



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Department of Conservation and Recreation

Massachusetts

## Norwottuck Rail Trail Rehabilitation



### Project Update

**August, 2011**

At the request of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) DCR and MassDOT agreed to complete the design and permitting of the Norwottuck Rail Trail Reconstruction Project "in-house" with MassDOT and DCR resources rather than fund an additional consultant design agreement.

This decision is intended to:

- Preserve as much as possible of the balance of the current earmark (\$4,449,450 including state match) for construction as additional non-earmark federal funds expected to be available from FFY 2010 for a successor consultant design agreement are not available
- Expedite the restart of the design and permitting effort by eliminating the time required to negotiate and execute the successor consultant design agreement(s)
- Ensure that the design meets both DCR and MassDOT guidelines for the trail, and addresses community concerns

MassDOT District 2, in cooperation with DCR, will prepare full Plans, Specifications, and Estimate (PS&E) for advertising and prepare the remaining environmental permit applications and MEPA documents for filing needed to move the project towards construction in 2013. Generally the scope includes:

- Reclamation and paving at 10' width from Damon Road to Spruce Hill Road in Hadley
- Reclamation and paving, or patching and overlay re-paving, at current width from Spruce Hill Road to Station Road. Opportunities to gaining additional width up to 10' will be explored provided that this does not result in additional wetland impacts or substantive tree removals. The extent of reclamation versus patching and overlay re-paving will be dependent on costs and constraints.
- No work west of Damon Road or east of Station Road
- Re-deck of bridges. The Snell Street bridge and the Connecticut River bridge are anticipated to be re-decked / repaired under DCRs Accelerated Bridge Program.
- Accessible ramps as needed at Route 116
- Expansion of Damon Road parking lot

- Road crossing treatments, turn-arounds, pull-outs, tree removal and tree planting depending on budget
- Does not include the creation of a spillway or dam at the beaver impacted area in Amherst
- Does not include realignment at the Route 9 tunnel.

We anticipate that this revised scope will reduce wetland impacts below 5,000 square feet. MassDOT and DCR anticipate submitting a Notice of Project Change to MEPA that will eliminate the requirement for an EIR. MassDOT and DCR will submit NOI's to the community Conservation Commissions.

DCR and MassDOT will also work collaboratively to address community concerns including:

- Wetland impacts
- Use of gabion baskets
- Tree removal
- Trail alignment and width near East Street
- Connections to the Swift Connector and malls
- Impoundment and erosion near the Amherst Farmers Supply

DCR and MassDOT believe that this represents a positive development for the Norwottuck Reconstruction Project that will allow us to most effectively improve the trail and address community concerns making the most of limited resource.