

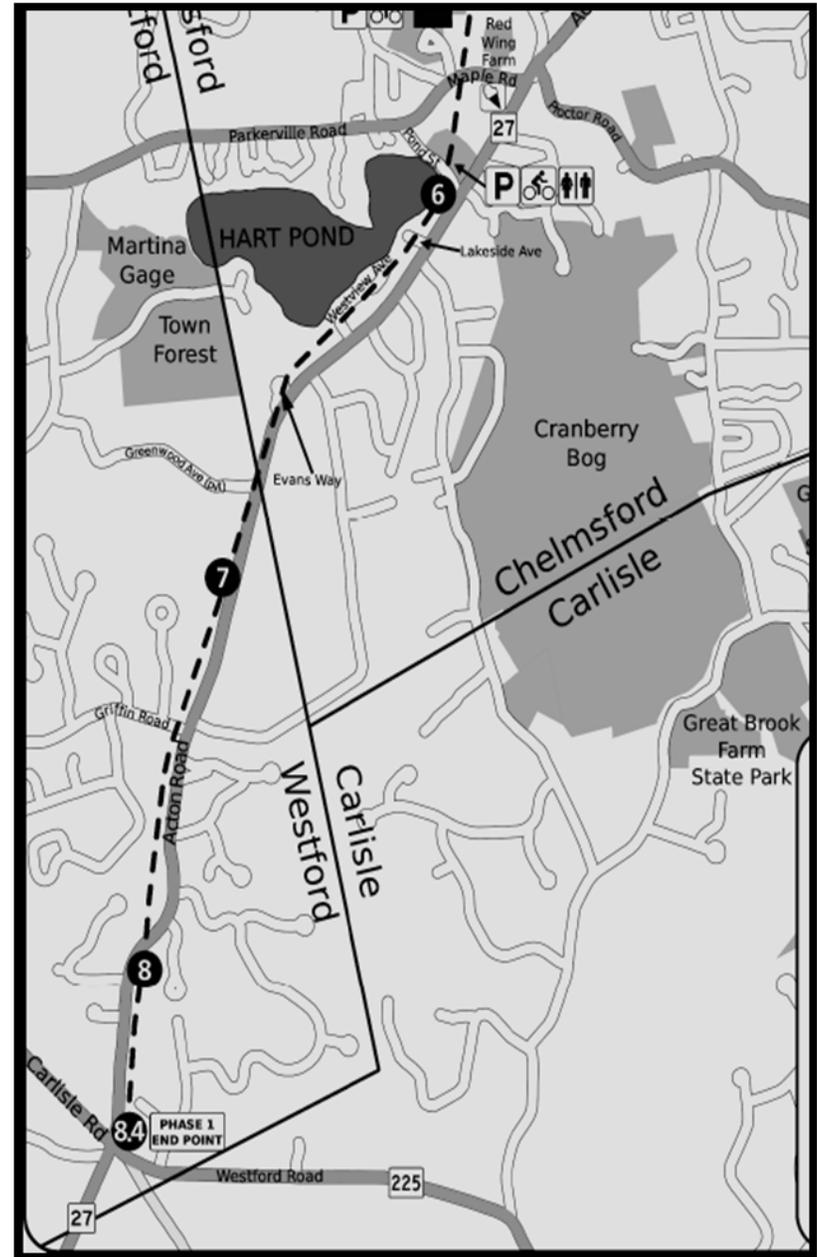
# Community Meeting

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Parking

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Stony Brook Middle School Auditorium

7: 00 PM



# Meeting Overview

## Introduction/Welcome

- Andrea Peraner-Sweet, Chair, Board of Selectmen

## Meeting Format and Objectives

- Chris Kluchman, AICP, Town Planner

## Update since Summer 2011

- Angus Jennings, AICP, Director Land Use Management

## Summary of Citizen Petition Articles for 2012 ATM

- Article 15: \$5,000 for Surveying, Bill Harman
- Article 18: Cease planning for parking; Tim Walsh and Steve Swech
- Article 17: Transfer Property (Vose Parcel) from Tax Possession Sales Committee to Park and Recreation Commission; Emily Teller and Chris Barrett

## Potential Committee/Wrap Up

- Andrea Peraner-Sweet, Chair, Board of Selectmen



# Meeting Format and Ground Rules

- Format – presentations by Town Staff, Citizen Petition proponents
- Moderated Discussion
- Ground Rules
  1. *Please treat presenters, facilitators and participants with respect.*
  2. *Use the microphone so the Westford Cable Access Television broadcast captures your comments.*
  3. *Interrupting others or dominating discussion will not be allowed. Raise your hand for acknowledgement.*
  4. *This is a public event open to all. However, as with any large group, there will be one to two people in charge of facilitating discussion, and sticking to the schedule. At today's event these are Town Planner Chris Kluchman and Director of Land Use Management, Angus Jennings.*
  5. *The purpose of this meeting is to provide information and clarification of complex issues related to the BFRT and related parking.*
    - a. *This meeting is **not a debate** about whether parking should or should not be provided at the Rail Trail. Town Meeting is the forum for residents to vote their positions.*
    - b. *Please do not repeat questions raised by others.*
  6. **Write down any comments or opinions on the green comment cards or the Town Web site <http://www.westfordma.gov/pages/index>.**
  7. *If you have questions or comments that cannot be accommodated during the event, please write them down on the **green comment cards** and turn them in at the Sign-in table.*

February 29, 2012



- The purpose of the meeting is to provide information and answer questions related to parking at Bruce Freeman Rail Trail specifically in preparation for Annual Town Meeting. Questions will be noted if there is no answer available this evening.
- What the meeting is NOT:
  - Not a debate about the pros and cons of parking
  - Not a popularity contest as to what side has the most supporters
  - Not a meeting where decisions will be made or Boards /Commissions will deliberate

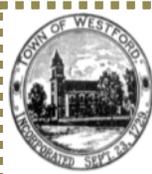


# Bruce Freeman Rail Trail: Discussion of Parking



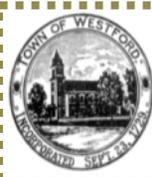
Community Meeting  
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Angus Jennings AICP, Dir. Land Use Mgmt



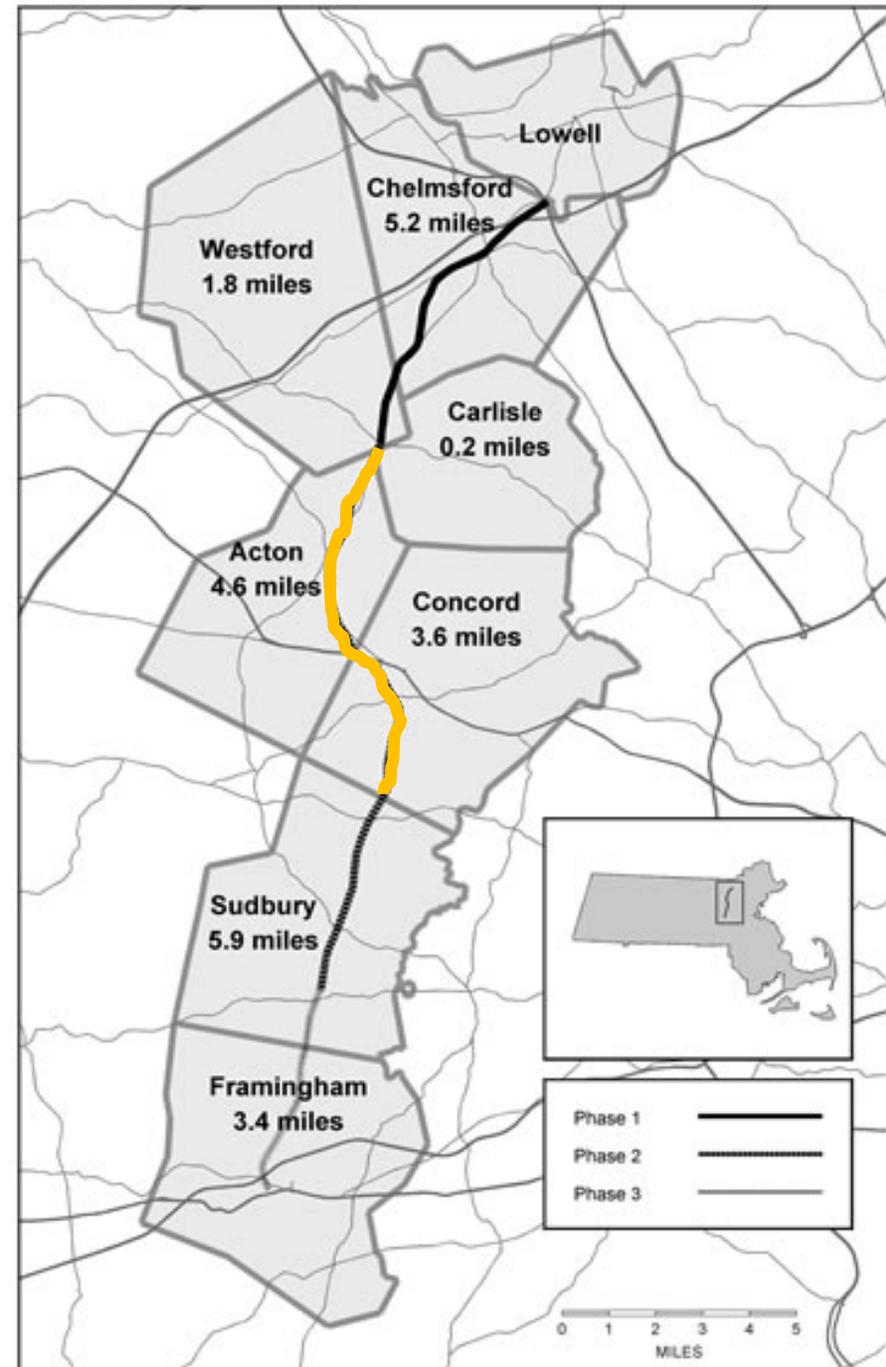
# Purpose of these slides

- Summary of Town actions related to BFRT since August 31, 2011 meeting
- Set out steps for potential long-, medium-term parking strategies:
  - Eventual construction of BFRT Phase 2A
  - Summary of next steps needed to pursue “Acton option”
  - Summary of next steps if policy direction to pursue Westford parking



