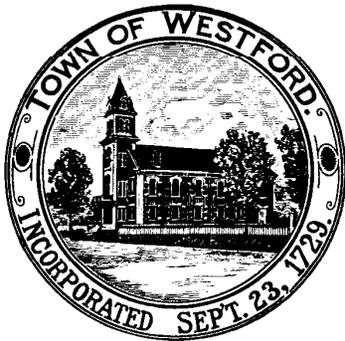


Bruce Freeman Rail Trail: Discussion of Parking



Multi-Boards Meeting
August 31, 2011

Angus Jennings AICP, Dir. Land Use Mgmt

August 31, 2011



Review of Presentation

- Goals for meeting
- Summary of issues
- Review of recent dynamics
- Summary of correspondence received
- Presentation of parking concepts (Town Engineer)
- Request for policy direction from Boards

August 31, 2011



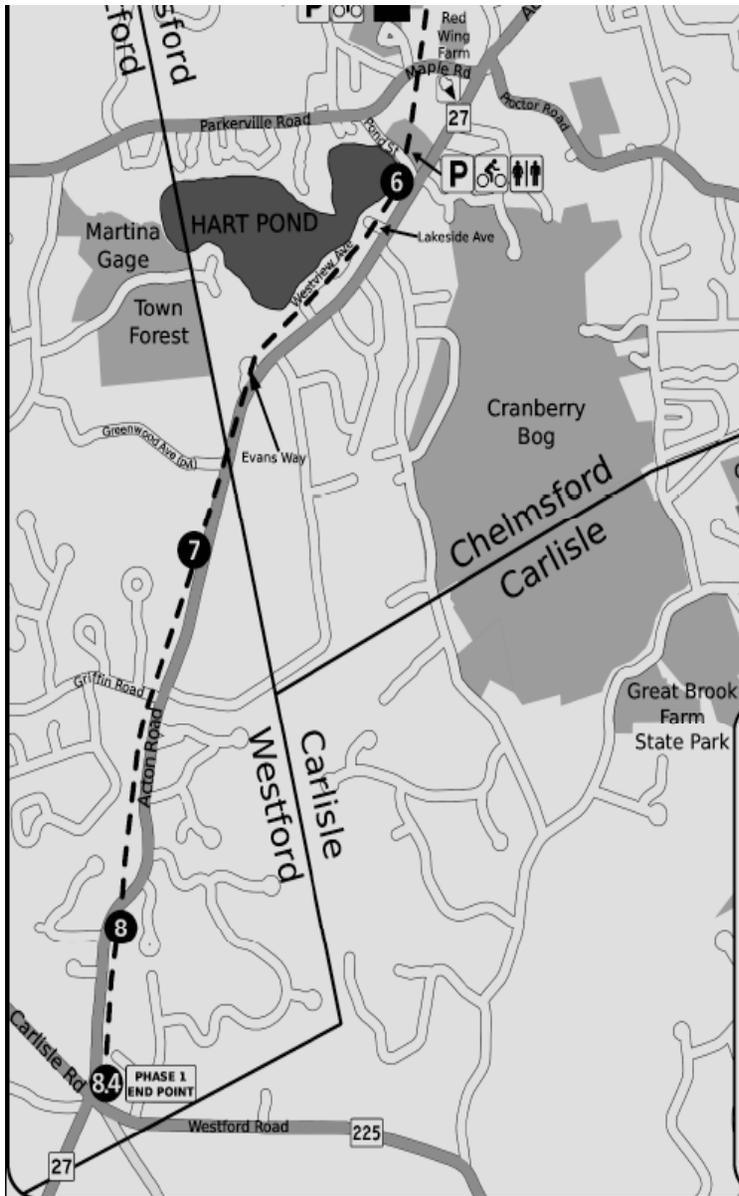
Goals for Tonight's Discussion

- Issue of parking has been raised in several public meetings in past year – and beyond – by supporters, opponents, and concerned citizens
- Tonight's meeting intended to:
 - Provide forum for multiple Boards to share information regarding issue of parking in Westford
 - Review available information regarding options that have been suggested
 - Provide direction to staff regarding policy objectives

August 31, 2011



Bruce Freeman Rail Trail / Westford Parking



Policy Challenge

- Significant public use of BFRT, projected to increase over time
- A need for parking in Westford was identified during BFRT planning process, but a Town-owned location was not found at that time
- No parking to serve BFRT exists in Westford; closest sanctioned parking to trail terminus is 2.4 miles north, at Hart Pond in Chelmsford
- Informal parking creates safety concern, and unmanaged impact to nearby homes

