Wachusett Reservoir area. They are looking for public comment. We have a link below that will get you to the place to leave comments. The most critical thing here is to get public access to the top of the dam in Clinton. That way a high-profile gap in the MCRT can be easily filled--without having to build a 600' bridge quickly.

Also, our survey for the report about the MCRT is nearing 2,000 responses. If you haven't submitted yet, please do so. We'll be keeping it live for a couple of more weeks anyway. Link here <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MCRTSurvey>

Enjoy the good news below. Oh, and by the way, the Eversource construction project has begun in Sudbury. Finally.

best,

Craig Della Penna, Exec. Director  
Norwottuck Network  
62 Chestnut St. Northampton, MA 01062  
413 575 2277 [CraigDP413@gmail.com](mailto:CraigDP413@gmail.com)

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*In the **GREEN** area, we have news about the Mass Central Rail Trail and/or its connecting paths*

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**\*\*\*\*Mass DCR is updating their Public Access Plan for the Wachusett Reservoir--and the iconic dam near where the MCRT passes over the Nashua River in Clinton\*\*\*\***  
**COMMENT DEADLINE is 11-25-22!**  
**Please weigh-in quickly!**



**CLICK HERE** to read the one-pager where you can see a link to DCR's presentation from late October. (still not up as of 10-30 though.)

# The Regroup and Recover Years

**2019:** And a little more than a year in, Constant Contact names it in the top 10% of all their e-Newsletters world-wide.

People love this e-Newsletter and it keeps the pro-trail advocates inspired.

Our free, monthly, E-newsletter goes out to over 10,000 people and the host, Constant Contact, told us that it is in the top 10% world-wide of all their E-newsletters in terms of engagement with readers.



Constant Contact

#### Norwottuck Network Earns 2018 Constant Contact All Star Award

*Recognized Among Top 10 Percent of Customers Driving Powerful Email Marketing Results*

**NORTHAMPTON, MA — March 16, 2019** — [Norwottuck Network, publisher of a monthly E-Newsletter about ongoing development of rail trails throughout the northeast has been named a 2018 All Star Award winner by [Constant Contact](#) a leader in small business marketing solutions. The annual award recognizes the most successful 10 percent of Constant Contact's customer base, based on their significant achievements using email marketing to engage their customer base and drive results for their organization during the prior year.

"We're happy to be recognized by Constant Contact for achieving strong marketing results and engaging with our customers. Constant Contact's tools have helped us better manage customer/ constituent relationships, engagement." We are helping build out not only the longest rail trail in the northeast but the most difficult project in this realm in the northeast as well. We partnered with Constant Contact to better develop relationships with not only our key partner advocates but key people in state agencies as well. By using the special tools available from Constant Contact, we are able to get the word-out, get news out, that 90% of our interested parties wouldn't easily be able to access.

Criteria used to select All Stars included the following.

- Level of engagement with email campaigns
- Open, bounce, and click-through rates
- Use of social sharing features
- Use of mailing list sign-up tools
- Use of reporting tools

#### About Norwottuck Network Inc. Mission Statement

To identify, promote and assist in the development of public trails, bicycle routes, walks, greenways and rights of way for low environmental impact transportation recreation, commuting and other travel;

To educate the general public regarding the benefits of public open space and low environmental impact travel through publications, public presentations, exhibits and any and all other appropriate means;

To identify, promote, and assist in the development of public facilities associated with trails, routes, walks and greenways such as historical recreational or cultural destinations, and sanitary and parking facilities and;

To encourage the use of sustainable practices and environmentally benign materials in the construction, renovation and operation of such facilities

#### About Constant Contact

Constant Contact, an Endurance International Group company and a leader in online marketing for more than 20 years, offers an easy-to-use platform that helps small businesses create professional campaigns that can help increase customers and revenue. From advanced automation features to industry-leading integrations, to personalized coaching, Constant Contact is the trusted marketing partner of hundreds of thousands of growth-minded small businesses around the world. For more information, visit: [www.constantcontact.com](http://www.constantcontact.com).