# Overview

- Engineering design of Phase 2A/2C of BFRT now underway
- MassDOT design kick-off mtg held in September
- Project survey work underway by GPI, the design engineer
- 75% design plans anticipated ~ Fall 2012

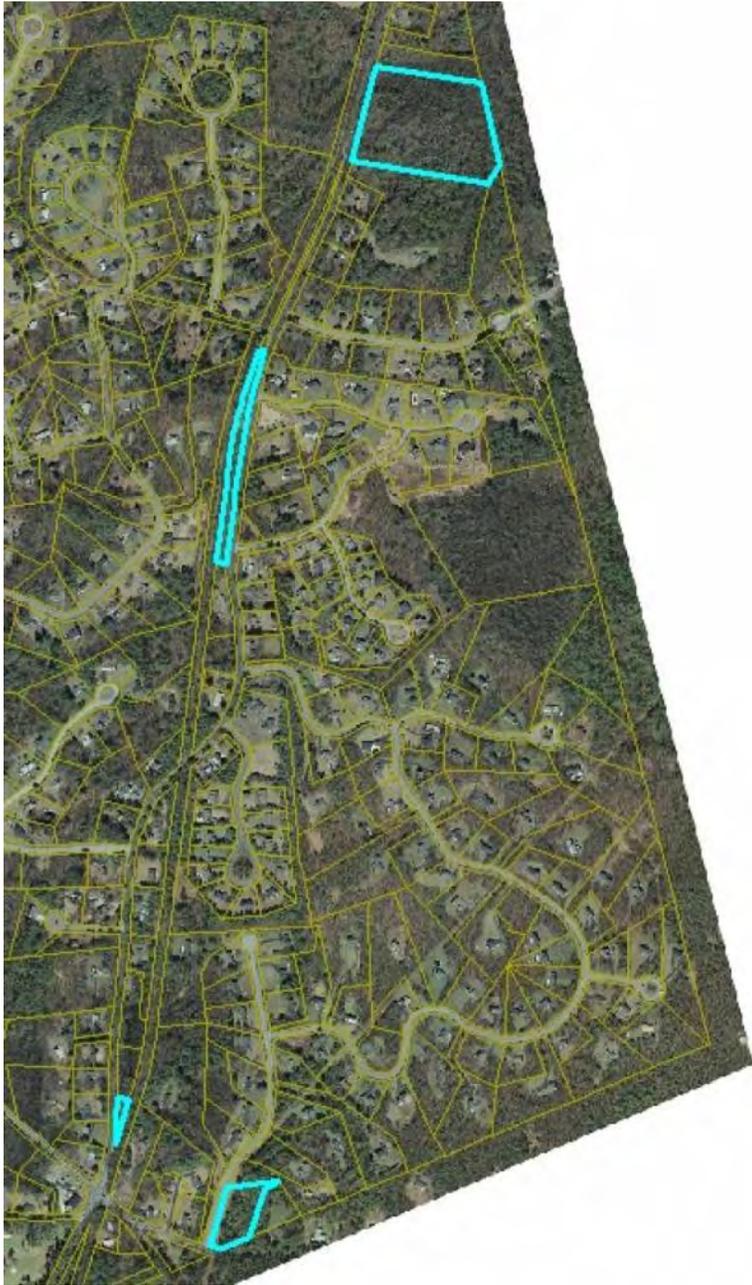


# Town actions re BFRT since Summer 2011

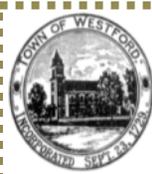
- “Acton option”
  - State grant application filed to fund
  - Presented at BFRT design kick-off mtg
- Grant not funded
- Have undertaken further research regarding steps that would be needed to make this happen
- Identification of two parcels for land survey only unless parking design work requested by BoS
- Recreation Commission working with Eagle Scout re potential transfer of Vose parcel for kiosk / benches near trail terminus, subject to public review
- Signs installed at Rte 27/225 restricting parking and directing people to Hart Pond parking



# Concept plans reviewed at August meeting



- Parcel (013 0047)
  - Parcel not recommended for further study due to access concerns (crossing Rte 27)
- Crest Haven parcel (013 0071)
  - Land survey (received 2/24/12) shows different boundaries than prior estimates
  - Conveyance was condition of 1988 subdivision; Town does not hold title
- Vose parcel (007 0086)
  - Parcel under consideration for “pocket park,” benches/kiosk; subject to public review, permitting
- Landmark Road parcel (003 0009)
  - Parcel not recommended for further study: Westford Conservation Trust (owner) voted no parking; also staff concerns re access, gas pipeline



# Town actions since Summer 2011

- Since January, activities in response to Town Meeting petition articles (meetings, correspondence etc)
- General government functions
  - In response to enforcement request re Landmark Road / Elderberry Conservation Restriction, sought legal opinion to determine Town's standing in dispute
    - Based on opinion, Board of Selectmen directed no Town involvement in dispute between private parties



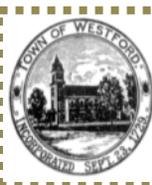
# Long-Range Plan: Next Phase of BFRT – Acton & Concord

- Phase 2A/2C design underway
- Construction funding not anticipated until at least FY21 (Boston MPO FY21-35 draft Long-Range Transportation Plan)

TABLE 8-3

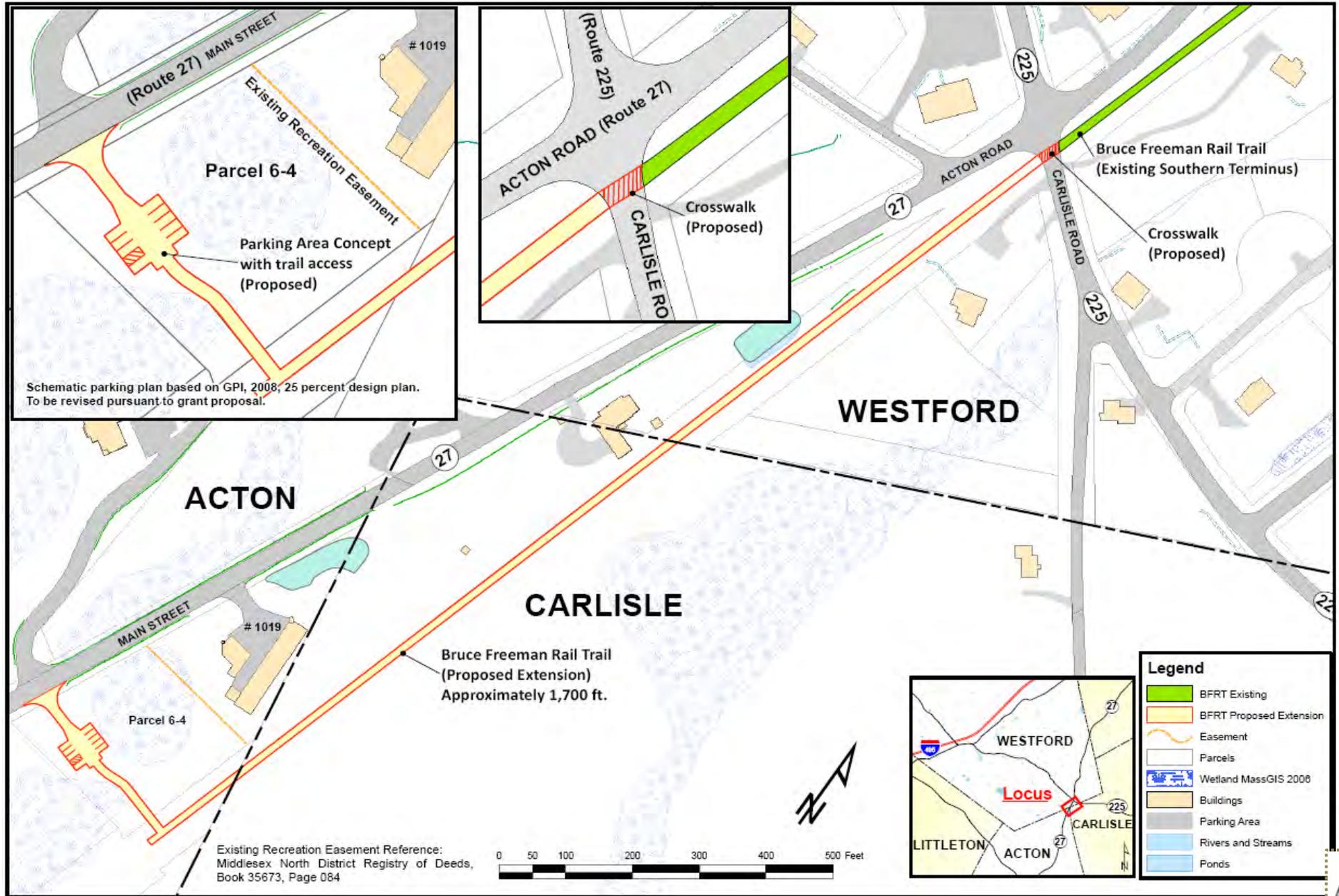
MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND EXPANSION HIGHWAY PROJECTS FUNDED IN THE RECOMMENDED PLAN, WITH COSTS

