



Town of Falmouth – Ad hoc Connector Committee

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Memorandum

To: Falmouth Town Council

From: Ad hoc Connector Committee

Re: Trail connection – Community Park and School Campus

November 19, 2015

Project Description and Council Charge

The concept of the East Branch Recreation Trail between the School Campus and Community Park dates back to the late 1990's and the Community Park Connector Committee has been assigned the task of re-development of a vision and plan for a connection pathway, bridge(s) and/or tunnel between the Falmouth Schools Campus and Community Park in accordance with the charge established by the Town Council on October 15, 2014. This segment of the charge offers guidance to the committee:

- Focus on developing a trail connection to provide a safe, accessible and legal means to walk directly to and from the School Campus and Community Park.
- Offer recommendations for consideration by the Town Council:
 - ❖ Fundraising and possibilities within a Public/Private Partnership
 - ❖ Community Support
 - ❖ Public accessibility and safety, and
 - ❖ Implementation strategies

The Committee is reporting to the Council to offer an update and a proposal for moving forward. This memorandum offers some history, next steps, design funding required to take the next steps and a proposed timeline.

History

1996 - JAMM Structural and Civil Engineering - Preliminary construction and preliminary cost

1999 - T. Gorrill, PE - DeLuca-Hoffman - Preliminary construction cost options - Falmouth Trail Railroad - Underpass 10' box culvert

2002 – Town RFP for East Branch Recreation Path – Gorrill & Palmer responded

2007 – Piscataqua River deteriorated snowmobile bridge removed and town commitment to not condone RR crossing

2010 – Gorrill & Palmer prepared Preliminary Assessment for potential East Branch Recreation Path

2012 – geotechnical work regarding possible tunnel connection and some initial cost estimates

2013 – more engineering and estimates

2015 – new design using accessible approaches

Moving forward

The Committee reviewed latest design on Sept 8, 2015 and determined that in order to develop good information for the Town Council and to help it form a firm recommendation of options that more consultation from engineering and grant consultants would be necessary. The Committee laid out a plan to look at three options for the crossing which would include design as well as possible financing options:

Option A – Attempt one more time to request MDOT to consider an at-grade crossing. The Committee believes that an at-grade crossing with a ten foot multipurpose transportation route that meets ADA standards, would be the ideal solution. This approach in design will accommodate the significant use of this trail system as a multi-purpose transportation corridor.

Option B – Enhance current design with approaches and a bridge similar in design to river point so that the approaches will be at a grade to meet ADA standards.

Option C – Enhance the bridge, approaches and entire trail from start to end points to become a completely accessible trail system meeting all ADA standards.

Process and Timeline

Fall/Winter 2015/2016 – Review right title and interest (RTI) matters. Report back to the Town Council with any RTI concerns and a plan of action. Upon completion of RTI review, request Town Council approval to continue the process of feasibility and funding for associated engineering services. Consulting funding will be \$20k for engineering and \$10k for grant and other consultation assistance. Other resources will include the Open Space Ombudsman, Community Programs Director, Public Works Director/Town Engineer, Long Range Planning and Economic Development Director, Land Trust Executive Director, County, and GPCOG. This team will serve as the grant finding team. The Committee will also spend time to identify stakeholders and plan for public input.

Winter 2015/2016 – Employ engineering and grant finding consultants to preliminarily design all three conceptual designs. Services shall include preliminary design, participating in public input, meeting with MDOT and RR officials, Committee meetings, and search for alternative funding and grant sources

Spring 2016 – Present first draft of project options to Town Council and public ultimately requesting Council approval

Spring/Summer 2016 - Fundraising and grant application process. Research and begin application for grant and alternative funding. Also consider a private fundraising campaign. Design a project implementation schedule to synchronize with a package of grant timelines.

November 2016 – Referendum (only if spending more than \$1,000,000 in local funds)

Fall 2016 – Final engineering

Winter 2016/17 – Bid for construction

Spring/summer 2017 – Construction

*Adjust schedule to accommodate grant funding – this could delay the project 1 to 3 years.

Some grant options include:

Private Funding – GPCOG

- GPCOG results - hundreds available for review

Public Funding

- Federal
 - ✓ Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) (NPS)
- State
 - ✓ Regional Trails Program (RTP)
 - ✓ Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program
- Regional
 - ✓ Portland Area PACTS
- Local government
- Other