

MWRC Minutes
Thursday January 25, 2024
8:00-9:30 am
Via Zoom

Attendees

Ashland: Alvaro Esparza
Framingham: Rick McKenna; Simon Alexandrovich; Sarkis Sarkisian
Holliston: Tina Hein; Barbara Peatie
Natick: Amanda Loomis, Morgan Griffiths
Marlborough: Katie Robey
Southborough: Meme Luttrell; Sam Stivers; Bill Cundiff
Sherborn: Marian Neutra, Robert Wolff, Heidi Doyle
Wayland: Mary Antes
Wellesley: Colette Aufranc; Eric Arbeene
Weston: Laurie Bent; Imaikalani Aiu
Associate Members: Susan Nicholl, Office of Senate President Karen Spilka; Jason Palitsch, 495/MW Partnership;
Elissa Landre, MassAudubon
MAPC Coordinators: Camille Jonlin, Travis Pollack
Guests: Georgia Barlow, Sasha Parodi, Javier Gutierrez, David Loutzenheiser (MAPC)

Call to Order and Welcome

Tina welcomed everyone to the meeting. No Roll Call was taken.

Welcome and Introduction of New Official Members & Attendees (5 minutes)

- Sam Stivers, Southborough
- Robert Wolff, Sherborn
- Eric Arbeene, Wellesley
- Bill Cundiff, Southborough

Discussion of Future Meeting Topics (based upon feedback from one-on-one meetings), MAPC (15 minutes)

- Travis went through the list of topics (see attached proposed topic list)
- Colette – this is good, it serves MWRC between now and when we adopt a formal workplan, this should go on the website
- Laurie – second idea of website, want materials to be there for reference
- Marian – include the Zoom link in reminder emails

Trails Project Scope of Work, David Loutzenheiser, Senior Transportation Planner, MAPC (15 minutes)

- Tina introduced David Loutzenheiser
- David – we've been working on trails since 2018; today proposing 2024 tasks for your feedback
- (See attached presentation slides with the project list)
- Goal of work is to have at least one Greenway network in each community that connects to two communities outside of that community
- A "Greenway" is separate from traffic, meant for biking and for walking (either shared use path or protected bike lanes next to sidewalks), and accessible / paved surface

- Prioritizing projects in Environmental Justice communities; closing small gaps that open up a larger network; and close proximity to MBTA stations
- Q&A
 - Colette – in addition to MBTA stations, should note connection to MWRTA stations and other RTA stations
 - Katie – there is a new floating trail in Marlborough to be open again in spring
 - Sam – Southborough does have some funds for roads and infrastructure; interested in walkway under new 495 interchange at Route 9
 - Jason – there was conversation about combining two 495 interchange improvements (Route 9 and 495), and hopefully the 495/Route 9 improvement could happen next; something as specific as the placement of the trail isn't a conversation yet
 - Laurie – bridge over Fitchburg line in Weston is great; also want to mention Route 30 project, shared use path connecting to Newton, allowing people to bike from Wayland to Riverside T line but there is some local opposition (abutters) so we need to tout the regional benefits
 - Morgan – Natick interested in partnering with Weston on this
 - Tina – likes the approach of prioritizing trails that connect at least 3 communities
- MAPC will resend the presentation and scope, and if anyone has feedback, they can email MAPC
- David sent a link for MAPC trail data in chat: <https://datacommon.mapc.org/browser/Transportation/Bicycle%20and%20Pedestrian%20Facilities>

Legislative Breakfast Topic Discussion, Georgia Barlow, MAPC (15 minutes)

