

Summary of Plans for Topsfield Linear Common and Border to Boston¹ Trail February 2008

Issue	Topsfield Linear Common/ Topsfield Rail Trail	Border to Boston Trail
Location	From Wenham town line to the Boxford town line near Pye Brook Park (3.9 miles). The trail runs along an inactive railroad right of way. The trail goes by the Topsfield Fair grounds, through the center of town, passing behind Proctor School and the Village Shopping Center and then connects with Pye Brook Community Park.	From Danvers to Salisbury (28 miles). The trail passes through 8 towns – including (from South to North) Danvers, Wenham, Topsfield, Boxford, Georgetown, Newbury, Newburyport, Salisbury.
Lead Organization	Topsfield Rail Trail Committee (Selectmen appointed)	Mass Highway Department, Essex Natural Heritage Commission, Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, and representatives from the other seven towns
Goal	Construct a recreational path in Topsfield	Construct recreational path from Danvers to Salisbury
Basic Design Concept	8 feet wide stone dust trail with 2 foot wide shoulders	Each town is recommending their preferences for the trail surface. Topsfield recommended a stone dust trail.
Access to Right of Way	The Town of Topsfield has signed a 99-year lease with the MBTA for the section south of Main Street. The Town of Topsfield owns the section by the Proctor School and a private individual owns the section between Main St. and the tennis courts (there is an easement for the trail through this property), We are working with National Grid to establish lease terms for the section north of Washington Street.	Each Town needs to secure access to the right of way in their respective towns. Most of the land is owned by National Grid or MBTA. Topsfield, Newburyport, and Salisbury have secured access to portions of the trail. The remaining sections are not currently under lease.
Current Activities	The Town of Topsfield is finalizing a Request for Proposal from engineering firms to prepare a preliminary design for the section of the trail from Washington Street to South Main Street. (Phase 1A).	Mass Highway is in the process of finalizing a Request for Proposal from engineering firms to prepare the 25% design for the entire Border to Boston trail. This design includes determining the trail alignment, crossing of roads such as Rt. 1 and Rt. 97 as well as Interstate 95.
Schedule	The bidding process is expected to take a month or two. The preliminary design is expected to take approximately 3 months to complete.	The bidding process is expected to be finalized in the summer of 2008.. The 25% design is expected to take approximately 1 year to complete.
Funding of Phase IA	The Town of Topsfield has applied for and received \$42,000 in grants for design and construction activities. There are no plans to allocate any Town funds to support the design, construction or maintenance of the trail.	Mass Highway intends to secure funding for the 25% design, with no contribution required from the towns. Congressman Tierney obtained an \$800,000 federal earmark in 2005 to support the development of the Border to Boston trail.
Future Activities	The Town will vote by ballot in May 2008 on whether to proceed with construction of the Topsfield Linear Common using outside funding (i.e., grants). Construction is expected to occur in phases, as outside funding allows. Construction of Phase 1A could take place in 2008. The timing for subsequent phases is unknown.	A 75% and full design package will need to be prepared following the completion of the 25% design and then funding will need to be obtained for construction by MassHighway. Construction of the trail will likely be in 5 to 10 years (or more) away.
Website for More Information	www.topsfieldtrail.org , RailTrail@Topsfield-MA.gov	www.bordertoboston.org

Note: This summary was prepared by the Topsfield Rail Trail Committee to provide residents of Topsfield with information based on our current understanding of the plans for development of the trails.

¹ Although the trail is called “Border to Boston,” it actually extends from the New Hampshire border to Danvers. There are no plans under active development to extend the trail to Boston.