

Alternative 2 - Gap in the BFRT

This alternative proposes to leave a gap in the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail from the northern end of the MBTA Commuter Rail parking area and the EOTC Owned right of way on the south side of Main Street. See Figure 6 on the following page.

Signage would be proposed indicating that the trail ends. It would be GPI's recommendation to propose additional signage and possibly a diagram indicating that the trail begins again south of Main Street to assist users not familiar with the area and the trail with continuing south when they reach the end of the trail.

Trail users who wish to continue will seek to find the most direct route through this area which would be to travel through the MBTA parking lot to the existing crossing forcing trail users to share use of the parking lot with motorists. In the July 13th meeting with the MBTA and DPU it was suggested that fencing be provided to prevent this movement. It would be GPI's recommendation to provide stockade fencing or chain link fencing blocking access to the Concord Park parking facility and the MBTA commuter rail parking lot to prevent trail users from utilizing this route. Chain link fencing could be hidden with landscaping. Even with fencing, trail users may find a way around the fencing and back into the parking lot whether it is from the railroad spur or the Concord Assisted Living Facility property unless the entire lot is fenced in. Installation of the fence would require easements and approval from Concord Park and EOTC.



Alternative 2 Summary

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Effectiveness

This will not be an effective alternative. Trail users will be left on their own to figure out how to get from the end of the trail to south of Main Street or vice versa.

Short-term and Long-term Reliability

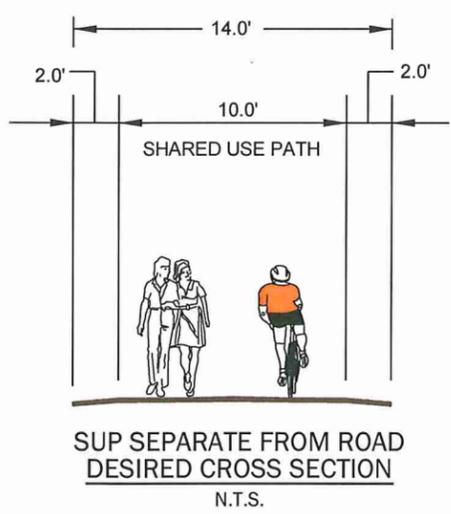
This alternative does not propose a continuous route for the BFRT. The *Massachusetts Bicycle Facilities Inventory Project* was completed in 1995 by Mass Bike under contract to MassDOT to inventory proposed and existing bicycle facilities. Part of this process was to prioritize the proposed facilities. One of the criteria for prioritization was connectivity with other routes and directness. If the connectivity was provided, the proposed facility received the most points. The *Massachusetts Bicycle Transportation Plan* emphasizes creating a network of trails. Leaving a gap does not meet the goals established by the State. With a gap in the trail, trail users who are not familiar with the trail and the area may reach the end of the proposed trail and turn around and go back to where they came from.

Short-term and Long-term Maintenance Costs

Aside from maintaining fencing and signing the short-term and long-term costs for this alternative would be minimal.

Difficulty in Implementing

No right-of-way would be required for this alternative. Easements would be required from Concord Park and EOTC for the installation of fence on their property.



- LEGEND:**
- — — — — = SHARED USE PATH (SUP) SEPARATE FROM ROADWAY
 - - - - - = PROPOSED FENCE

ALTERNATIVE 2 - CONCEPTUAL PLAN
GAP IN THE BFRT
CONCORD, MA

FIGURE 6
SCALE: 1" = 80'

The MBTA has no objections to this alternative but did note that funding may be an issue without a continuous path. MassDOT would likely not approve this alternative for state and/or federal funding since it does not present a continuous route.

With federal funds being allocated towards the construction of the BFRT, a Categorical Exclusion (CE) Checklist would be required. Since work will be proposed within the Riverfront Area of Nashoba Brook, a Notice of Intent must be filed with the Concord Natural Resources Commission. It is possible that an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) would also be required assuming that this would be constructed as part of the Concord BFRT and not independently. It should be noted that these permits would be required even if this alternative was not selected. This alternative does not trigger additional permitting.

Cost to Design and Implement

The design efforts for including signing and fencing on the plans would be minimal. Installation of fencing and signing would cost approximately \$40,000.00.

This option could also jeopardize funding for the project. The Federal Highway Administration and MassDOT do not fund portions of trails. All trails constructed with state and federal dollars must have logical starting and stopping points. Although West Concord Center is a logical terminus with the Commuter Rail Station and the businesses, it does not provide connectivity to the south for trail users headed south or to the north for trail users headed north. If funding is lost, the Town of Concord would need to fund construction of the BFRT through the community. Currently the construction cost is estimated at approximately \$7,000,000.00.

Risk to Public Safety

This option strands trail users where the trail ends. Without a proposed design, this option presents a concern getting trail users across Main Street to the EOTC owned right-of-way. With a gap in the trail, user safety could be jeopardized without the proper signing, striping and guidance.

Vehicular Impacts

Although this alternative does not propose any direct vehicular impacts, with a gap in the trail, trail users will be forced to find their way to where the BFRT begins again and they could go in any direction. This could present the potential for trail user/vehicular impacts, especially for trail users not familiar with the area.

Benefits to the Community

This alternative does not propose a continuous route for the BFRT. It could certainly discourage users unfamiliar with the area from visiting the trail. Leaving a gap may also prevent those unfamiliar users from entering the village of West Concord and visiting the local businesses. A solid fence could negatively impact the visual character and aesthetics of the area.

Timeliness to Implement

Alternative 2 does not propose any special or time consuming design features so assuming this would be incorporated into the BFRT Phase 2C design and construction, the design could be completed in approximately 24 months and the construction could be completed in an additional 24 months.

Context Sensitive Aesthetics

A solid fence to prevent trail users from entering the MBTA Commuter Rail parking area could negatively impact the visual character and aesthetics of the area.