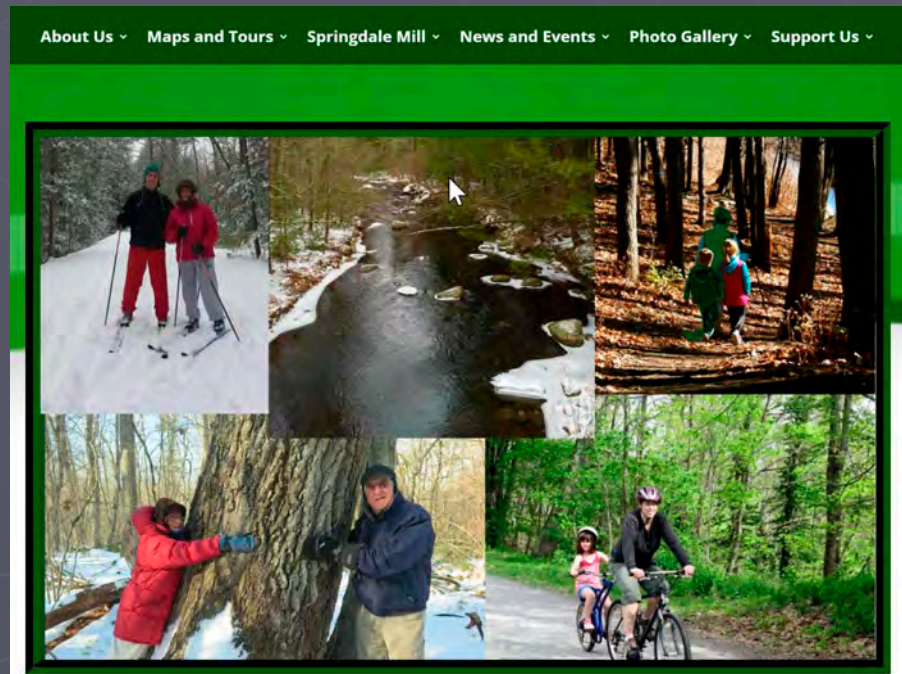
#### Media Contact:

Craig Della Penna, Executive Director, Norwottuck Network, Inc.  
62 Chestnut St. Florence, MA 01062 413-5752277 [CraigDP413@gmail.com](mailto:CraigDP413@gmail.com)



# The Tipping Point Years

**2017:** Wachusett Greenway opens their 20<sup>th</sup> mile of their 30-mile section of the MCRT.



# The Tipping Point Years



**2017:** The Belchertown Land Trust donates 5 miles of the MCRT to the town, making the town-owned sections, 7.5 miles of the 9.5 miles overall.

# The Tipping Point Years

**2017:** Friends of the Belchertown Greenway is founded.

**2018:** The town's Conservation Commission begins to submit grant requests to the MassTrails Team to begin to do trail improvements.



<https://www.belchertowngreenway.org/>



# The Creation of the MassTrails Team inside the Exec. Branch

**2017-18:** "In my 25+ years of advocacy for rails to trails development, all over the Northeast, I've never seen such an action-oriented turnaround at a state level, to commit to getting this infrastructure project done."

"What is getting built-out will definitely be the long-term legacy of the Baker-Polito Administration."



# The Tipping Point Years

**2019:** Ribbon-cutting on the Weston and Wayland segments of the MCRT.





# The Tipping Point Years

**2020:** Town of Clinton and the Clinton Greenway Conservation Trust, partner together to buy the 1,000' tunnel and the remaining 1.5 miles of the corridor there.

<https://tinyurl.com/Clinton-Project>





# The Tipping Point Years

**2020-2021:** MassDOT commissions and completes a feasibility study of the middle section of the MCRT to identify the missing pieces and to come up with work-arounds until the expensive gaps can be filled-in.



<https://tinyurl.com/MassDOTMCRTStudy>

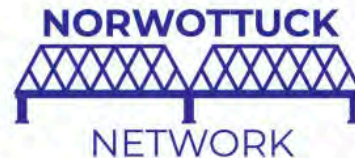
# The Breakthrough?

2022: Norwottuck Network puts out an RFP to find a consultant to write a report that would answer the basic question.

The “Elephant in the Room” question.

*Just what would a completed MCRT mean to the Commonwealth and the communities along the way?*

[www.nnnetwork.net/rfp](http://www.nnnetwork.net/rfp)



MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL —BOSTON TO NORTHAMPTON—104 MILES



## Request for Proposals

### THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COMPLETING THE MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL

The NORWOTTUCK NETWORK, Inc. (NN) requests proposals to:

- 1.) design and develop an assessment of volume of use, profile of users, and economic impact of the currently open 50± miles of MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL (MCRT) and the currently open and usable intersecting shared-use paths.
- 2.) the projected economic and health impacts to the state and the communities along the route of a completed 100± mile trail.

