



Article #30 – Peninsula Phase II - Bridging the Gap

Southborough Trails Committee (STC)

A Community Preservation Committee Article

Article:

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$211,232 (\$27,552 Contingency) from the CPA Fund Budgeted Reserve for the construction of the final segment of Peninsula Trail requested by the Southborough Trails Committee for recreational purposes.

Using CPA Funds Does Not Impact the Current Tax Rate

Project Overview

The Peninsula Trail is a 1.9-mile nature trail that includes a .4-mile section of accessible trail (i.e., meets ADA criteria). Phase I commenced in 2023. Phase II involves paving/striping/signage for accessible parking spaces (an upgrade to existing parking) and hiring a qualified contractor to oversee and manage the purchase and installation of an elevated boardwalk and pedestrian footbridge. Phase II is critical to rerouting the trail off a dangerous section of Rt.30, connecting three regional trails (Boroughs Loop/Aqueduct/Bay Circuit Trail), and closing the largest remaining gap in Southborough.

Who supports this project?

- Boroughs Loop Trail is a **collaborative effort** (2012) Including a mix of municipalities, non-profits, land trusts, and state agencies. As part of the effort, Southborough committed to do its part to open the Peninsula Trail.
- The overall project is **supported BY EVERY** Board, Commission, Committee, state agency, community stakeholder that has been asked to support this initiative: DCR, MWRA, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Sudbury Valley Trustees, Select Board, Advisory, Community Preservation Committee, Recreation, Southborough Public Accessibility Committee, Council on Aging, Southborough Open Land Foundation, Marlborough, Westborough, Westborough Community Land Trust, Northborough. The Southborough DPW also provided in-kind support for Phase I by installing accessible parking spots as part of the STC's MassTrails grant.
- **Over 1600 signatures** were collected from the community to urge DCR to move forward with the public access plan so we could open this section of trail (Dec'20-Mar'21) when the process was delayed during COVID. In 2022, DCR finalized the public access plan in 2021 and the trail opened.
- **37 Letters of Support** have been collected since 2021 for Phase I and Phase II of this project through CPA applications, MassTrails Grant, and the public access plan initiative.
- This project helps the town meet several goals and recommendations established in the [Master Plan](#) and the [Open Space Recreation Plan](#).

Community comments collected during the 2021 public access plan initiative:

- *"This initiative is an investment in the future."*
- *"More trails in Southborough would be wonderful, and being part of a bigger network is a good thing for the greater community."*
- *"I love this trail and would appreciate not having to run on the roads in between segments. Safer for the drivers as well!"*
- *"Trail connectivity helps people more easily explore and enjoy open spaces. This is an important missing link to open up for public access."*

How will this project benefit the community?

Investing in trails will enrich the lives of residents and enhance the overall quality of life in the community.

Trails contribute to a healthier and happier community in the following ways:

- Increases **walkability** and access to open space
- **Expands recreational resources** for all abilities and ages (the **1st accessible trail** segment in town).
- **Improves** overall quality of life; access to resources that will enhance physical and mental health through activity.
- Provides opportunities for **community engagement** through volunteerism and programming.
- Promotes **environmental stewardship** by providing opportunities for education and awareness about local ecosystems which fosters a sense of connection to the natural world.
- **Educates** trail visitors about **Southborough's history** through interpretive signage and programming.
- Creates a **long-lasting community asset** for current and future generations to enjoy.

Understanding the project cost: Why is it higher than you might expect?

- Project consists of a ~70-75'x6' Boardwalk and ~65'x6' bridge (will meet ADA criteria).
- The initial investment costs more – there are long-term savings on maintenance and replacement costs.
- The proposed materials, FRP (Fiberglass reinforced polymer), is known for its durability and longevity (~50-75 yrs.)
- Minimize maintenance costs, highly resistant to moss and mildew growth.
- Lighter weight - bridge is modulated for easier installation (important for this location).
- Does not leach chemicals into the surroundings.

The importance of this project? Who will use this trail?

- Phase II completes the Peninsula trail connection.
- Reroute the trail off a dangerous section of Rt. 30, which is not safe for pedestrians.
- Close the gap for 2 regional trails and intersect with a 3rd trail network.
- Adding accessible structures to trails to promote inclusivity and equity allowing individuals with varying abilities to enjoy outdoor activities is our legal and ethical obligation as a town.
- We are working with the Appalachian Mountain Club leadership and volunteers to build out the natural surface trail to be as accessible as possible (next to the boardwalk). While not all the natural surface trail will meet ADA criteria, we are focused on what can be done.
- Access to trails and expansion to recreational resources has ranked high in all public surveys/forums in town.

Will there be parking?

- For Phase II, we are working with Sanofi to secure parking near Stony Brook Road (dependent upon crosswalk installation by town).
- Other existing parking: Small parking lot exists at the intersection of Rt.30 & Central St, plus two ADA parking spots at this location. More parking can be found at Fayville Park on Central Street (.3mi walk to trailhead).



Phase II Location

“Nothing worthwhile was ever accomplished without the will to start, the enthusiasm to continue and, regardless of temporary obstacles, the persistence to complete.” Waite Phillips