- To occur Friday, April 26; suggestion in chat to use the new Marlborough public library
- Georgia – lots of exciting housing legislation like Homes Act, Municipal Empowerment Act, new budget; Government Affairs colleagues will send summaries of these, and they will frame the legislative breakfasts discussion on housing
- There is a housing and affordability crisis, and communities are doing great work to support residents so we want to use the breakfast to talk to legislators about support needed from state
- There will be a legislative panel for MAPC to facilitate questions to legislators and audience Q&A, but we also want to hear from you all for the legislators
- Also, MAPC will send a proposal to discuss and vote on during February's meeting for MWRC funding for subregional research into housing data
- Ideas for Legislative Breakfast topics:
 - Colette – Wellesley is working on MBTA communities and housing along Route 9 that is walking distance to Elliot station in Newton, and you walk on the sidewalk that is owned but not maintained by MassDOT – so, you can't access train from housing! Not enough funding; could MWRC write letter to Tibbitts-Nutt about funding for this, these sidewalks degrade after 5 years or so
 - Imai – Good to cover big issues like the Housing Bond Bill and Municipal Modernization Act; Weston wants to support ADUs and subdivision of larger lots/houses in a way that helps families and doesn't make ADUs into speculative housing, so one idea is to specify that ADUs or subdivisions can only happen if someone has owned the main house for a minimum of two years to favor existing homeowners.
 - Katie – concern about ADUs and that they must be owner-occupied/limit short-term rentals; not sure if they should be by-right
 - Eric – Wellesley passed ADU bylaw last year and had minimum leasing term of 30 days by annual affidavit to make sure they aren't Airbnb's; also ensured ADUs can be attached as of right and needs special permit to be detached; tried to incorporate safeguards of community concerns, so other communities are welcome to ask Wellesley if they have questions

Community Share: Successes of 2023 and Outlook For 2024, All (35 minutes)

- Ashland/Alvaro: MBTA zoning focus
- Framingham/Rick: new mapping and new signage of trails; joined Natick in a New Year's Eve celebration; focus on downtown improvement including facade improvement grant from OneStop (MDI) to bring people into the area; life sciences workforce development effort
- Holliston/Tina: Great First Night trail walk had 4,000 people come; successful trail work
- Marlborough/Katie: New Mayor, Katie was newly elected; downtown businesses did a "winter wonderland" with closed main street, free hot chocolate and chowder; MBTA communities by end of 2024; built new school and are still overcrowded so want to determine how to build another school
- Natick/Amanda: Spring town meeting with major re-writes to tee up MBTA communities; working with consultant on West Natick; MBTA communities vote in fall; lots in housing and tenant-based rental assistance, want to serve more families
- Natick/Morgan: transportation projects like Route 27 both North and South of Natick Center and making them more accessible to multi-modal transportation; reconstruction at Route 9 and Route 27 that will continue for a few years: Cochituate Rail Trail stops shy of commuter rail station so trying to connect those; also working on bike and ped plan this year
- Sherborn/Marian: worked for 6 years to complete housing near Framingham and Natick borders and water was the issue, but got article passed at fall town meeting for North Sherborn Water District to get MWRA water and sewer from Framingham, need this to pass at state level as soon as possible; finalized new library in 2023 and far over budget; new ground-mounted solar legislation and MBTA Communities
- Sherborn/Rob: with Framingham and Ashland, have done a deal for 5 separate pieces of property to protect trails and wetlands and give Ashland ownership of a section of the dike trail for 100 acres of conservation land in Sherborn that currently doesn't have great access; Framingham great lead on this; trail connection between upper Charles and Framingham commuter rail station and along Chris Walsh to Bruce Freeman, still hope to work out deal with CSX; CSX may consider "rails with trails" option; MBTA took over CSX active line from Sherborn to Foxborough and there is a proposal for rails with trails in Foxborough, so MBTA may be interested in developing that further north (long-term goal)
- Sherborn/Heidi: large scale solar bylaw with review by Attorney General ongoing; putting forth MBTA overlay district at upcoming town meeting and so far there has been an overall positive response by abutters
- Southborough/Meme: trying to get MBTA Communities to town meeting in March, took info from public mapping sessions into overlay district and want to pass it this spring; trails committee finished peninsula trail which added ADA compliant section; Econ Dev finished wastewater study along Route 9 because it doesn't have public sewer; PB and SB passed public shade tree policy after the bylaw did not pass town meeting
- Southborough/Sam: improving sidewalk network in town including through ARPA funds; have 3 40B projects in pipeline and may introduce new housing in Southborough which is exciting; Southborough belongs to Complete Streets
- Southborough/Bill: talking to SB for recommendations on where first sidewalk project should be
- Wayland/Mary: approved new COA community center after 15 years of trying to get more space; transitioning to a Town Manager so things are working differently but going well; MBTA Communities on annual town meeting agenda, Route 20 forum coming up
- Wellesley/Colette: two elementary schools being built; refurbished interior of Town Hall which is ongoing; Hazard Mitigation Plan and Equity Audit ongoing; housing plan ongoing alongside MBTA compliance; need new fire station but not doing anything yet; funding for downtown to reconsider mobility, walking, and rejuvenating it; PFAS mitigation with temporary filtration systems; hiring – need new fire chief and CFO, new transportation staff on budget, have new HR and assistant HR directors and need compensation and classification study due to differences between union and non-union workers; successful work with