**Proposals are due on Wednesday, June 22, 2022 at 5:00 PM to [CraigDP413@Gmail.com](mailto:CraigDP413@Gmail.com)**  
**For questions, contact Craig Della Penna at the above email address.**

#### About the Norwottuck Network

NN is a 501(c)3 organization set up to help buildout the MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL. A full history can be found on our website. <https://www.nnnetwork.net/about-us> The proponent/firm will be responsible to the Norwottuck Board and/or their representative.

#### Background

Within 150 miles of the Norwottuck Network base in Northampton, Massachusetts lies the densest network of former steam railroad corridors in the northeast United States. The longest, most complex of these corridors is the MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL (MCRT), which runs 104 miles from North Station in Boston to Union Station in Northampton.

In 2021, the MA Department of Transportation (MassDOT) acknowledged the concept of a statewide rail trail by completing a feasibility study of the 68.5 mile central MA section detailing existing gaps and the work-arounds required to enabling the corridor's successful completion. Over time, these provisional solutions will be authentically restored by replacing missing bridges and by restoring other historic details. A link to the three-volume study may be found here: <https://www.tinyurl.com/massdotstudy>

According to the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT), tourism is an integral part of the state's economy.

- Tourism generates **\$1.5 billion** in state and local taxes, **\$22.9 billion** in travel-related expenditures, and **149,400** in-state jobs.
- Massachusetts ranks **6<sup>th</sup> nationally** as a destination for international visitors. Many of them are accustomed to bicycle tourism at home, and our delightful MCRT will invite our visitors to explore Massachusetts's stunning natural beauty and rich history and lore. But we want to know more.

Examples of recent reports providing guidance on how to develop the Economic Impact Report effectively may be found here:

Great Allegheny Passage Economic Impact Report. 2021. [LINK HERE](#)  
MassTrails, Impacts of Shared Use Paths. 2021. [LINK HERE](#)  
The Economic Impact of the Erie Canalway Trail. 2014. [LINK HERE](#)  
Walkway Over the Hudson, Poughkeepsie, NY. 2018. [LINK HERE](#)  
Schell Bridge Northfield, MA. 2011. [LINK HERE](#)  
Complete George, NYC. 2015. [LINK HERE](#)

Page 1 of 4

# The Breakthrough?

**2022:** Kittelson & Associates' Boston office and their sub, Cambridge Econometrics were chosen and their work is underway.



