

A community newsletter from the Natick Cochituate Rail Trail Advisory Committee on the proposed Cochituate Rail Trail. Visit our website at natickma.gov/crt

What is the Cochituate Rail Trail?

The CRT is a proposed 4-mile path and linear park connecting Natick Center with Saxonville in Framingham, with a spur to the Natick Mall, along the Saxonville Branch that dates to the mid-1800s. This line carried freight until 2006, and was last used for passenger rail service in the 1930s.

The CRT has made great progress, with many exciting developments on tap in the coming year.

The CRT will connect Natick and Framingham with a 4 mile trail for walkers, bikers, commuters and strollers. The CRT will serve thousands of residents and hundreds of businesses, and will serve for commuting, shopping, recreation and enjoyment of the outdoors. Large and small employers, parks, the Amvets, transportation connections, retailers, neighborhoods, a hotel and the Natick Soldier Systems Center all link to the CRT. ■■■

Designing the CRT

The CRT design is underway. A “25% design” has been submitted to MassDOT, and a public hearing for comments and questions will be scheduled this coming winter. Final design funding was approved by Town Meeting, and a design contract with the engineering firm BETA Group has been approved; the design is scheduled to be complete in early 2017. It includes new bridges, scenic lookouts, safe grade crossings and a 12-foot wide paved path. The design is online at natickma.gov/crt. ■■■

In this issue...

- What is the Cochituate Rail Trail?
- Designing the CRT
- Construction funding approved
- Buying the right-of-way
- Framingham section is open
- Natick Town Meeting support
- CRT on Facebook
- Friends of Natick Trails
- “No Trespassing,” please
- Contacting the Advisory Committee

Construction funding approved

In July 2015, the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization approved CRT construction to start during Federal FY 2018, which begins in October 2017, with 80% federal and 20% state funding.

The project should take about 2 years, and is budgeted for \$5.9 million. The CRT was a good project candidate for funding because it will help with congestion, air quality, transportation connections, health, and access to work, commerce and residential development. ■■■

The CRT design includes new bridges to safely cross two of the busiest roads in the region:



New Route 9 bridge with higher clearance



Route 30 bridge joining Framingham and Natick

In addition, a ramp will bring the CRT up to street level in Natick Center to connect with the Cultural District, MBTA and RTA station and all that downtown Natick has to offer. See more illustrations on the following page. ■■■

Buying the right-of-way

CSX Transportation owns the 21 acres needed for the CRT, and will sell it to the Town based on its appraisal method. Natick, with support from our legislators, the Town of Framingham, and many businesses along the CRT, is asking the Baker Administration to help fund the acquisition using \$3 million specified in the 2014 Transportation Bond Bill. This money, along with local funds for land acquisition and private fundraising, is key to buying the property and completing the project. ■■■

Framingham section opening

Framingham is our partner with the CRT. Their 1.5-mile section is now open from Route 30 at the town line to School Street in Saxonville. Framingham acquired the land for its trail section from the Commonwealth, and built the CRT in part as a federally funded water/sewer project to help offset project costs. Enjoy the CRT today! ■■■

No trespassing

The CSX right of way in Natick is still private property; the Town does not have authority to permit access by individuals on the property. CSX pays property taxes on the land they own in Natick.

The Town has installed barriers to prevent motorized vehicles and trash disposal. If you observe dumping or other illegal activity on the ROW, please report it to the Natick Police. ■■■

Natick Town Meeting support

Natick Town Meeting and other Town committees, including the Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Finance Committee and Planning Board have consistently supported the CRT project.

Between 2006 and 2014, Town Meeting approved the use of \$600,000 in mitigation funds from General Growth (Natick Mall), and \$200,000 from the state related to the Natick Modera housing development at the former Paperboard site alongside the CRT. These funds have been, or will be used for many work products, including:

- Several community meetings
- An abutter survey
- A conceptual design study
- An alternative transit/recreational use study

- Wetlands research
- Topographic survey
- Multiple appraisals
- Title research
- Gates and barriers
- 25% design
- Final design

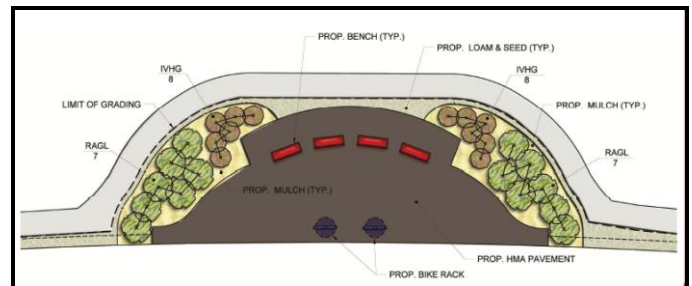
Visit natickma.gov/crt for studies and reports. ■■■

Like the CRT on Facebook

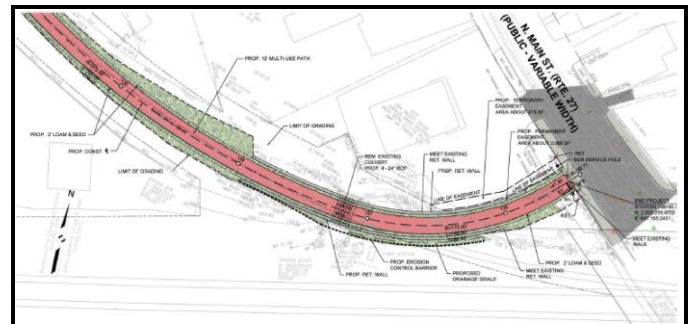
Visit [Facebook.com/crtrail](https://www.facebook.com/crtrail) to stay up to date. ■■■

Friends of Natick Trails

A new non-profit organization will help acquire the land for the CRT, help maintain and enhance the trail, and support other trail projects. You are very welcome to participate! Send an email to FriendsOfNatickTrails@gmail.com. ■■■



Typical scenic overlook at Lake Cochituate



North Main Street/Natick Center connection

Contact the CRT Advisory Committee

The CRT Advisory Committee, appointed by the Selectmen, holds public meetings about once a month or as work requires. Visit natickma.gov/crt for more information, email crt@natickma.org, or call the Selectmen's office at (508) 647-6410.

Please contact the CRT committee or attend a meeting with any questions. Your participation is welcome! ■■■