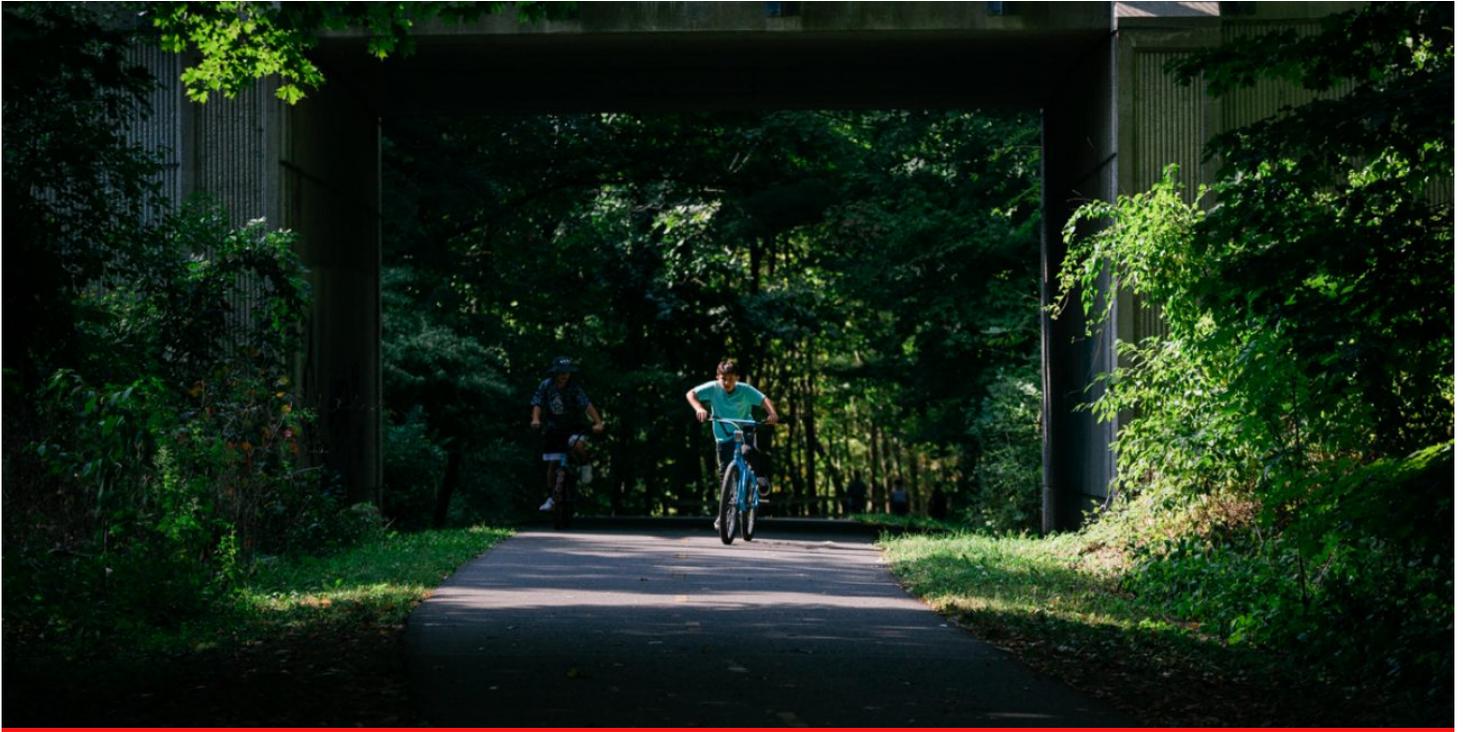


NEWS

PEABODY SEEKS TO BRIDGE GAP IN GREENWAY PROJECT

BY ANNE MARIE TOBIN | September 23, 2020



Nick Vetrano, 11, left, and Matt Flaz, 10, both of Peabody, ride their bikes along the Independence Greenway in Peabody on Wednesday afternoon. (Spenser Hasak)

You have 4 free articles left this month.