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



# Map exhibit of "Acton option"

Westford Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Parking



Bruce Freeman Rail Trail  
Proposed Extension and Parking Area



September 14, 2011



February 29, 2012

# Next steps to pursue “Acton option”

- Would need MassDOT support:
  - Release of State interest in materials (rail, ties) within ~1,700’ of MassDOT Rail ROW
  - Agreement with Town(s) to authorize right of entry, removal of materials, and installation of paved surface
  - Approval of safe pedestrian crossing of Rte 225 at 27
- If above can be accomplished, would need:
  - Funding (amount unknown – “Iron Horse” variable)
  - Local permitting (3 towns)
- All of above would require coordination among Westford, Carlisle, Acton, MassDOT and GPI
- Best guess is 2-3 year process, contingent upon necessary investment of time and resources
- No assurance this could be accomplished



# Next steps for Westford parking

- Direction to proceed from policy makers
- Site selection
  - If Vose or Crest Haven parcel, GPI would need to be directed to prepare plans
  - No other design resource identified
- Site control
- Town Meeting vote would be needed to amend zoning (no such proposal pending)
- Permitting – Site Plan Review, Conservation(?)
- Operations & Maintenance Plan
- Obtain construction funding



# Future Decision Points re Parking

- Resource allocation toward “Acton option”
  - If favored, consideration of multi-town working group/task force
- Whether to pursue Westford parking option
- Action on proposed Town Meeting articles



# Closing

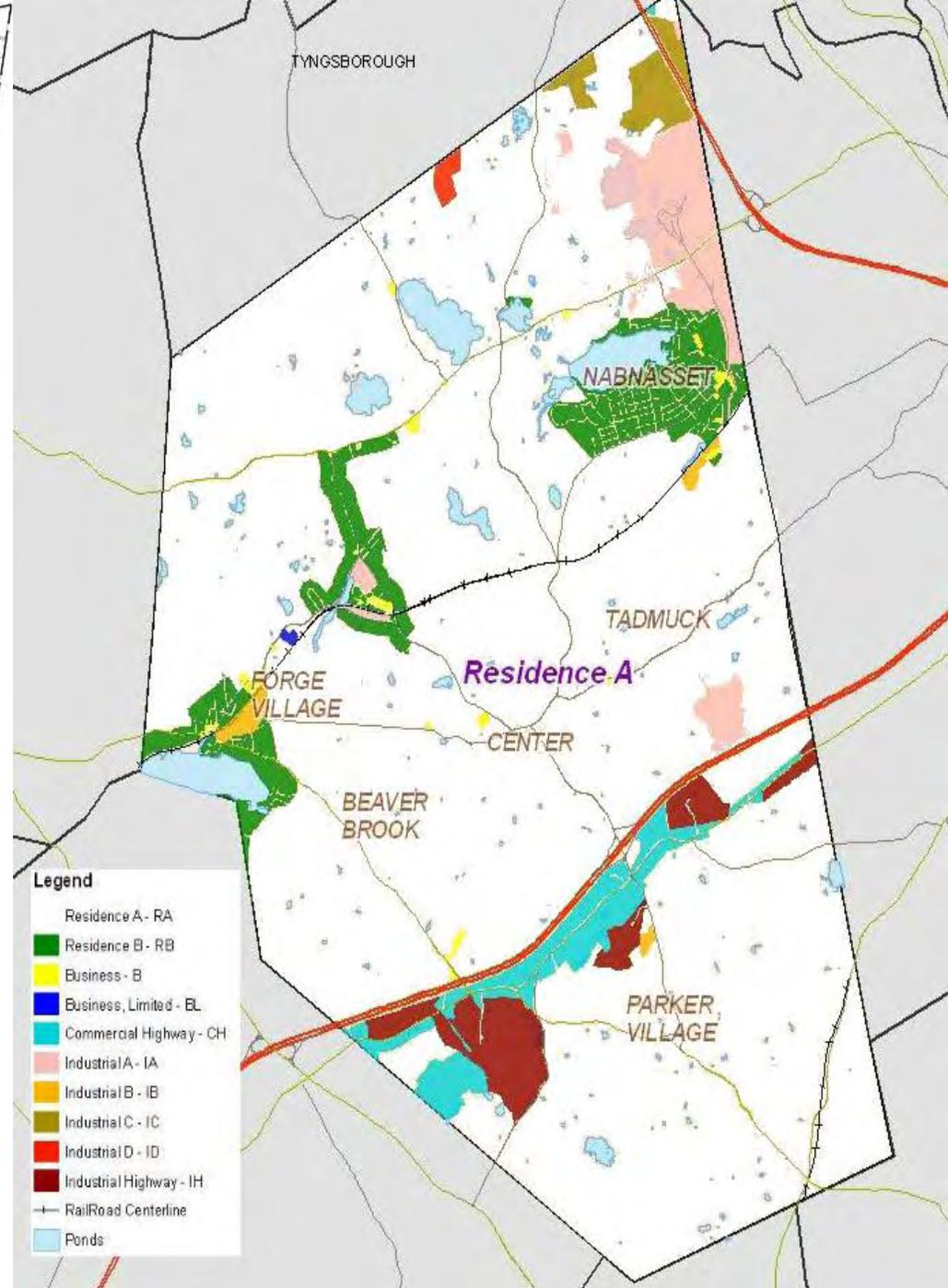
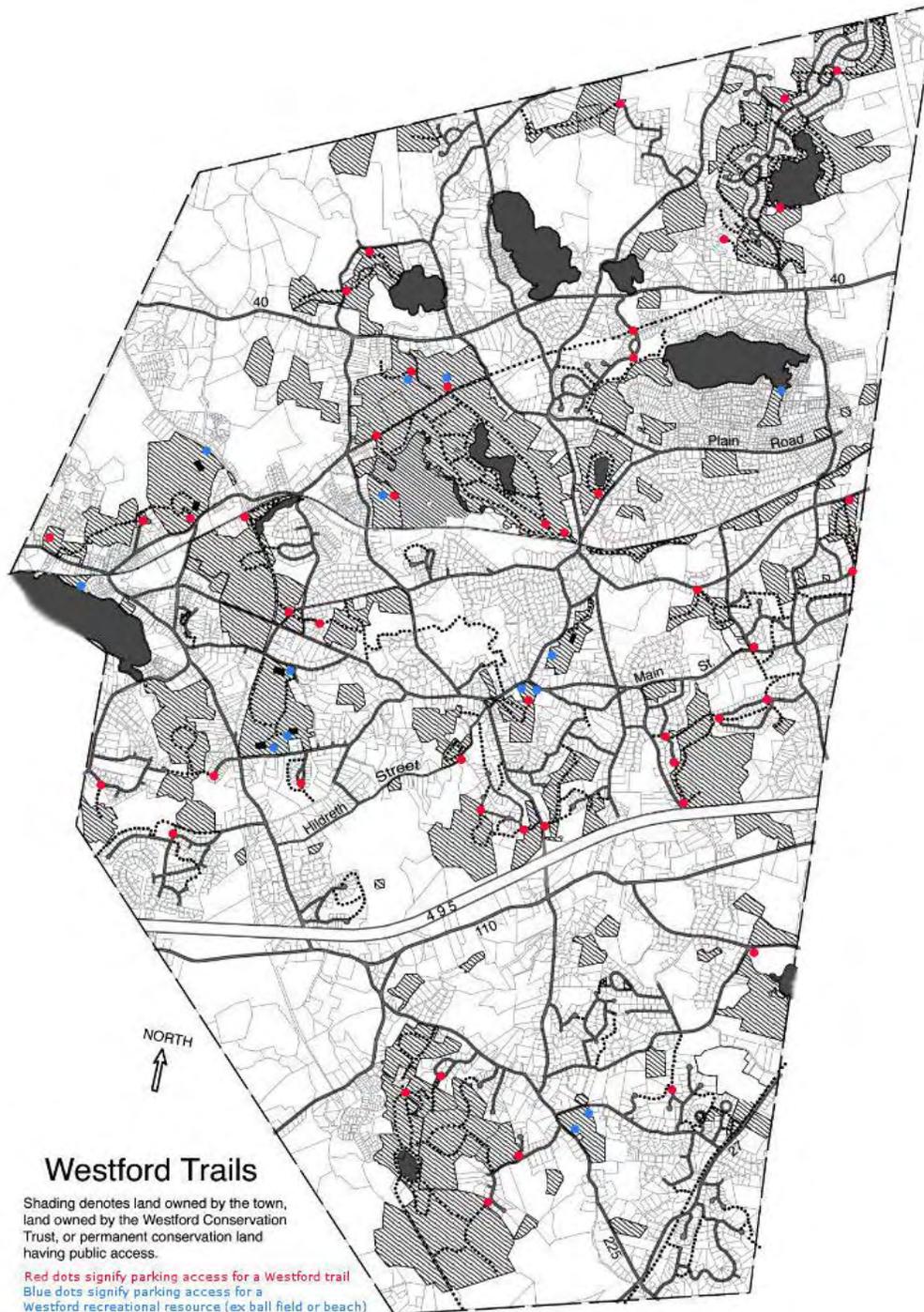
- What are the next steps?
  - An appropriate public policy question
  - Many conflicting opinions on this matter
  - Town Meeting action will inform Boards etc
  - None of the proposed Town Meeting articles address site selection or zoning
- Town staff role
  - Responding to public inquiries
  - Providing information to inform decisions
  - Carrying out work based on approved policy direction