<https://www.masscentralrailtrail.org/kittelsonproposal>



# Current Scoresheet

**GOAL:**

104 MILES RE-OPENED

**CURRENT  
MASS CENTRAL  
RAIL TRAIL DATA**

104

Number of  
miles from  
Boston to  
Northampton

53.5±

Number of miles  
currently open

90.5±

Number of miles  
owned by a  
protecting entity

13.5±

Number of miles  
owned by a non  
protecting entity

# Where I believe we will be in two years

**75 miles**

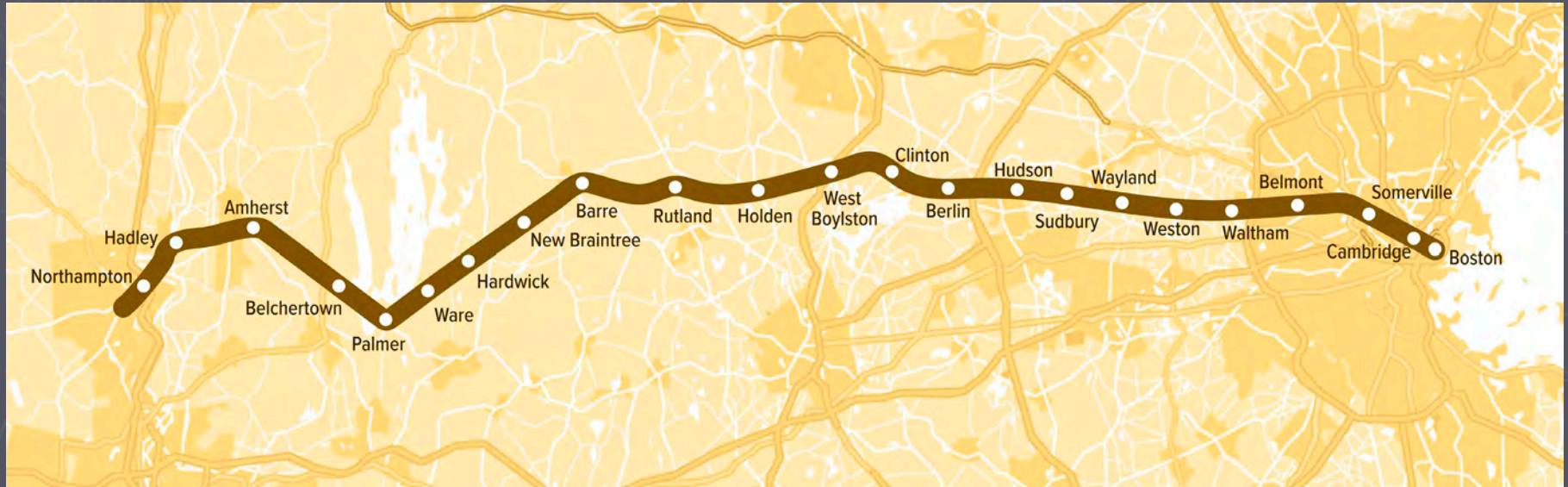
**open**

**95 miles**

protected status

**9 miles**

non-protected status



# Back in 2014



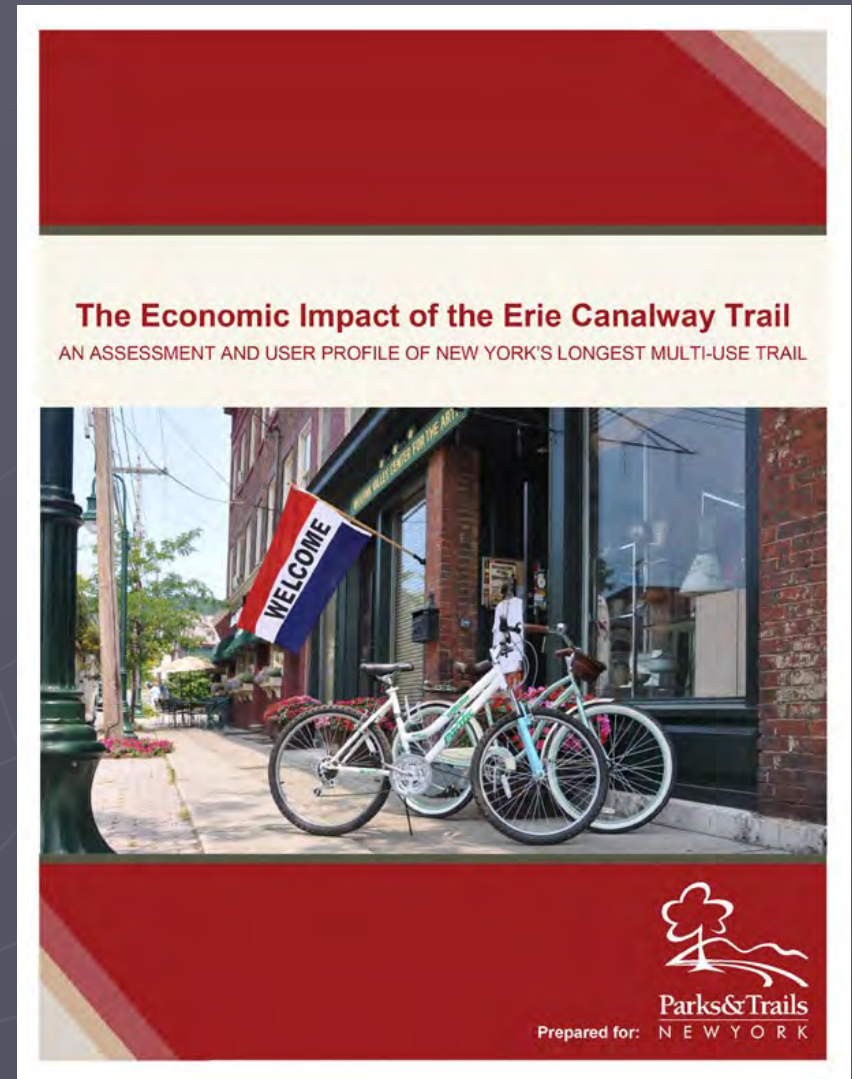


# Economic Impact of the Erie Canalway Trail



# Economic Impact of the Erie Canalway Trail

- ▶ This report which showed the huge numbers, so stunned the Governor of NY
- ▶ **That he ordered NYDOT to build—400 miles in 4 years.**
- ▶ They succeeded.





