

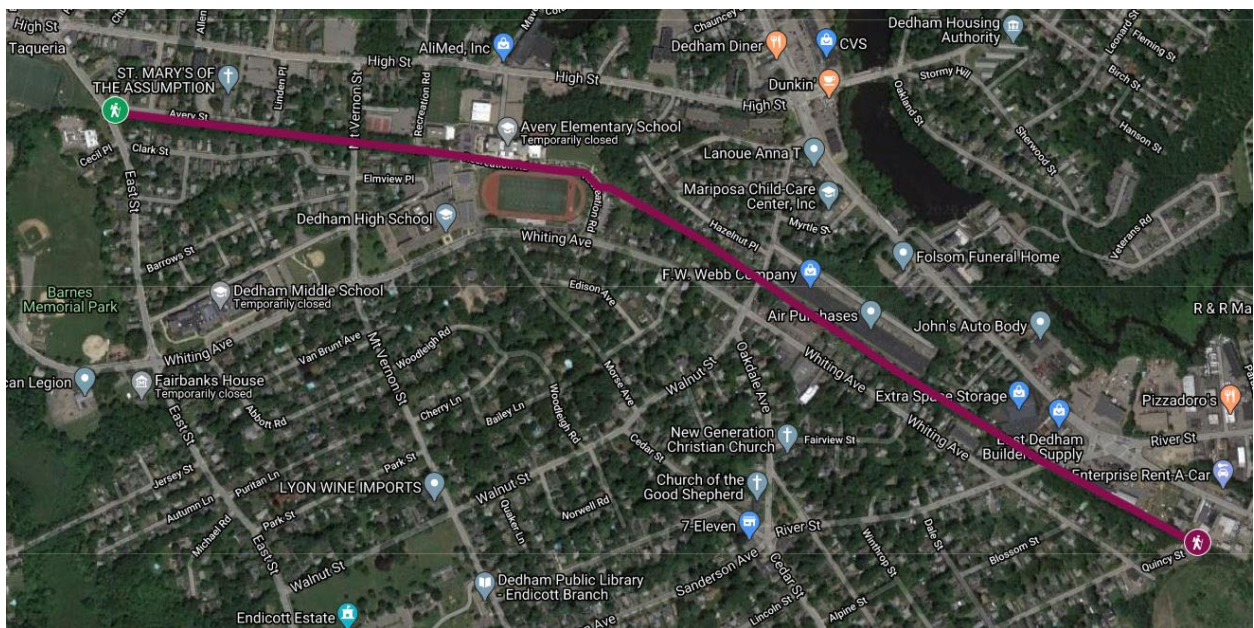


Proposed Dedham Rail Trail

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the length of the proposed rail trail?

The proposed rail trail is 1.3 miles long. The southern end of the rail trail could be extended to near Sprague Street if the Town and MBTA are able to finalize a proposed, but not finalized, lease for additional right-of-way within the abandoned rail corridor.



The northern end of the abandoned rail corridor is located at the intersection of East and Avery streets, near Gonzalez Field. The southern end of the corridor is located near Quincy Street. The southern end could be extended to near Sprague Street if the MBTA were to lease the Town a right-of-way.

Does the Town own the abandoned rail corridor? If so, which Town board has care, custody, and control of the parcel?

The Town owns the abandoned rail corridor formerly known as the Dedham Secondary Branch. By deed from the MBTA dated June 22, 1999, and recorded in Book 13545, Page 523, the Town obtained the fee title to the entirety of an abandoned railroad right-of-way known as the Dedham Secondary Branch (the "Rail Corridor"). The Town's title counsel, Marsh, Moriarty, Ontell & Golder, P.C., conducted extensive review of the record title to the Rail Corridor in 2017 and confirmed the Town's ownership.

The majority of the Rail Corridor is presently held in the care, custody and control of the Board of Selectmen for general municipal purposes, pursuant to the vote of the April 10, 2006 Special Town Meeting under Article 1. The portion of the Rail Corridor between Walnut Street and Mount Vernon Street is held in the care, custody and control of the School Committee for school purposes, pursuant to the vote of the April 2, 2008 Town Meeting under Article 38.