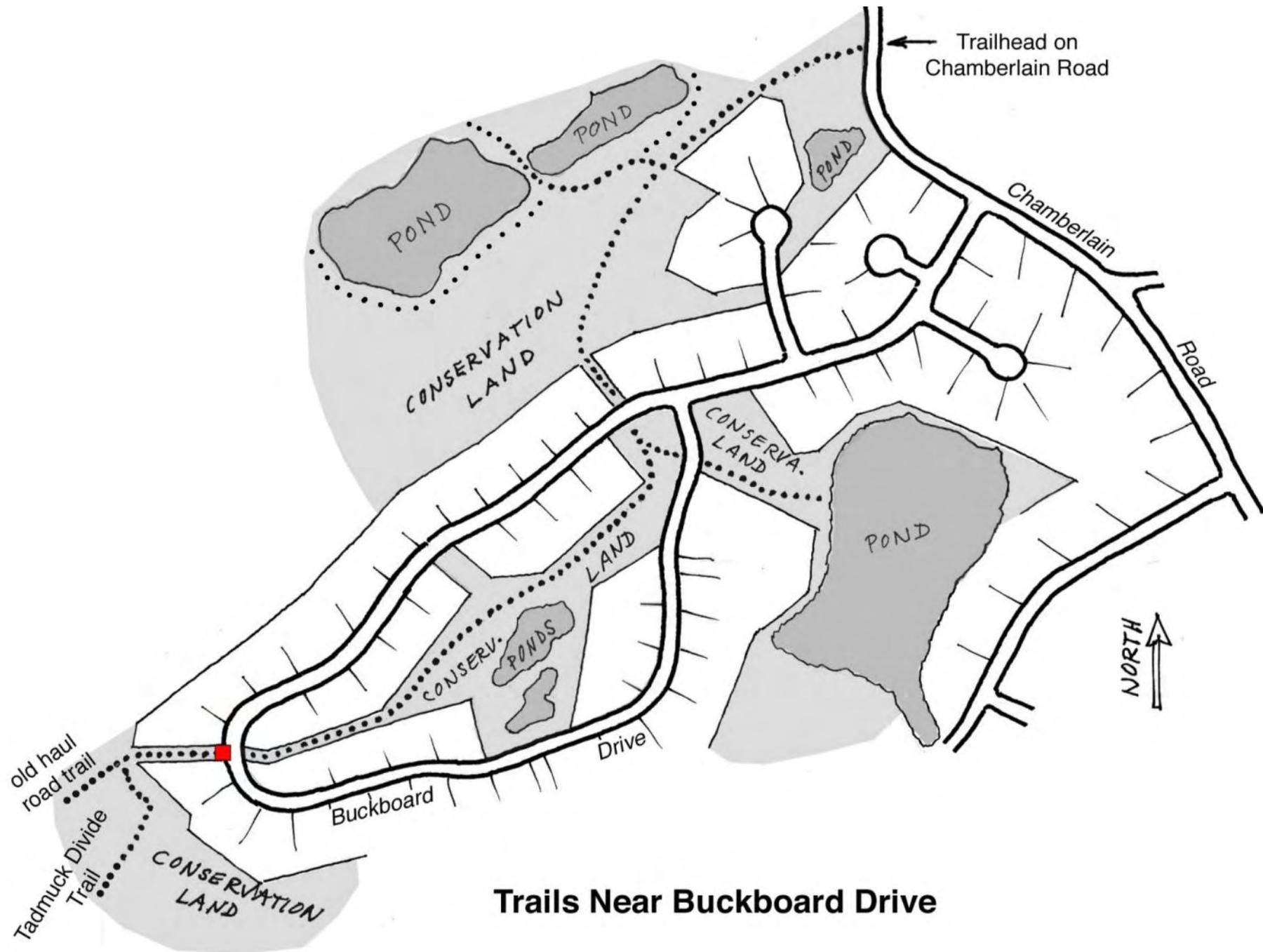


# Article 15

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a \$5,000 FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS by taxation, by transfer from available funds, by borrowing, or any combination thereof, for the for surveying and other technical work to develop parking in the Town of Westford for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