MWRTA on microtransit and bus routes into downtown; trying to get ADA access to a train station; Colette up for reelection

- Wellesley/Eric: bringing MBTA Communities to spring town meeting March 25, doing road shows to educate people and public meetings, have a website for it; residential incentive overlay project for town meeting; Strategic Housing Plan, since the HPP is five years old and Wellesley wants to go beyond it to think through both affordable and market-rate housing, where it should be located and what people are looking for, releasing RFP soon to do this year
- Weston/Laurie: new restaurant for Josiah Smith Tavern in middle of Weston trying to open by fall of 2024; Municipal Aggregation Plan now approved; working on water tank project for sites for three tanks
- Weston/Imai: tree improvements; MBTA Communities work; wants an easy way to find out what other communities are doing for 3A (MAPC is developing a website!)
- 495 Partnership/Jason: had annual meeting in December <https://www.495partnership.org/trc>
- MassAudubon/Elissa: working on accessibility between nature and cultural institutions in South Natick for people without access to cars; in Holliston, acquired 185 acres and staff are determining how to open it to the public in 2025 including trail layouts, signage, connectivity around it

Other Business Not Known at Time of Posting (5 minutes)

- MWRTA got more funding this year from State

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 9:32 am.

MetroWest Regional Collaborative

2024 Possible Meeting Topic Areas



February

- I-90 and Climate Equity projects share updates and Q&A
- Housing Data Project Concept
- Establish bylaw subcommittee

March

- Wastewater
- FY25 Work Plan Topics and Projects

April

- Legislative Breakfast (Friday, April 26, in-person; location TBA)

May

- Transportation, possibly MBTA listening session meeting

June

- Vote on FY25 Work Plan
- Possible sustainability directors' lunchtime meeting (Anyone can participate)

Potential Additional Topic Areas (from Travis/Camille one-on-one meetings with municipalities, with number of mentions in parentheses)

- Housing (10)
- Transportation/Transit (10)
- Solar (4)
- Wastewater (3)
- EV Charging (3)
- Sidewalks/Transportation Safety/Accessibility (3)
- Business Attraction & Retention (2)
- DCR Coordination and Properties (2)
- Shared Staffing & Services (2)
- Local Newspaper/Media (2)
- Truck Idling (1)
- Joint Bid/Construction Projects to Reduce Costs (1)
- State House Bills and Budget Updates (1)