For the portion of the abandoned rail corridor that is under the care, custody, and control of the School Committee for educational use, what action would be required to transfer care, custody, and control to the Board of Selectmen for general municipal use?

Town Meeting must vote, pursuant to G.L. c.40, s.15A, to transfer care, custody and control of the portion of the abandoned rail corridor held by the School Committee to the Board of Selectmen. That vote could be structured to transfer sole custody to the Board of Selectmen, or to establish joint custody between the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen for specified purposes. For such vote to be effective, the School Committee must determine that the custody it is releasing is no longer needed for school purposes.

Is there an option to lease a right-of-way from the MBTA in order to connect or extend the trail beyond the limit of the abandoned rail corridor owned by the Town?

The MBTA has indicated a willingness to consider leasing some portion of its existing right-of-way to the Town for rail trail purposes. Lease terms have been discussed generally but remain to be finally determined. Typically, such a lease would have a term of 99 years.

What type of funding is proposed for the trail? What would be the Town's (taxpayer's) cost for each phase of the project?

Rail trails in Massachusetts are typically paid for with a combination of state, federal, local, and private funding. Many state and federal grants require local matching funds, which might come from private donations. For example, MassTrails Grants, which are awarded annually in amounts ranging from \$5,000 to \$300,000, require that grantees match a minimum of 20% of the grant amount.

For the proposed rail trail in Dedham, due to the cost of the trail, the primary funding source would likely be the MassDOT Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). It is important to note that the TIP funds 100% of construction-related costs, but not design costs. The Town of Dedham would be responsible for

paying for design costs associated with the proposed trail, while the construction costs would be fully covered by MassDOT.

The Town of Dedham currently has two significant projects in the current TIP which encompasses projects programmed for 2020 – 2024. Current TIP projects in Dedham are pedestrian improvements along Elm Street and Rustcraft Road, programmed for 2021, and pedestrian improvements for Bussey Street, programmed for 2023. Together these projects are valued at almost \$8 million. Having a project included in the TIP is a competitive multistep process. The first step requires a municipality to internally prioritize projects that it believes meet the TIP criteria. From there, projects are designed to at least the 25% stage and submitted to the Boston Region MPO. The Boston Region MPO then evaluates and prioritizes from the submitted projects to program regional projects over a 5-year period.

Is the Town concerned about environmental contamination? Assuming there is mitigation necessary due to environmental concerns, including presence of hazardous materials, would the grant cover that cost? What about mitigation for neighbors?

No mitigation relative to environmental contamination is expected, as the abandoned rail corridor was previously capped in place with oversight from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. During the design, construction, and operation of the rail trail, the Town and all contractors will follow Best Management Practices to prevent disruption of the contaminated soil that is believed to be present in the abandoned rail corridor. Because this is a known issue, prior to completing final design of the proposed trail, soil and geotechnical testing would be performed and any additional work necessary to mitigate environmental contamination would be built into the construction cost of the project. Testing, which is part of the design, would be funded by the Town of Dedham. Additional costs required for mitigation, if any, would likely be funded as part of the construction by MassDOT.

With regard to mitigation for neighbors, prior to and during preliminary design, neighbors and other stakeholders would be consulted regarding suggested trail features such as privacy fence and additional vegetative buffers. These elements would be included in the final design and would be paid for with construction funds.

What is the average annual cost to maintain a mile of paved multi-use trail? Are there other costs that the Town would incur? How does the Town propose to pay for the maintenance and other costs in perpetuity?

After completion, the Town would be responsible for the maintenance of the trail. This would include collection of trash and recycling, mowing of grass and maintenance of other plantings, removal and maintenance of trees, plowing of snow, and all other maintenance associated with a transportation asset (similar to any road or sidewalk). It is estimated that this would add roughly \$5,000 to the operating budget of the Department of Public Works on an annual basis.

