

Official Bedford Arbor Resources Committee (BARC) Statement on Minuteman Bikeway Extension Project

After research, site visits and careful consideration, the Arbor Resources Committee has voted to **NOT support** the Minuteman Bikeway Extension Project.

The following points contributed to this decision:

1. It is difficult for residents to evaluate the tree loss on this project because large areas such as the parking lots & ramp are not clearly delineated. The small demonstration area at Lavender Lane was chosen as “typical” but does not convey the variability in size of the area to be cleared along the entire trail.
2. The project will result in a significant loss of tree canopy and under story.
3. Many mature trees are being sacrificed to make room for cars to park.
4. Trees are under assault from climate change, insects and diseases never encountered before. We can no longer assume that the trees we remove can be easily replaced or that the small replacement trees will survive to maturity.
5. When large areas of ground are disturbed and the vegetation is removed, such as along the trail edges, what grows back is mostly invasive plants such as buckthorn, Japanese knotweed and bittersweet vines. These invasive plants continue to spread unchecked throughout town and this project will only add to the problem.
6. Bedford is losing trees at a rapid rate. About a hundred public trees and many hundreds of private trees are lost every year. Few of these trees are being replaced and the problem is getting worse. This project contributes to the problem.
7. Tree loss contributes to warming, which in turn puts stress on the remaining trees. This and other feedback loops are causing the climate to change faster than predicted.
8. The Arbor Resources Committee believes that the mitigation for the lost trees on this project meets the requirements of the Town Tree Policy, based on the data provided. However, this project highlights some of the serious weaknesses of the 2018 Tree Policy, such as equating an acre of clearing to only ten trees for mitigation and seriously undervaluing trees.

Approved at the Bedford Arbor Resources Committee meeting on September 22, 2022