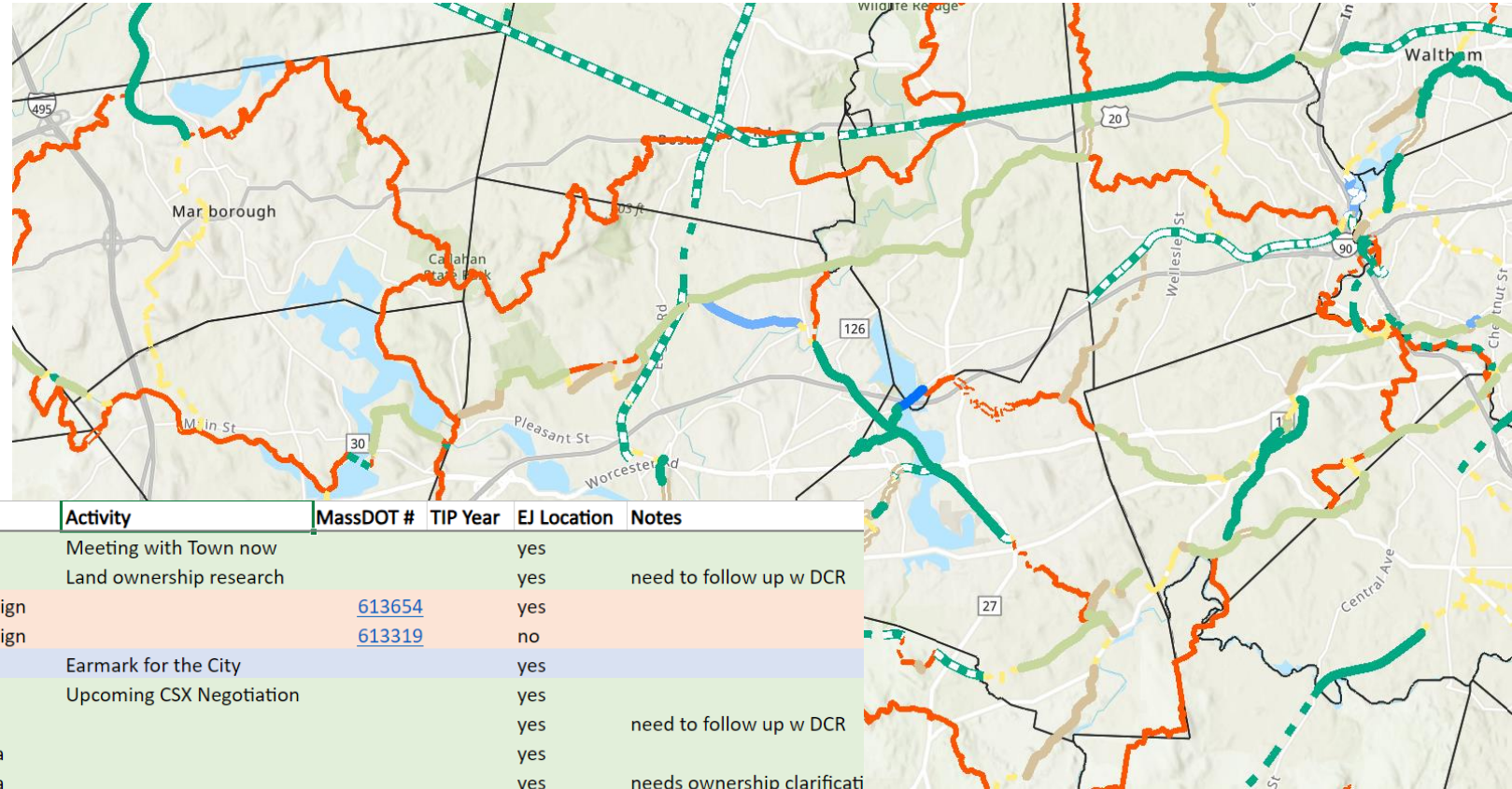
Questions or Ideas? Contact the Subregional Coordinators:

Camille Jonlin – cjonlin@mapc.org or Travis Pollack – tpollack@mapc.org

Tasks

- Task 1 Project Tracking and Mapping
- Task 2 Identify Project Priorities
- Task 3 Priority Project Advancement
- Task 4 Branding and Marketing
- Task 5 Signage and Wayfinding
- Task 6 Events and Meetings