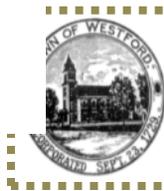






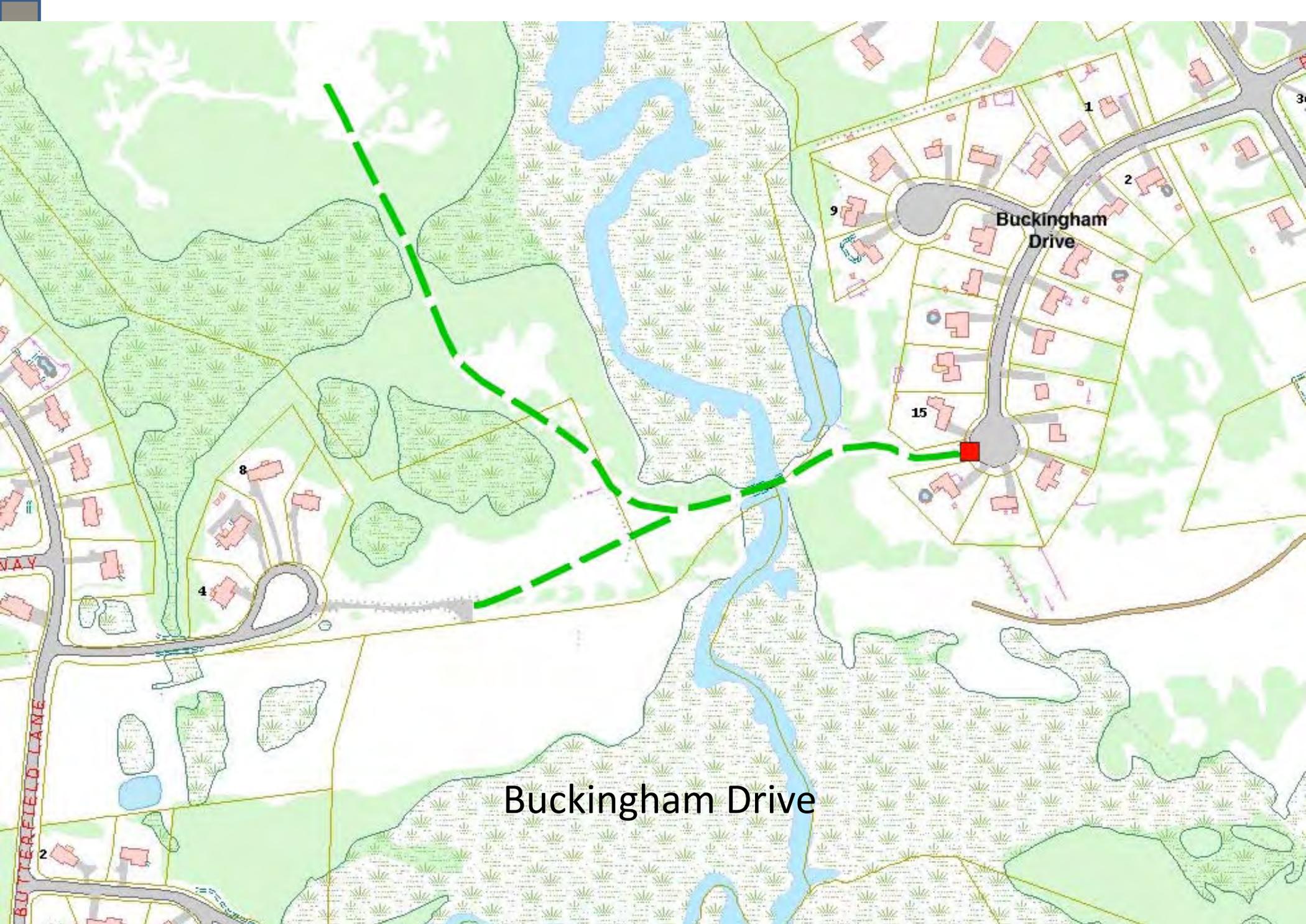
Trails Near Buckboard Drive

February 29, 2012





**Buckboard Dr**



Buckingham Drive

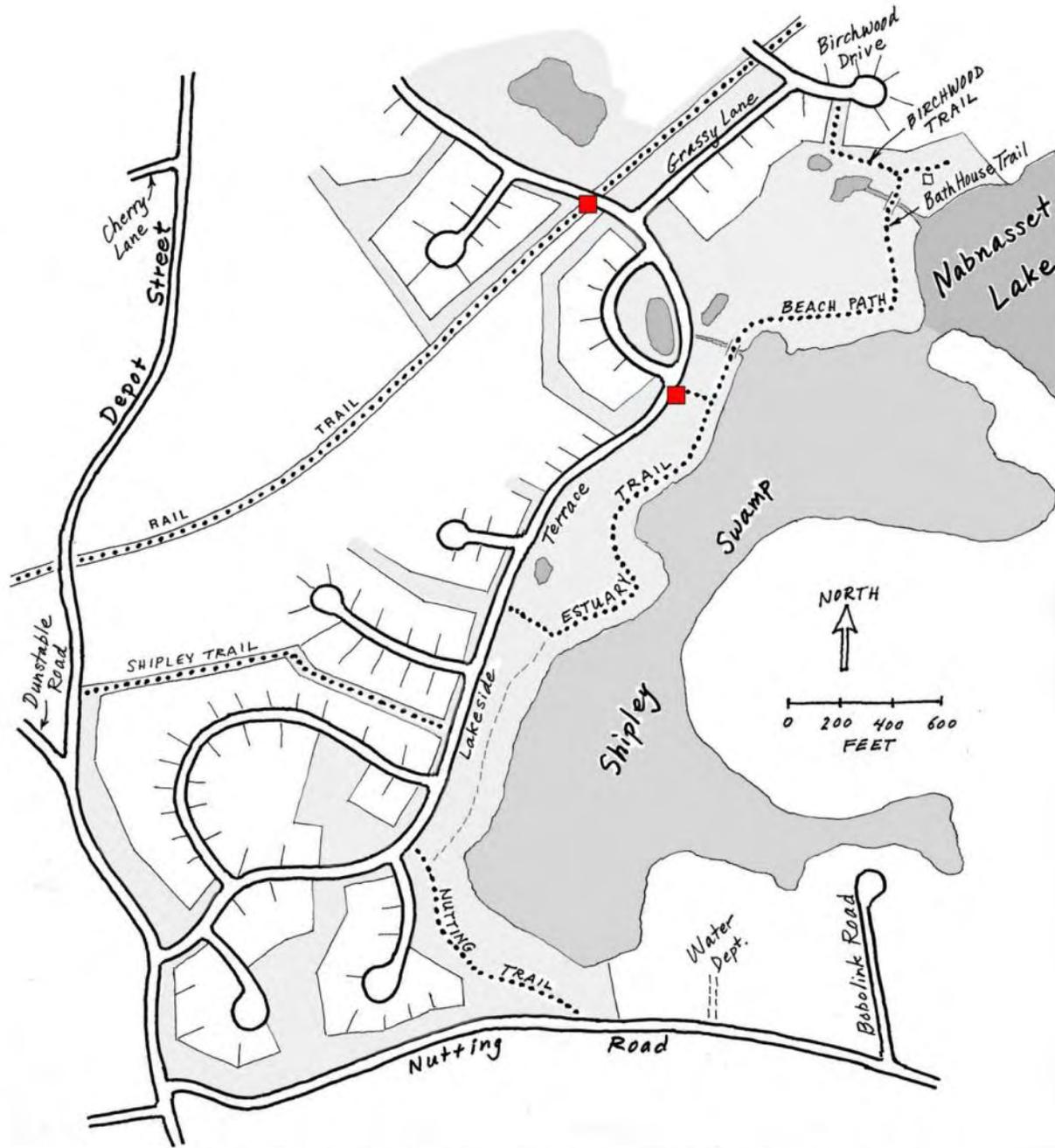




Buckingham Drive



**Buckingham Drive**



Trails Near Nabnasset Lake and Shipley Swamp

February 29, 2012





**Lakeside Terrace and bike trail**



## Parking at Lakeside Terrace Trail Head

February 29, 2012

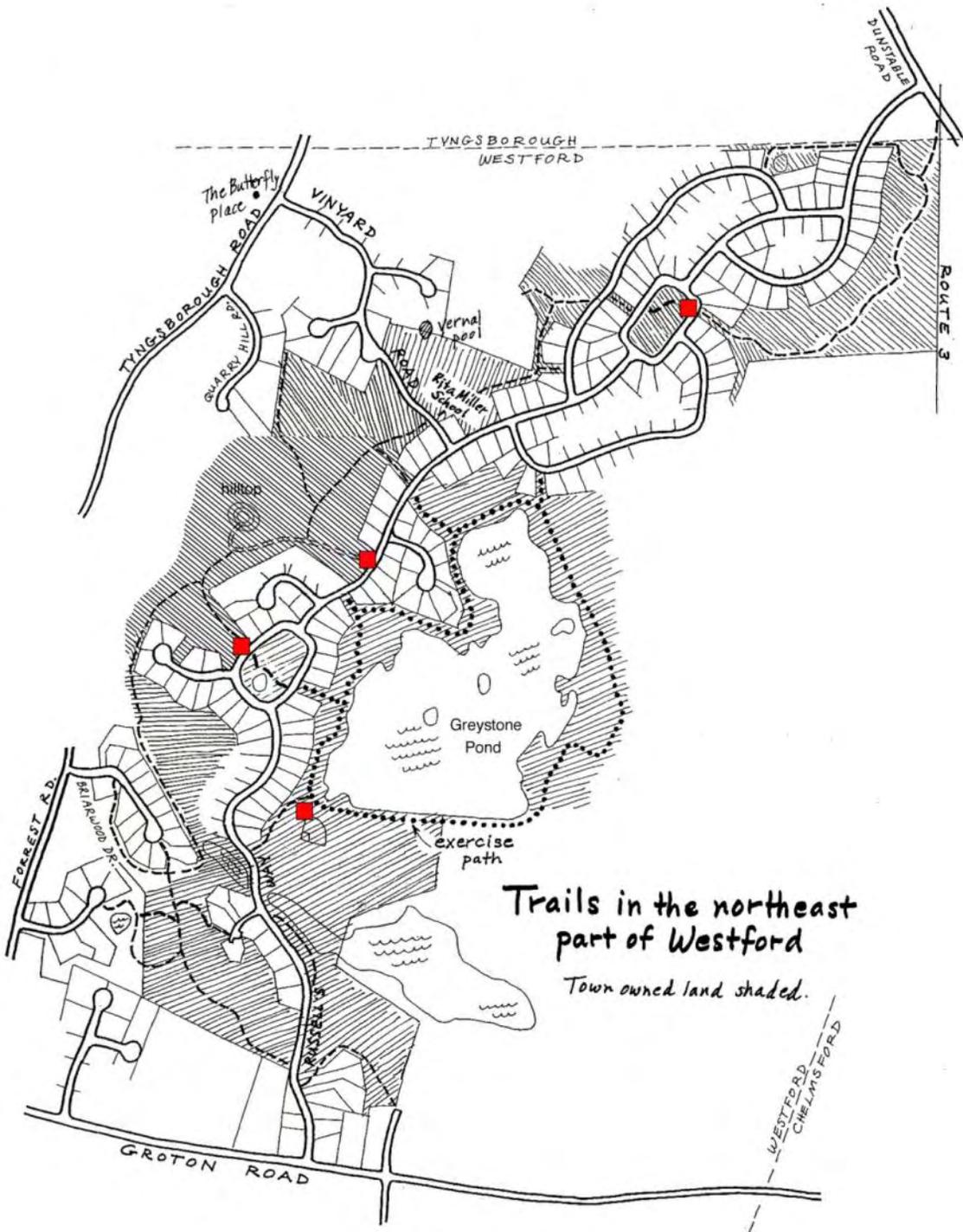


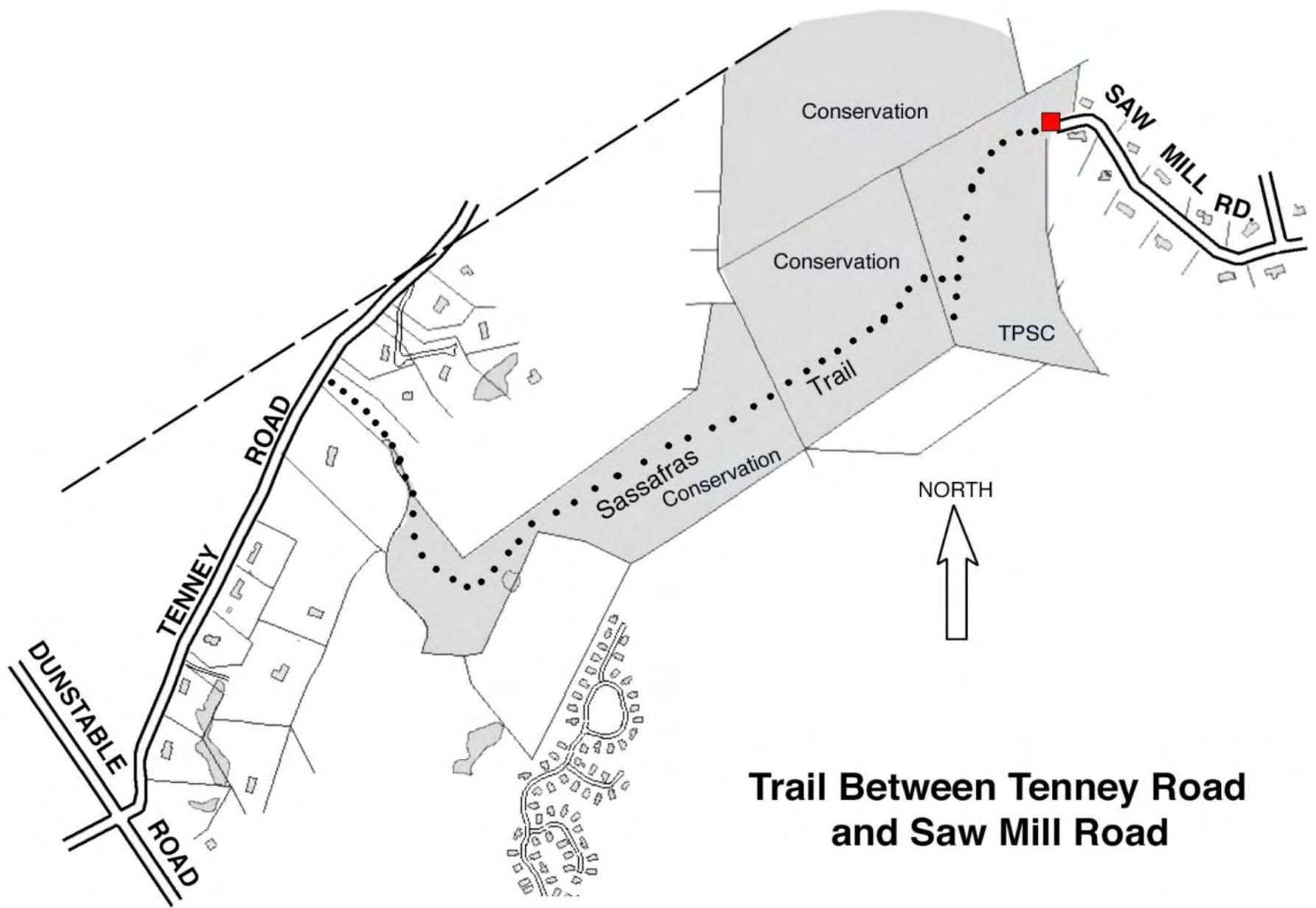


Lakeside Terrace Trail Head

Febr







**Trail Between Tenney Road and Saw Mill Road**



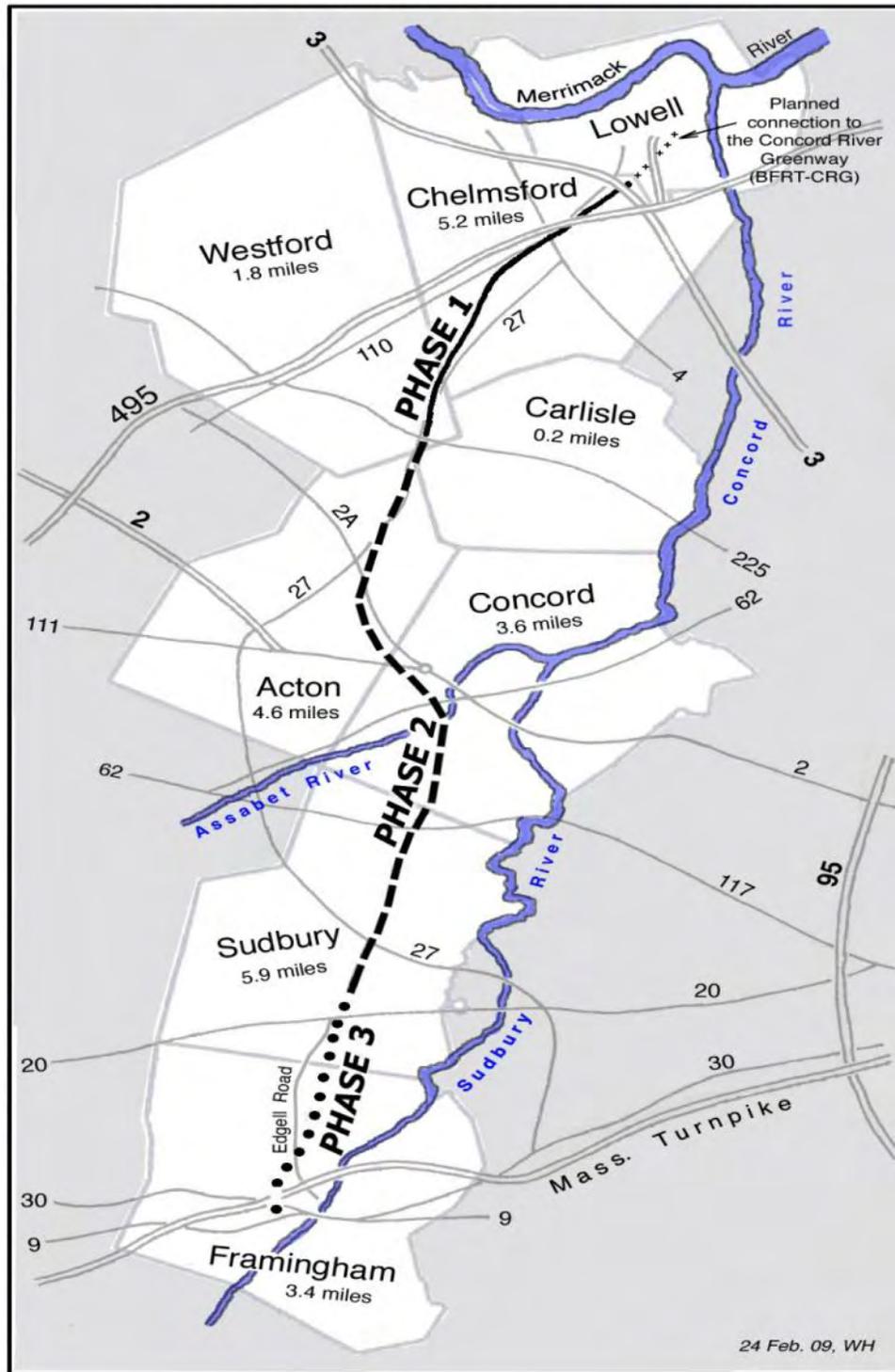


**Sawmill Parking at Trail Head**



**Sawmill Parking at Trail Head**

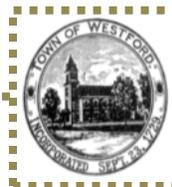
# Bruce Freeman Rail Trail



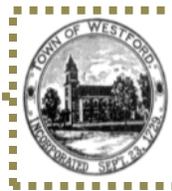
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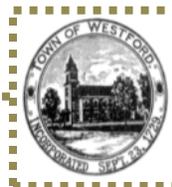
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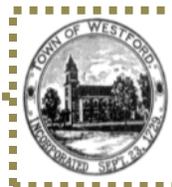