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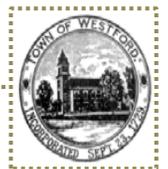


Bruce Freeman Rail Trail / Westford Parking



- Next phase of BFRT design work to include feasibility testing and conceptual design for up to two sites in Westford, not yet identified.
- Next phase of design work will soon begin. Important to set out process for selection of site(s) for analysis.
- Site(s) analysis would identify design features to balance parking with neighborhood concerns.
- If one or more sites found to be appropriate, set out process for site control, design, permitting (including zoning), and construction

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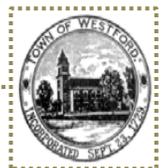


Next Phase of BFRT – Acton & Concord

- Engineering firm (GPI) selected for next phase of design; will begin in September
- Construction funding not anticipated until at least FY21 (Boston MPO FY21-25 draft Long-Range Transportation Plan)

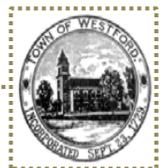
TABLE 8-3
MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND EXPANSION HIGHWAY PROJECTS FUNDED IN THE RECOMMENDED PLAN, WITH COSTS

	CURRENT COST (2011)	2012-2015	2016-2020	2021-2025	2026-2030	2031-2035	MPO FUNDING	NON-MPO FUNDING*
RECOMMENDED HIGHWAY PROJECTS								
Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (Concord to Westford)	\$18,700,000			\$29,940,000			\$29,940,000	



Recent Dynamics

- In October 2010, after two related public meetings, Planning Board unanimously supported staff efforts to further investigate parking options in or near Westford, with timeline for work not determined
- Westford Highway Department has posted “no parking” signs at Vose parcel; Police enforcing
- Chelmsford has voiced opposition to placing signs directing people to Hart Pond



Preparations for Tonight's Meeting

- Town staff have conducted preliminary reviews of all parcels that have been suggested – even in a cursory way – in order to provide Boards information to support this process
- For those few parcels with any potential viability, conceptual drawings have been prepared
- Town Counsel provided opinion re zoning
- Public mailings and email notifications sent
- All written correspondence received on this topic – both last fall and recently – has been provided to all Board members

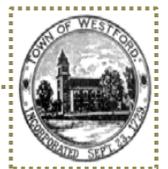
August 31, 2011



Extensive Public Correspondence Received

- Many letters oppose parking, citing range of concerns
- Some letters support add'l parking
- Some concerns may be able to be mitigated in parking design (i.e. screening, scale, location); other letters are opposed to any parking
- Suggestions received included better signage to Chelmsford parking; evaluation of parking on industrial/commercial sites; overall project planning

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Concerns Raised

- Grading of ravines to make a level lot
- Increased need for police patrols
- Lighting, and related cost of operations
- Need for traffic studies
- Increased congestion in busy area
- Overnight lighting would encourage loitering
- Would put homes at risk for vandalism
- Risk to children crossing road
- Clean up of litter
- Noise management
- BFRT is community feature, not destination
- Effect of overflow parking on neighborhood



Concerns Raised

- Deforestation / loss of screening from Rte 27
- Enforcement of restriction on use of lot to only BFRT users
- Restriction on vendors setting up on lot
- Lighting
- Effect on residential character / property values
- Aesthetic issues
- Increased potential for crime, vandalism
- Danger to kids from strangers
- Increased noise and litter
- Size of lot
- Town expense to maintain and monitor

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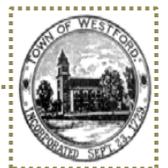
Site Evaluation, and Next Steps

- After staff consideration of alternatives, several options not recommended for further study
- Understanding consensus may not be achievable on whether parking is needed, any plans should address concerns raised to date
- Town Engineer to present concepts to date
- If policy direction given to advance this work, would require preliminary plans, definitive plans, permitting, and construction funding



Policy Direction Needed

- Do Boards direct staff to advance work to evaluate additional parking to support BFRT?
- Of parcels reviewed:
 - Should one or more on “short list” be removed?
 - Should one or more not on “short list” be added?
 - One site, or scattered sites?
 - Preliminary feedback re site selection, concepts?
- Is there policy direction to advance short- and/or medium-term approach?
- If so, guidance on design issues?



Town Engineer – Concepts

August 31, 2011