Empire State Trail

Map

Activities

Trail Closures



# Empire State Trail

**Now Complete!**

The **750-mile** Empire State Trail welcomes bicyclists and hikers to explore New York State's extraordinary experiences, people, and places.

[VIEW MAP](#)



# The Breakthrough?

**2022:** Kittelson & Associates' Boston office and their sub, Cambridge Econometrics were chosen and their work is underway.

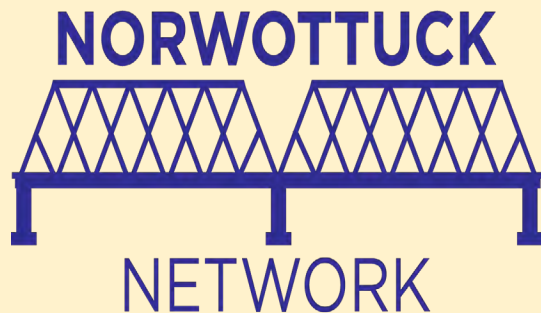


<https://www.masscentralrailtrail.org/kittelsonproposal>

# Mass Central Rail Trail Economic Study

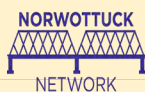
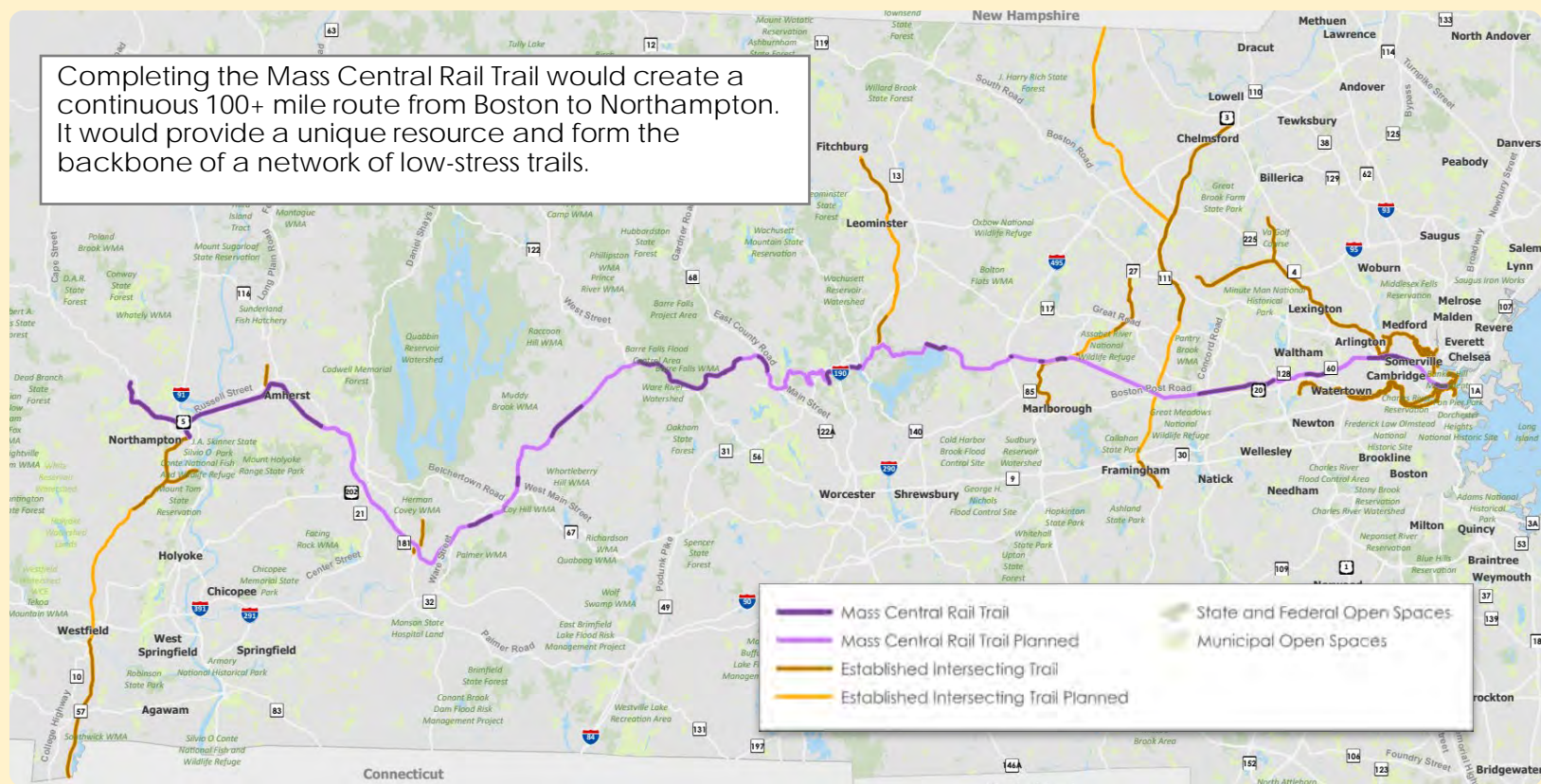
November 2022

