

Minuteman Bikeway Extension

Community Forum
September 29, 2022

Agenda

- Welcome
- Select Board Presentation
- Community Q&A
 - Attorney George Hall, moderating

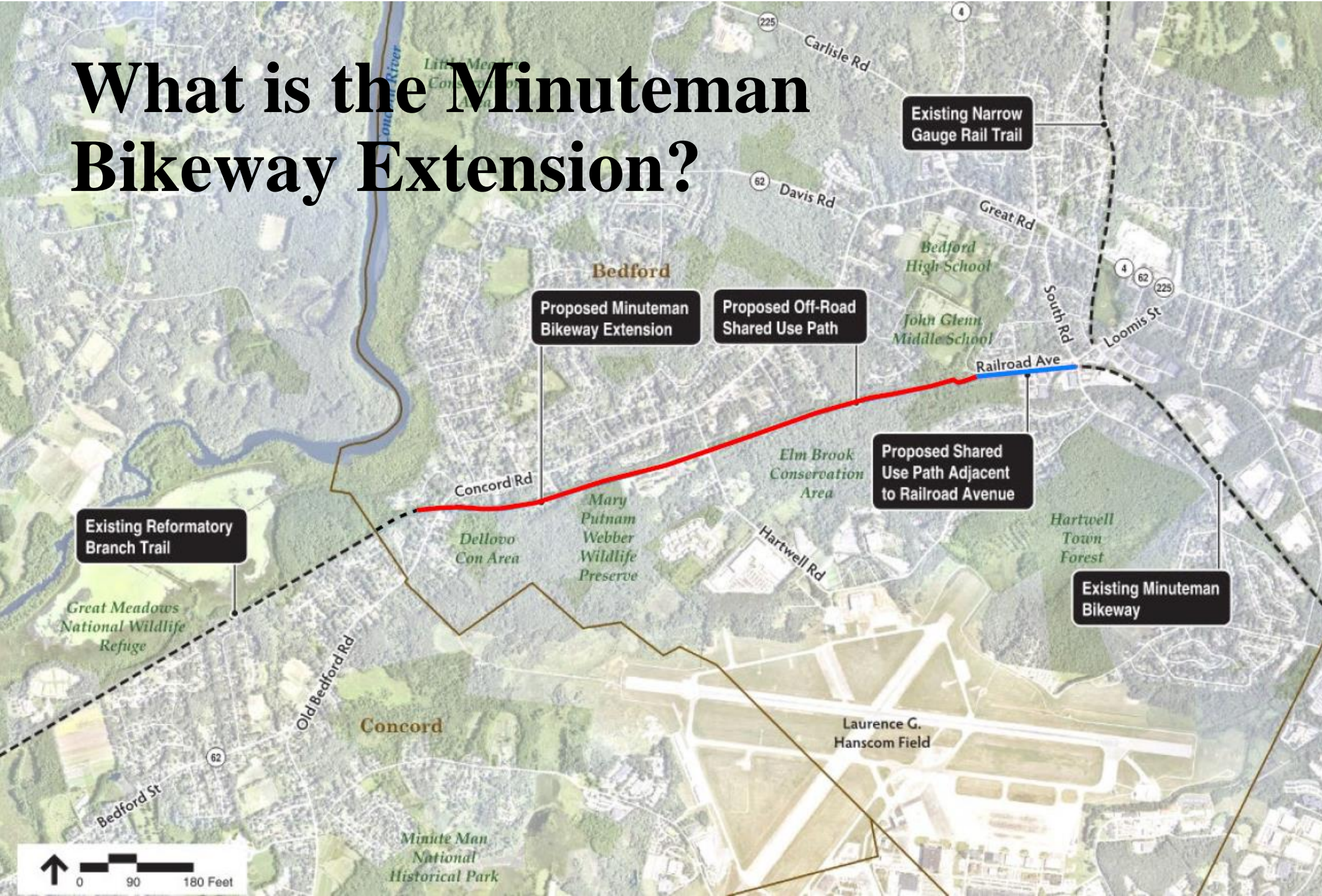
<https://www.bedfordma.gov/minuteman-extension>
Contact Bikeway@bedfordma.gov or (781) 918-4274

Protocols

- Questions from microphone only
- Moderator will recognize each speaker
- One question at a time (if you have more, return to the end of the line)
- Follow Civil Discourse Guidelines

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What is the Minuteman Bikeway Extension?



How did we get here?