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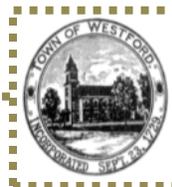
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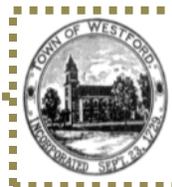
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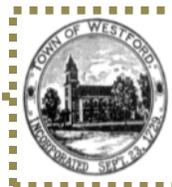
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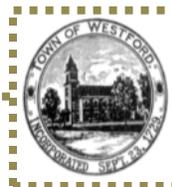
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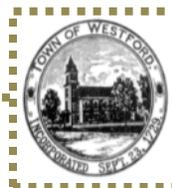
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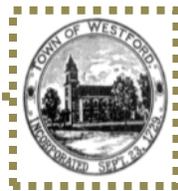
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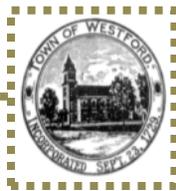
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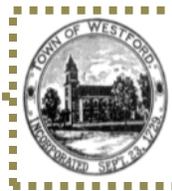
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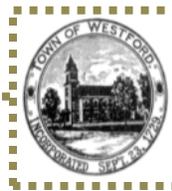
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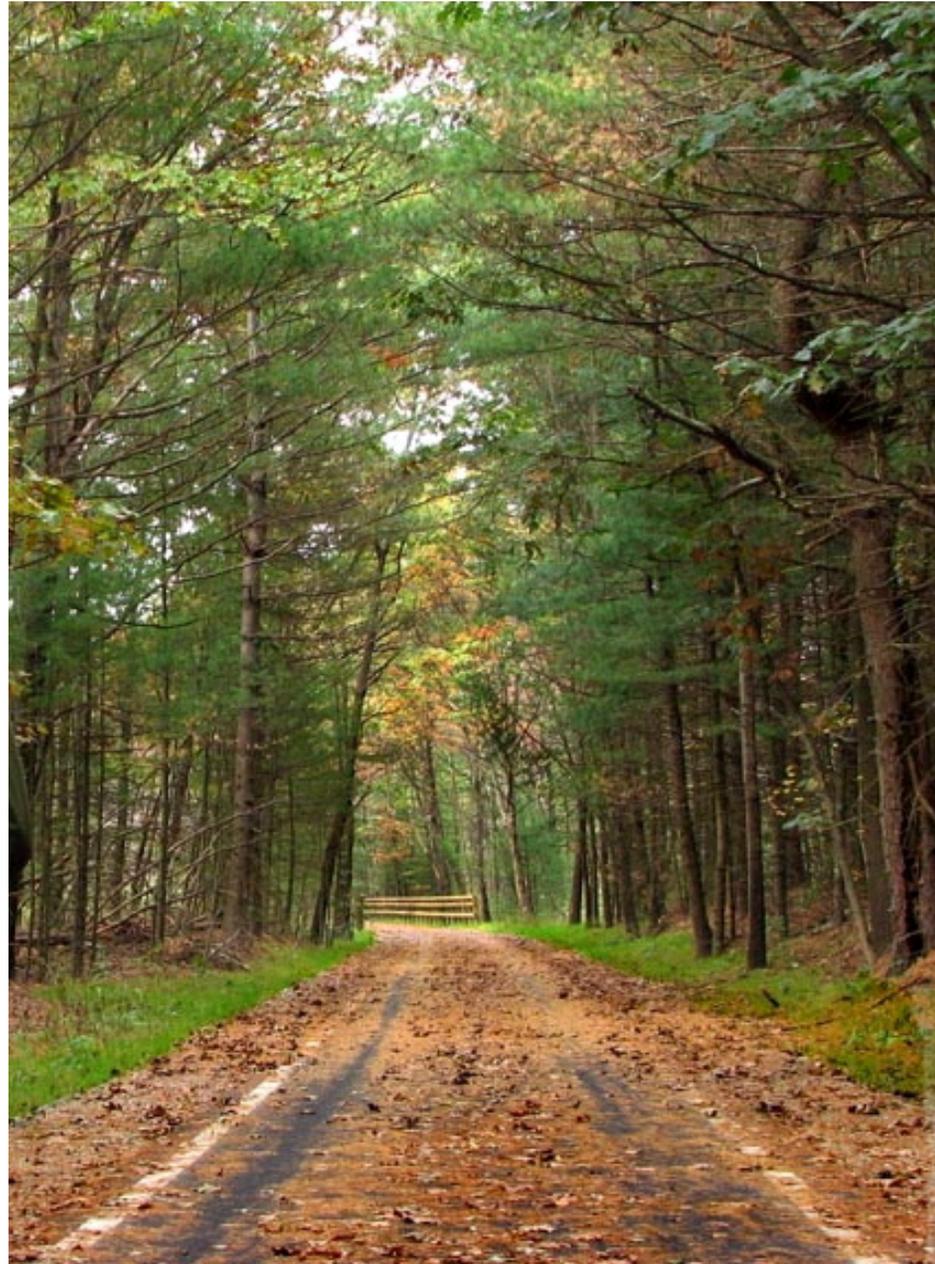