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## Connecting Residents

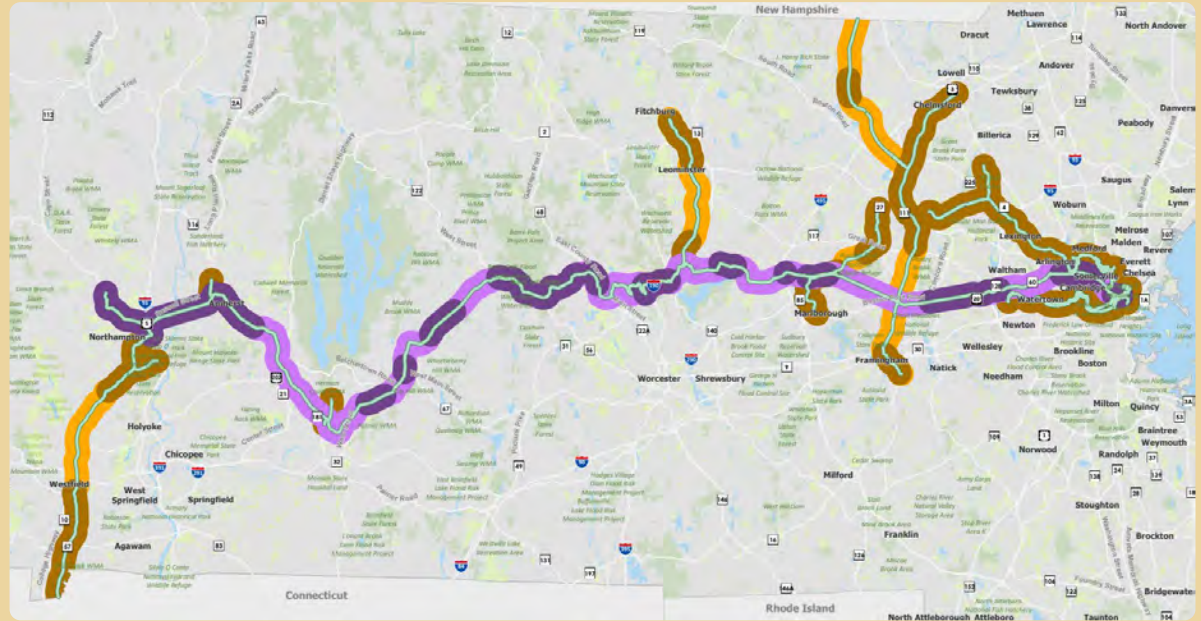
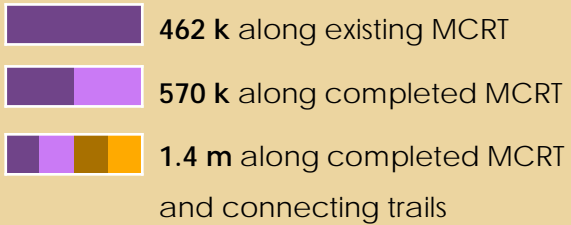
Completing the Mass Central Rail Trail would create a continuous 100+ mile route from Boston to Northampton. It would provide a unique resource and form the backbone of a network of low-stress trails.





Completion of MCRT and connecting trails would create a connected network of trails that would be less than 1 mile from **24%** of Massachusetts residents