Task 1 Project Tracking and Mapping



Community	Regional Trail Projects	Geographic Limits	Status	Activity	MassDOT #	TIP Year	EJ Location	Notes
Ashland	Upper Charles Loop	Hopkinton SP to Framingham TL	Planning	Meeting with Town now			yes	
Ashland	Aikens Rd Connector	Aikens Rd to Hopkinton SP	Research	Land ownership research			yes	need to follow up w DCR
Framingham	Bruce Freeman RT ph 4	Route 9 to Sudbury TL?	Prelim design		613654		yes	
Framingham	Bruce Freeman RT ph 3	Eaton Rd W into Sudbury	Prelim design		613319		no	
Framingham	Chris Walsh Trail	Farm Pond south loop	Design	Earmark for the City			yes	
Framingham	Upper Charles Trail	Framingham MBTA to Sherborn TL	Planning	Upcoming CSX Negotiation			yes	
Framingham	Sudbury Aqueduct	Framingham MBTA to Sherborn TL	Stagnant				yes	need to follow up w DCR
Framingham	Beaver Dam Brook Trail	UCL Trail to Aqueduct	MAPC Idea				yes	
Framingham	RR ROW	Tripp St to Beaver St approximately	MAPC Idea				yes	needs ownership clarification
Framingham	Carol Getchell Connector	CRT to Carol Getchell Trail on dike	Feasibility	Solomon Fd funding			yes	Advocacy project
Framingham	Weston Aqueduct	Bruce Freeman RT to Southborough line	Stagnant				yes	need to open and sign rem
Framingham	Bruce Freeman connector	Cushing Park to BFRT	Dormant	MAPC Idea			yes	
Framingham	Wauashakum Trail	Downtown to Ashland state park	Dormant	status of feasibility study?			yes	
Holliston	Holliston Greenbelt Trail	Ashland SP to UCRT	Implementation	Town seeking easements			no	need to follow up
Hopkinton	Upper Charles Loop	Milford to Ashland		resolve routing plan			no	comment on routing plan
Hopkinton	Upper Charles to Hopkinton	Through Legacy Farms	status?				yes	
Marlborough	Panther Trail	Circle trail within Marlborough	Implementation				yes	Town project, need to map
Marlborough	Assabet RT Greenway Ext	ARRT terminus to Southborough	MAPC Idea	None			yes	Need to scope with the Cit
Marlborough	Wachusett Aqueduct	Southborough to Northborough	Status?	access permit on open channel			yes	keep following