2004 - 2010

- Bedford began initial project feasibility studies
- TIP application from Town to Boston MPO
- Asphalt design chosen over stone dust by 2010 Annual Town Meeting

2010 - 2020

- Public meetings held to refine concept design
- Railroad Avenue and Concord Rd designs finalized
- Town applied for state/federal construction funding
- Awarded TIP funding in 2014 for construction in 2022

2020 - 2022

- Design development: 25%, 75%, and 100% Plans submitted to MassDOT
- 25% Design Public Hearing held on 2/6/2020
- Right of Way and Permitting

What are the benefits of the project?

- Greater access: an improved shared use path for all ages and abilities
- Connections to neighborhoods, schools, conservation land, and the regional rail trail system
- Safer road/trail crossings
- Railroad Avenue/Commercial Avenue improvements
- Infrastructure improvements

Existing Conditions



Reformatory Branch Trail Dimensions



Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Acton MA





**Railroad Avenue looking west
with new shared use path and
sidewalk**



**Overhead view of paved trail
with stone dust shoulders**

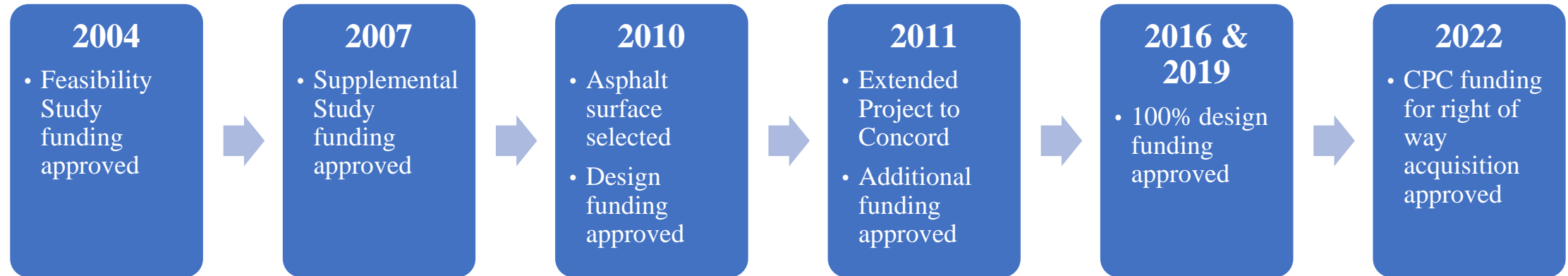


Lavender Lane parking area



**Concord Road parking area
and underpass**

What has Town Meeting voted on?



• **March 2022 Annual Town Meeting**

- Article 6-12 providing CPC funding **PASSED** (simple majority needed)
- Article 11 authorizing the Select Board to use eminent domain to obtain land and easements **DID NOT PASS** (2/3 majority needed)
 - 60.7% of voters supported

Where are we now?

- **Design**

- 100% design plans finalized and approved by Mass DOT
- Right-of-way (ROW) plans finalized
- Properties reappraised and notified
- All local, state, and federal permits approved

- **Funding**

- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)—federal/state
- Community Preservation—local

What will November 2022 Special Town Meeting vote on?

- Portions of the current Reformatory Branch Trail are actually privately owned
- Warrant article will seek same authorization for the Select Board to use eminent domain to purchase:
 - Land along the Reformatory Branch Trail itself, not residents' backyards
 - Permanent and temporary easements throughout the project area including Railroad Avenue and Concord Road
- Impacted abutters are paid at the highest economic value as established by an independent appraiser

What are some concerns to discuss?

- **Tree Clearing** – “Proposed Clearing and Grubbing” line is the maximum extent of vegetation clearing
- **Blanding’s Turtle** – Habitat not found within Project limits
- **Paving the Reformatory** – Asphalt is required for this Project
 - **Effect on cross-country teams**

What are some concerns to discuss?

- **Eminent Domain** – Purchasing portions of the current Reformatory Branch Trail that were discovered to be privately owned
- **Project Timeline** – Length of easements vs. construction time
- **Funding** – State funding pending; Town funding approved
- **Who's in Charge?** – Town vs. State

What if the article fails again?

- **Town will not have clear title to the full path**
 - Utilities
 - Recreational Statute
- **Critical infrastructure improvements will require Town funding**
 - Railroad Ave construction cost = \$3.2M in 2022 dollars (includes \$2.2M for utility upgrades)
 - Concord Road underpass cost = \$2M

What's next?

Community Forum

- Oct. 17,
5:00pm
- Zoom

Special Town Meeting

- Nov. 14,
7:00pm
- BHS
Gymnasium

Thank you!

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for additional questions.

Questions?