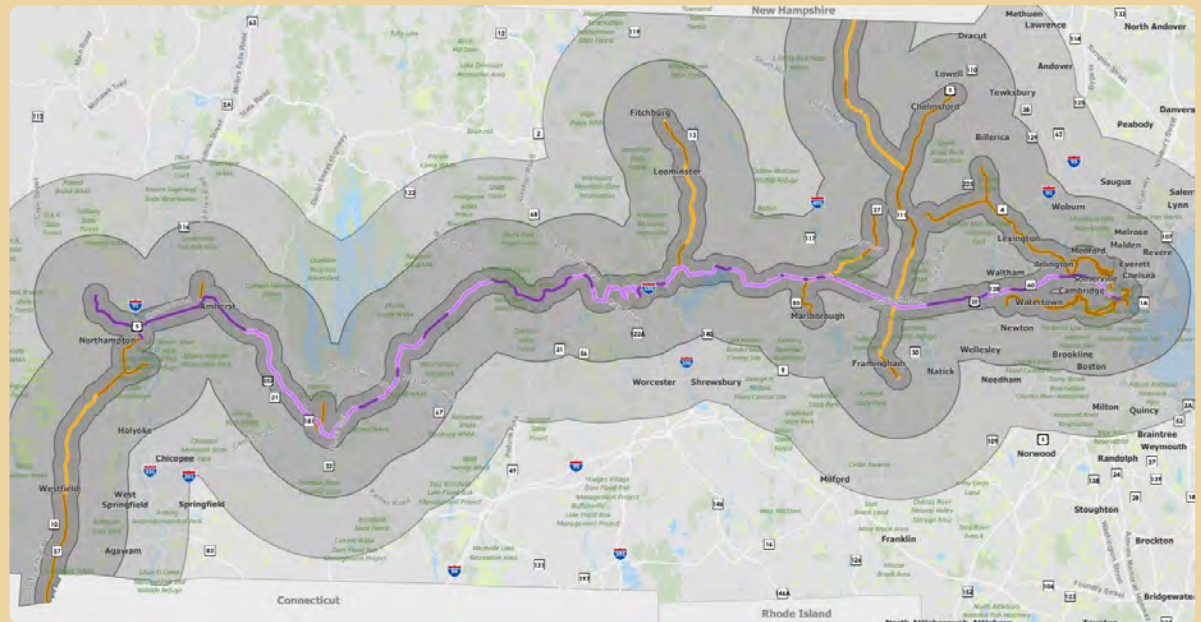
### Residents within 1 Mile of Trail



Completion of MCRT and connecting trails would result in the majority of Massachusetts residents living within 10 miles of a 278-mile network of trails.

## Residents near Trail Network

Within 1 Mile	1.4 m (24%)
Within 5 Miles	2.9 m (43%)
Within 10 Miles	4.2 m (61%)





## User Survey

Advertised use survey using flyers, hand-outs, newsletters, and social media posts.

Received over 2,000 responses, including users from all sections of the trail.

### Questions focused on:

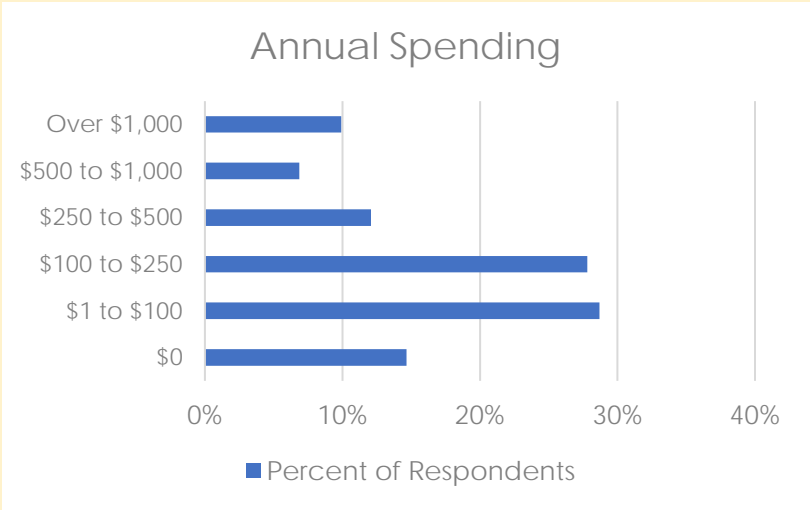
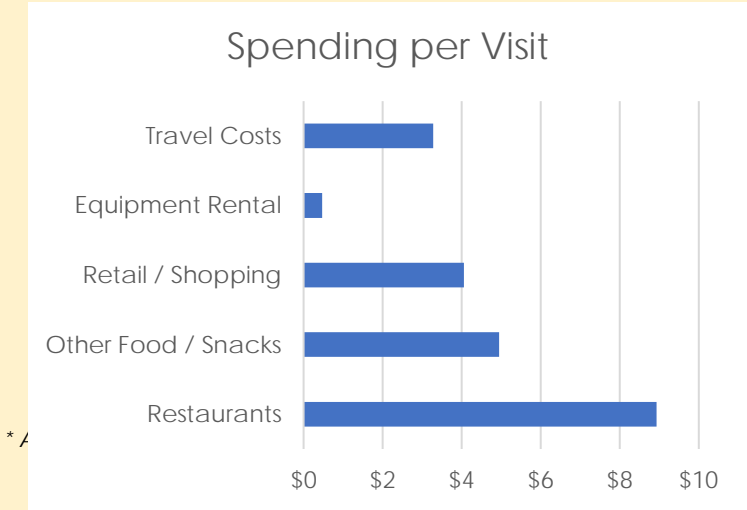
- How people currently use the trail
- Spending associated with trips on the trail
- Future use if the trail was completed