Task 2 – Identify Project Priorities

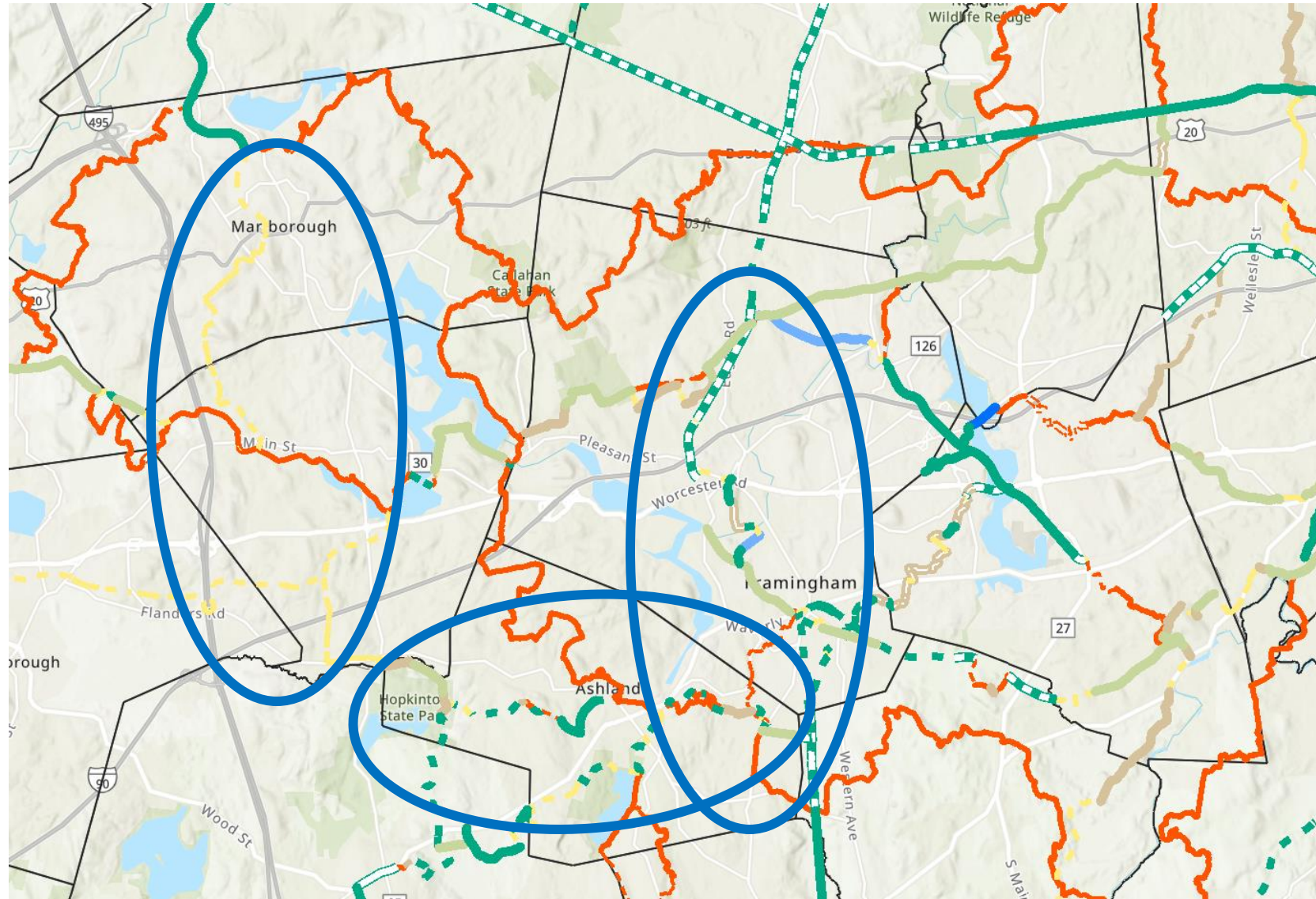
Goal for each community to have at least one greenway the meets the following criteria

- ☐ Separation from Traffic
- ☐ Accessible surface
- ☐ Connects to two or more adjacent communities
- ☐ Connects to the nearest transit station
- ☐ Highest Priority
 - Environmental Justice communities (Framingham, Ashland, Marlborough, West Natick)
 - Closing small gaps yield significant network miles
 - Close proximity to MBTA stations



Task 3 Priority Project Advancement

Framingham
Ashland
Southborough
Marlborough



Tasks 4 and 5 Marketing and Signage



Task 6 Upcoming Meetings

- Annual Trail Summit –
Marlborough, Southborough,
Ashland??
- Individual meetings in the above
locations



LandLine webpage

- Develop branding for the effort that can be used in digital and print.

Deliverable – website, perhaps paper products, media attention

Task 5 – MW regional signs and wayfinding

Using the MassDOT Signage and Wayfinding Guide, identify funding to begin to implement signs and wayfinding throughout the region on completed segments.

- Identify funding through foundations and other sources to do a wayfinding pilot.
- Develop a signage plan with selected communities (more than 1 adjacent)

Deliverable – procure funding to develop and install signage in a selected area

Task 6 – MW Trail focused meetings

During 2024, three trail focused meetings will be held, as well as the annual summit. The trail focused meetings to occur separate from regular MW meetings, and focused on projects in 3 or less communities.

Place based focused meetings, with deep dive discussion on scoping, planning or implementation of priority projects

1) Framingham focus – recap of the fall trail summit progress toward next steps on a number of projects

2) Ashland Upper Charles Trail – work toward revisioning the Upper Charles Trail

3) Southborough and Marlborough – Focus developing a Greenway corridor to connect the Assabet and Open Channel Trails

4) Aqueduct Trail Network – Focus on completing the last remaining sections. Identify challenges and opportunities

Annual trail summit focusing on information sharing and an outdoor walk. Target locations – Marlborough, Southborough, or Ashland