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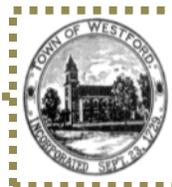


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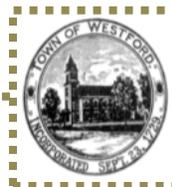
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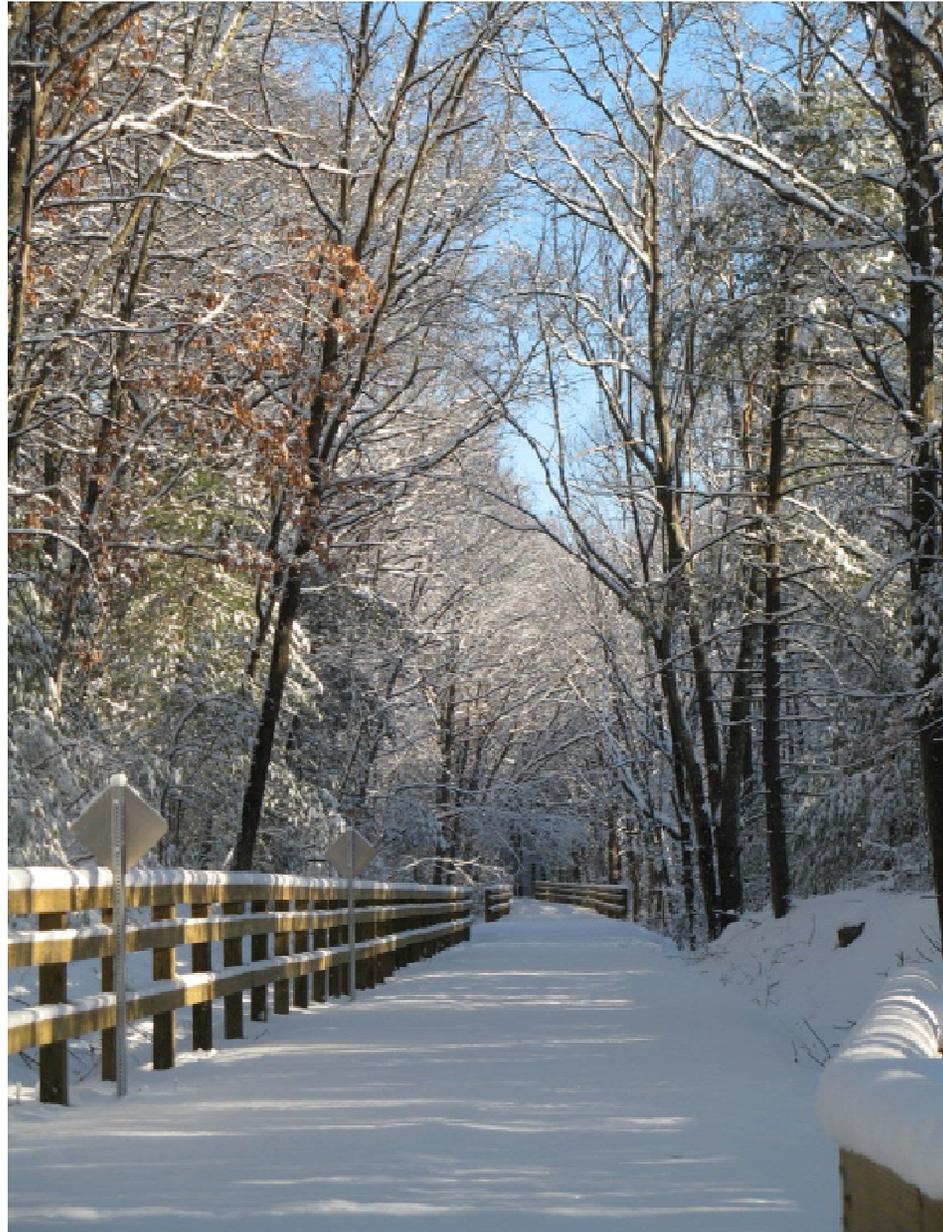


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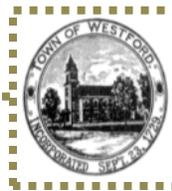




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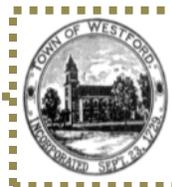
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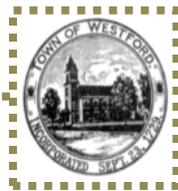
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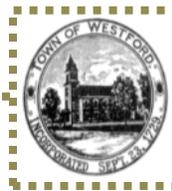
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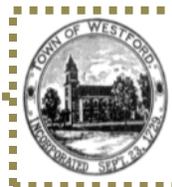
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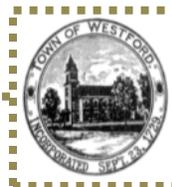
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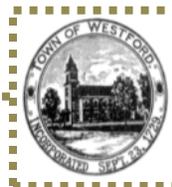
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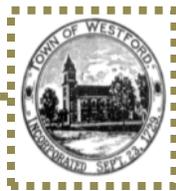
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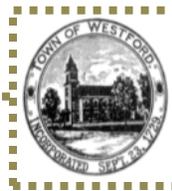
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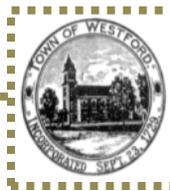
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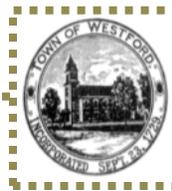
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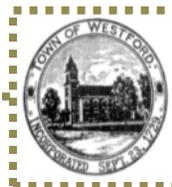
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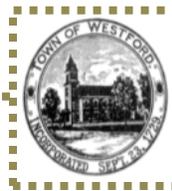
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February 29, 2012



February 29, 2012



# Community Meeting Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Parking February 29, 2012

Town Meeting Article 18  
Cease All Planning or Development of  
Public Parking in Residential Zoned  
Parts of the Town Within 1.0 Mile of  
the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail



# The Issues

- The BFRT is a great resource for Westford, Chelmsford, Lowell and the surrounding communities.
- However, is parking at the very edge of Westford needed?
- Who benefits from the proposed parking?
- Where is the cost/benefit analysis?



# The Issues (cont.)

- How will safety matters related to increased traffic congestion be addressed?
- Depending on what is proposed, how will the safety of bicyclists, pedestrians and school children at bus stops be addressed?
- How will increased crime be addressed?
- How will trash be controlled, collected, and removed?



## The Issues (cont.)

- Shouldn't we be spending our limited time and resources working together to extend the trail into Acton and establish parking there?
- This is the one solution everyone agrees on.

So let's do it - together!



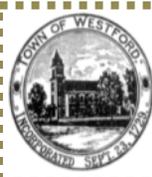
# Is Parking at the Very Edge of Westford Needed?

- Use of the BFRT continues to expand all along its length (Great!) using existing parking facilities.
- No one is being denied access to the trail.
- Plenty of parking infrastructure already exists within easy reach of all area residents.
- The BFRT crosses only 1.8 miles in Westford, all of it in quiet residential neighborhoods.
- Over many years of discussion, no one has been able to articulate or document a real need for the proposed parking.



# Who Benefits from the Proposed Parking?

- The vast majority of Westford residents live closer to existing parking than to the proposed additional parking.
- Unlike other towns with rail trails, Westford has no nearby commercial business that would benefit from parking along the trail.



# Where is the Cost/Benefit Analysis?

- How much will the proposed parking cost to plan, engineer, build, and maintain?
- Does the town have spare money for non-vital services and facilities?
- Aren't the schools, teachers, fire & police departments, and other resident services more important when it comes to spending Westford tax dollars?



# How Will Safety Matters be Addressed?

- Some of the proposed parking areas are directly across from school bus stops with more than 25 children each; how do we protect them?
- Unfortunately, there have been reports of loitering and stalking in the area of the rail trail; won't parking lots potentially make this even worse?
- How will overflow parking, traffic and congestion be managed around these parking areas?



# So, What Should We Do?

- There is no need for parking in Westford.
- If there's a desire for parking, there are no suitable locations for it; and no money for it.
- Under current Town Bylaws, municipal parking lots are not allowed in residential areas; continuing to seek ways around this will make the division of our community even worse.



