



Common Questions: Crime, Litter & Privacy

Nothing but praise for Salem bike path

To the Editor:

I read with interest the article on the Danvers page headline, "Bike path proponents launch petition." I thought my experiences living with a similar bike path in Salem might be relevant to the discussion.

When we purchased our home, our property abutted the abandoned Marblehead branch of the Boston & Maine Railroad. While the tracks remained, they had become overgrown with thick weeds and brambles. One fear we had was that one day regional planners might reactivate the right-of-way behind our house for light commuter rail to Marblehead.

Several years ago, we received notice about a proposed plan to con-

vert the former rail bed to a bike path. As abutters we were extremely apprehensive about this proposal. We envisioned that such a path would open access to undesirable activities such as drugs, drinking, graffiti, litter, gangs and neighborhood crime. We were also concerned about a lack of privacy, having streams of people walking and biking through our backyard.

As a result of these concerns, the city did provide a fence and some landscaping to minimize impacts to bike path neighbors. Having lived with the bike path now for several years, none of the above concerns have materialized. The bike path has instead become a haven for families; couples strolling hand in hand, moth-

ers with strollers, children pushing doll carriages, families on bikes, joggers, serious cyclists, neighbors walking their dogs, Salem State sports teams working out, etc. In the winter, it is a popular place for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

Mostly, it has brought neighbors together with a passing hello or to stop and chat while out for a walk. I have never felt unsafe on the bike path, day or night, and we have never had to report a problem of any kind.

I believe the Salem bike path to be an asset to our property value, quality of life and to our neighborhood. I believe the Danvers project would have a similar result.

Bob Fraser
Salem

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