

TOWN OF SUDBURY
RAIL TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Approved by the Select Board: March 21, 2023

Updated: August 12, 2025

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Sudbury Rail Trails Advisory Committee is to advise the Select Board and staff on matters regarding the development, design, construction, enhancement and maintenance of rail trails in Sudbury, specifically the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and the Mass Central Rail Trail.

The Committee shall objectively and critically consider the interests of trail users, residents, abutters, businesses, sensitive environmental areas, historic resources, and input from Town staff and relevant Town boards, committees, and commissions to facilitate an enjoyable experience that increases the overall quality of life in town.

Responsibilities

- Provide a forum for feedback from abutters, businesses, residents, and other interested parties to respond to community desires to improve the quality of trail conditions and amenities
- Consider and support additional linkages and amenities to improve access to and usage of the rail trail system
- Consider and recommend supporting infrastructure (e.g., benches, bike racks, interpretive panels, scenic overlooks, parking facilities, etc.) to enhance the enjoyment, value, and universal access offered by rail trails
- Consider and recommend policies to the Select Board that will promote safety, accessibility, and enjoyment of the rail trails for all, as well as contribute to the economic development of the town and the well-being of the community
- Consider and support programming to enhance, invite, educate, and improve the rail trail experience in Sudbury (e.g., rider skill development, guided walking tours, etc.)
- Make recommendations to the Select Board on funding needs, sources, and scope
- Review data including rider counts, surveys, expert opinions, similar experience elsewhere, and other sources to support its decisions and recommendations when feasible

Background:

Sudbury is home to the intersection of two of the longest rail trails in the Commonwealth – a 4.6 mile stretch of the 25-mile Bruce Freeman Rail Trail running from Lowell to Framingham and a 4.3-mile stretch of the Mass Central Rail Trail, which is envisioned to run 100-miles+ from Boston to Northampton. Sudbury's trails intersect in the central section of town just north of

Route 20/Boston Post Road, adjacent to the Sudbury business district. Rail trails have been developed across the Commonwealth and the country to serve a variety of purposes, including promoting recreation and physical health; safe, alternative transportation options; access to the natural environment; and enhancement of a community's quality-of-life.

Ongoing considerations include environmental constraints, abutter concerns, business concerns, public safety, financing, and continuing maintenance requirements.

Membership:

The Rail Trails Advisory Committee shall be appointed by the Select Board and other Town boards/commissions, and consist of between five (5) and seven (7) members in staggered three-year terms. The Committee will elect a Chair to lead the meetings, and a Clerk to ensure all meetings are properly posted and minutes of each meeting are kept. Minutes of the Committee's work shall be prepared and promptly posted on the Town website and sent to the Select Board on a regular basis. The Select Board will vote to choose one of its members to act as liaison between the Committee and the Select Board.

The Committee membership should include representatives from the following, subject to approval by the Select Board or the respective Town board/commission:

1. One (1) member from the Park and Recreation Commission
2. One (1) member from the Conservation Commission
3. One (1) member from the Planning Board
4. One (1) member who is a Sudbury resident recommended by the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and the Rail Trails Advisory Committee
5. Up to three (3) non-committee, at-large resident members*

*In the event the committee representative positions are not filled, additional non-committee resident members may be appointed to provide up to seven (7) members in total.

There may also be up to 2 additional non-voting associate members added, as recommended by the RTAC and appointed by the Select Board.

Committee Member Qualifications:

Rail Trails Advisory Committee members should be Sudbury residents with a demonstrated interest in rail trails, community relations, public health and recreation, alternative transportation options, natural and historic resources, business development, and/or promotion of Sudbury's unique sense of place.

Staffing Assistance:

The Director of Planning and Community Development or his/her designee will support this Committee. Other staff may be consulted as needed, such as the Director of Public Works or his/her designee regarding operations and maintenance, or the Chief of Police or his/her designee regarding safety issues.

Compliance with State and Local Laws and Town Policies:

The members of the Rail Trails Advisory Committee are responsible for conducting their activities in a manner which follows all relevant state and local laws and regulations, including but not limited to the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law, and Conflict of Interest Law, as well as all Town policies which affect Committee membership. All appointments are subject to the following:

- The Code of Conduct for Select Board Appointed Committees
- The Town's Email Communication for Committee Members Policy

Use of the Town Website:

The Committee will keep minutes of all meetings and post minutes and other Committee materials on the Town's website. The Committee will post notice of meetings on the Town's website as well as at the Town Clerk's Office.