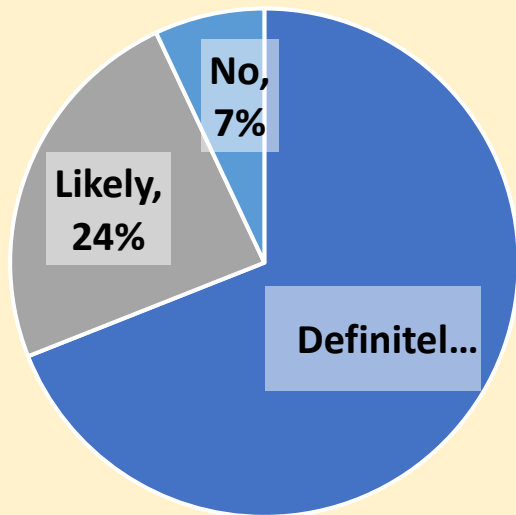
On days you use the trail, how much money do you typically spend on the following categories...

During the past year, how much money did you spend on equipment (e.g., new walking shoes, bike equipment) related to your use of the MCRT?

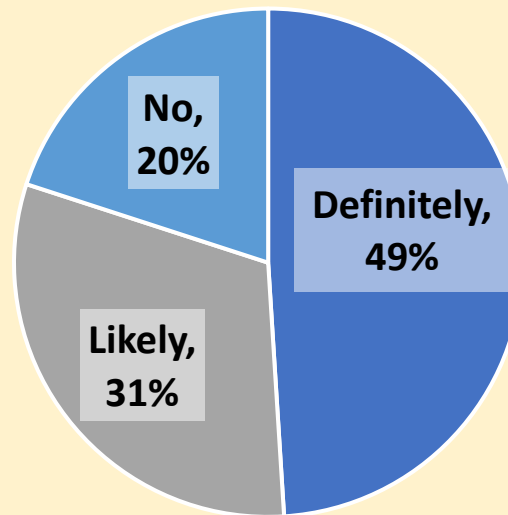




If the Mass Central Rail Trail was completed to provide a continuous path between Boston and Northampton, **would you visit the trail more frequently or travel longer distances?**



If the Mass Central Rail Trail was completed to provide a continuous path between Boston and Northampton, **would you consider a multi-day trip on the trail with an overnight stay?**



## Estimated Use

Estimate that completing the MCRT would increase the number of yearly visits to the MCRT by between **190%** to **260%**.

Completing the MCRT means more use by residents who live near a new section.

*"The trail near my house is very short and awaiting a piece to connect it up to more. Otherwise I would be using the path a LOT more. I would walk and bike almost everywhere I need to go instead of having to drive. I think that's very important, and more fun."*

A longer connected trail is a more attractive resource for residents and visitors to the area.

*"Having the trail broken up makes my use limited to short trips, primarily walking. If the trail was contiguous then I would use it more often, particularly for biking."*



# 2-page infographic about MCRT



# Innovative bridge developments on Linear Parks

Bloomberg CityLab

CITYLAB

## The Bright Future of the Pedestrian Bridge

Top engineer Ted Zoli says the era of shared-use structures has arrived.

Eric Jaffe

January 30, 2015, 11:35 AM EST



The Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge is a 3,000-foot structure for walkers and cyclists connecting Nebraska and Iowa. *Chris Murphy / Flickr*

SHARE THIS ARTICLE

A decade ago, it was unusual to design a bridge with space for pedestrians

<https://tinyurl.com/Ped-Bridges>

A few months ago, Governor Baker announced that this bridge (left) would be built between Somerville and Everett--two Gateway Cities.





Under construction right now  
over Rt 2 in Concord Mass.



# The End