PEABODY — The city of Peabody is gearing up to connect the dots of the Peabody Independence Greenway.

Mayor Edward A. Bettencourt, Jr. announced this week that the city will receive \$10.1 million from the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to extend the Greenway by construction of two new trails, one which will link the existing two segments of the Greenway, which are located on opposite sides of Route 1.

The centerpiece of the plan calls for construction of a new, two-span steel pedestrian bridge over Route 1, running from the Boston Sports Club across the highway to Lowell Street near the Hallmark Building. That bridge will connect the trail that begins at Russell Street near Boston Street and ends at Lt. Ross Park with the extension of the trail beginning at Clark Road and ending near Lahey Clinic. In addition, the Greenway will be extended from the end of the Lahey Clinic trail to the Endicott Street bridge, bringing the entire trail to a length of about 10 miles.

The project will also include signal upgrades at Lowell and Bourbon streets and the Route 1 northbound/Lowell Street intersection, various curb, walking and drainage improvements and natural privacy screening near residential neighborhoods.

“The Peabody Independence Greenway has been a wonderful addition to the city of Peabody,” Bettencourt said. “It’s incredibly well-utilized by people who are out biking and walking every day. Even during the winter months, there are people out there taking advantage of such a great opportunity. We think connecting the two segments will further enhance the benefit to the community.”

The STIP grant increases total funding for the project to nearly \$11 million. The city previously received \$203,750 from the Department of Conservation and Recreation MassTrails grant program for design costs associated with the Route 1/Lowell Street connector segment. Peabody’s City Council recently approved \$455,179 from the city’s Community Preservation Act (CPA) for engineering plans for the full project.

“These projects take a long time,” said Community Development Director Curt Bellavance. “The tough part is getting the engineering and public hearings done, especially today,” adding that the target date is 2024-2025.

Bellavance said the project has been kicked around for several years, but began to gain traction three years ago.

“Brendan Callahan (Assistant Director of Planning) said the state wanted to get it going again,” Bellavance said. “We got some preliminary grants to start looking at the Lahey Clinic to Endicott Street component because we already had some rough designs sitting on the shelf. Brendan put together the design plans for that, presented that to the state and they liked it.”

Bellavance said a preliminary design plan will be submitted to the state within the next two to three weeks. After that, there will be a public hearing, following which the city will present 75 percent design plans, which Bellavance estimates will take six to 12 months, adding it will likely take another six months to submit a final plan.

Bellavance said the bridge component will provide an added benefit.

“We wanted to make that connection between those two no man’s land sections, which will also allow us to connect with the Border to Boston Trail (which continues through Danvers into Boxford) that ends at the Speedway Gas station. The state is hoping for all cities and towns to connect so that eventually you could ride your bike from Boston to Portland, Maine. The bridge piece will get us over Route 1, and then come down to where the Border to Boston trail would meet and connect with the Greenway,” Bellavance said, adding that he and his wife Mary have enjoyed using the Greenway “for years.”

“We have always been trying to provide more things to do for the people in the City of Peabody by trying to make those key connections and have been working with the state to look at opportunities to maybe build a bridge to make those connections,” Bettencourt said. “I’m very excited about it, there is still some time and some years away, but we are really moving along very well in the process. I think this is something that will be a great addition to the citizens in the years ahead.”

Anne Marie Tobin can be reached at atobin@itemlive.com.



Anne Marie Tobin

Anne Marie Tobin is a sports reporter for the Item and sports editor of the Lynnfield and weeklies. She also serves as the associate editor of North Shore Golf magazine. Anne Marie joined the Weekly News staff in 2014 and Essex Media Group in 2016. A seven-time Massachusetts state amateur women's golf champion and member of the Massachusetts Golf Association Hall of Fame, Tobin is graduate of Mount Holyoke College and Suffolk University Law School. She practiced law for 30 years before becoming a sports reporter. Follow her on Twitter at: @WeeklyNewsNow.

Anne Marie Tobin can be reached at atobin@itemlive.com