# So, What Should We Do?

- As suggested by some Town officials, let's dismiss all 5 of the parking related Town Meeting articles and quit trying to build parking lots where they don't belong.
- Let's stand-down on trying to open access to the rail trail where it doesn't easily exist.
- Let's pursue the opportunity to extend the trail into Acton and build parking on existing, commercially zoned space as everyone has already agreed is a really good idea.
- Let's start working together towards the same goal rather than working against each other.





## Article 17

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the care, custody, control and management of a parcel of land located along Acton Road identified as Parcel 86 on Westford Assessors' Map 7, from the Tax Possession Sale Committee presently held for the purpose of tax title sale to the Parks and Recreation Commission to be held for recreation purposes;

Or act in relation thereto.



# Why The Transfer?

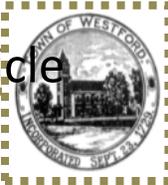
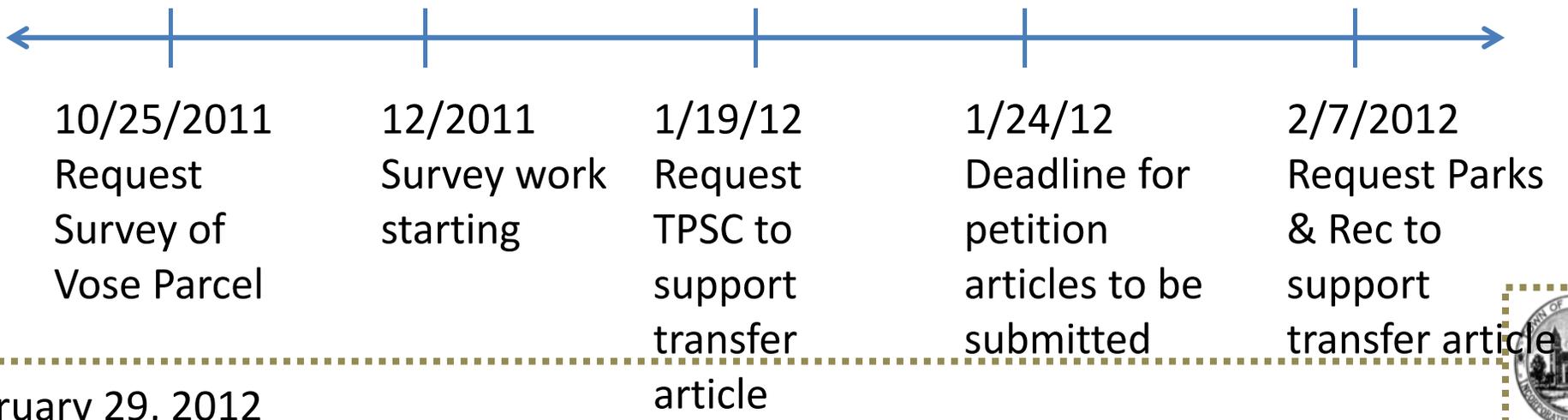
- Eagle Scout Project
  - Construction of informational kiosk
  - Two (2) benches
  - Minor landscaping
    - Plants
    - Mulch/Stone pavers
  - No trees will be removed as a result of this project





# Timing

- Two articles on TM warrant (16 & 17)
- Deadline for TM warrant
- Schedules of Parks and Recreation Commission and Tax Possession Sales Committee





# Process

Parks and Recreation  
Commission requests transfer  
of parcel



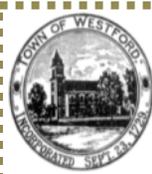
Town Meeting Vote

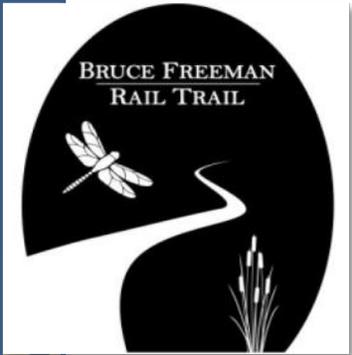


TPSC takes vote on what to do with the  
parcel

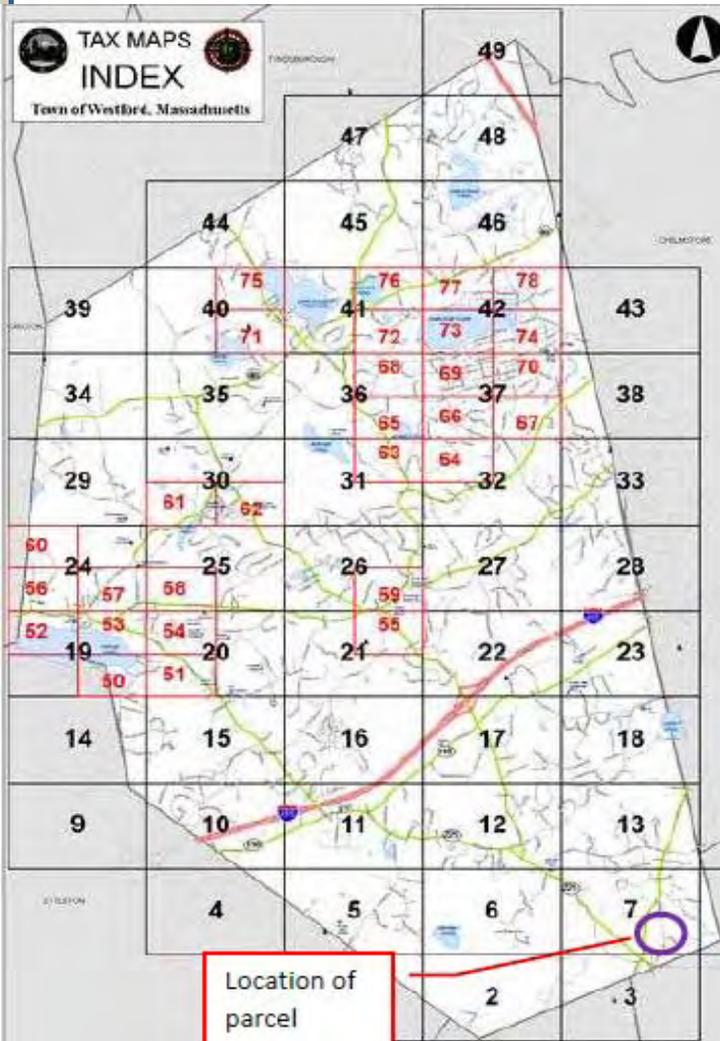


Parks and Recreation Commission holds  
public meeting(s) gather input and to decide  
use





Westford Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Pa



February 29, 2012





# Location, Location, Location

- Town Land vs. Trail Right of Way
  - Chelmsford's experience with putting a kiosk on the ROW
  - Rail Right of Way Division at Mass Hwy is 1 person
    - Still working on ROW access for Phase 2A design work
  - Desire to keep from road in order to discourage people from pulling off the road
  - Tree cover
    - Shade, reduce impact on abutters, more tranquil, buffer from road noise





# Kiosk Example

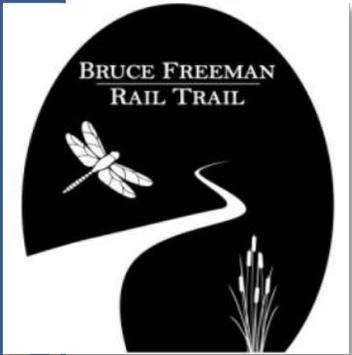
## Jack Walsh Field

Westford Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Pa



February 29, 2012





# Benches along the BFRT Chelmsford

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Pa



February 29, 2012



# Other Trail Amenities in Chelmsford

- Art walk
- Bike Racks
- Bike Repair Station
- Kiosk
- Toilets



Trail Side Murals at Ginger Ale Plaza  
Chelmsford





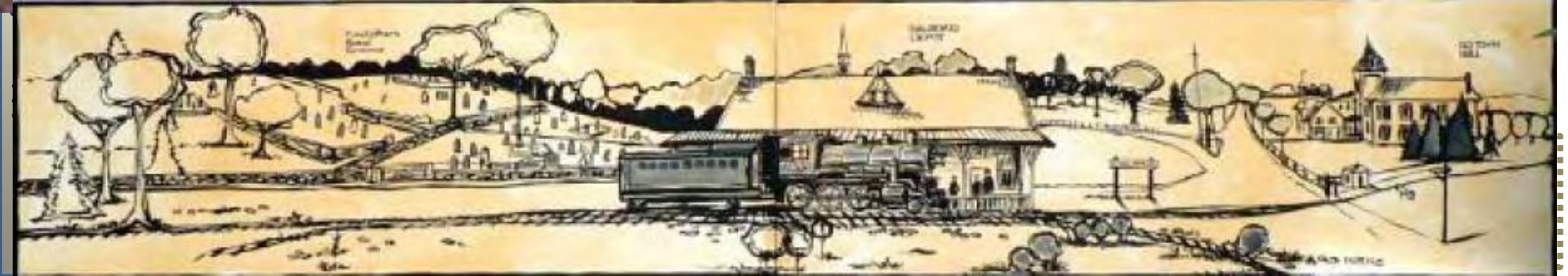
# Trail Amenities in Westford

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Thank you for your continued support of the BFRT



- Town Web Site (Bruce Freeman Rail Trail tab)  
<http://www.westfordma.gov/pages/index>
- Town Planning Staff
  - Angus Jennings, Director Land Use Management, 978-692-5524
- Presenters
  - Bill Harman
  - Steve Swech/Tim Walsh
  - Chris Barrett/Emily Teller
- Friends of Bruce Freeman Rail Trail  
<http://www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/>

