

CPC Application: “Old Colony Rail Trail”

by Town Councilor Jesse Gordon

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**Our Rail Trail -- here closed to the
public -- Randolph's hidden gem
(at Teed Drive crossing)**

Vision for “Old Colony Rail Trail”

What a fully-open Rail Trail looks like:
(flat wide trails, good for kids, wheelchairs, etc.)

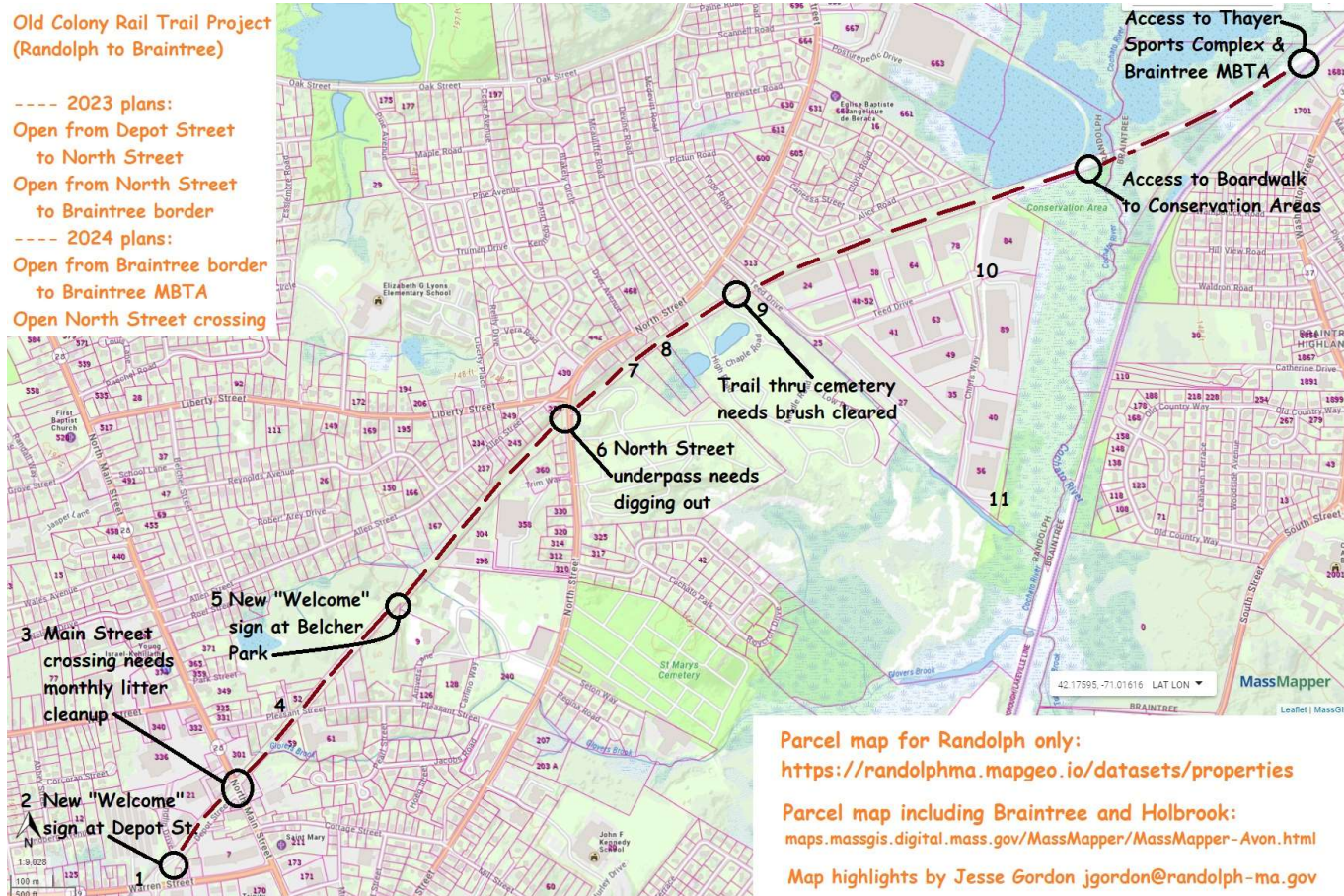


What our mostly-closed Rail Trail looks like:
(we DO have a flat wide trail down there!)



Project for Old Colony Rail Trail

- Currently open from Depot Street to North Street
- Trail is littered and overgrown from North Street to Teed Drive and Chiefs Way – I propose clearing that trail, this year.
- Trail is buried at North St.; seeking plan to dig out underpass (and I'll propose to dig it out next year)
- Will work with Braintree next year & propose boardwalk to South Street conservation area and Kellaway Drive



1. Depot Memorial

1. From Depot Street to North Street -- this is on the MAPC Landline map as an "Existing Greenway" and it is open to the public. It's a lovely walk/bike/stroller trail from the abandoned train depot, with the abandoned track visible for much of its length and a little memorial at Depot Street with exposed track.



2: Depot Street crossing

2. In 2022, the CPC funded restoring the "Welcome" sign at Depot Street -- which was built decades ago but has faded into non-readability.

I will get that "Welcome" sign restored by this summer.



3: Main Street crossing

3. Main Street crossing needs regular litter cleanup. This year the DPW got a “vacuum vehicle” appropriate for this stretch of trail.

Some funds are allocated here, for DPW overtime to start vacuuming this trail.

This underpass is what the North Street underpass once looked like, before it got filled in. To fully open the Rail Trail, we need to dig out the North Street underpass!



**Main Street underpass
is always cluttered with litter**

4: Pleasant Street crossing

4. The rail-trail crosses Pleasant Street at the point shown. This view looks back to Main Street; the other direction enters Belcher Park. Many cars drive on the rail trail to attend soccer games etc. at Belcher Park. A “greenway crossing” would be nice here (like a green-painted crosswalk right where the photographer is standing on Pleasant Street)



5: Belcher Park to RICC

5. The rail-trail goes through our municipal Belcher Park and happens to run adjacent to the RICC, the Randolph Intergenerational Community Center. There's a walking trail through the woods there, and the CPC funded a second "Welcome" sign at that location, to connect to the RICC.



6: North Street overpass (west side)

6. At North Street, the rail bed was buried decades ago when the North Street overpass was reconstructed.

Proposal this year is to design a plan re-open that tunnel under North Street. There is a footpath up to North Street with a rough trail behind the old faded sign.

Replacement of that sign is Sign #3 (adding to the two signs already underway this year). This sign will describe how to cross North Street (without the tunnel dug out, for now)



6: North Street underpass (west side)

6. Bottom of the hill behind the sign on North Street; this was once an underpass



6: North Street overpass (east side)

6. The next section on the eastern side of North Street is much worse than the western side -- very overgrown, very unused, and very unwelcoming.

You can walk in via the cemetery now, through the litter and overgrowth. The dug-out tunnel would get to that same point.



6: North Street underpass (east side)

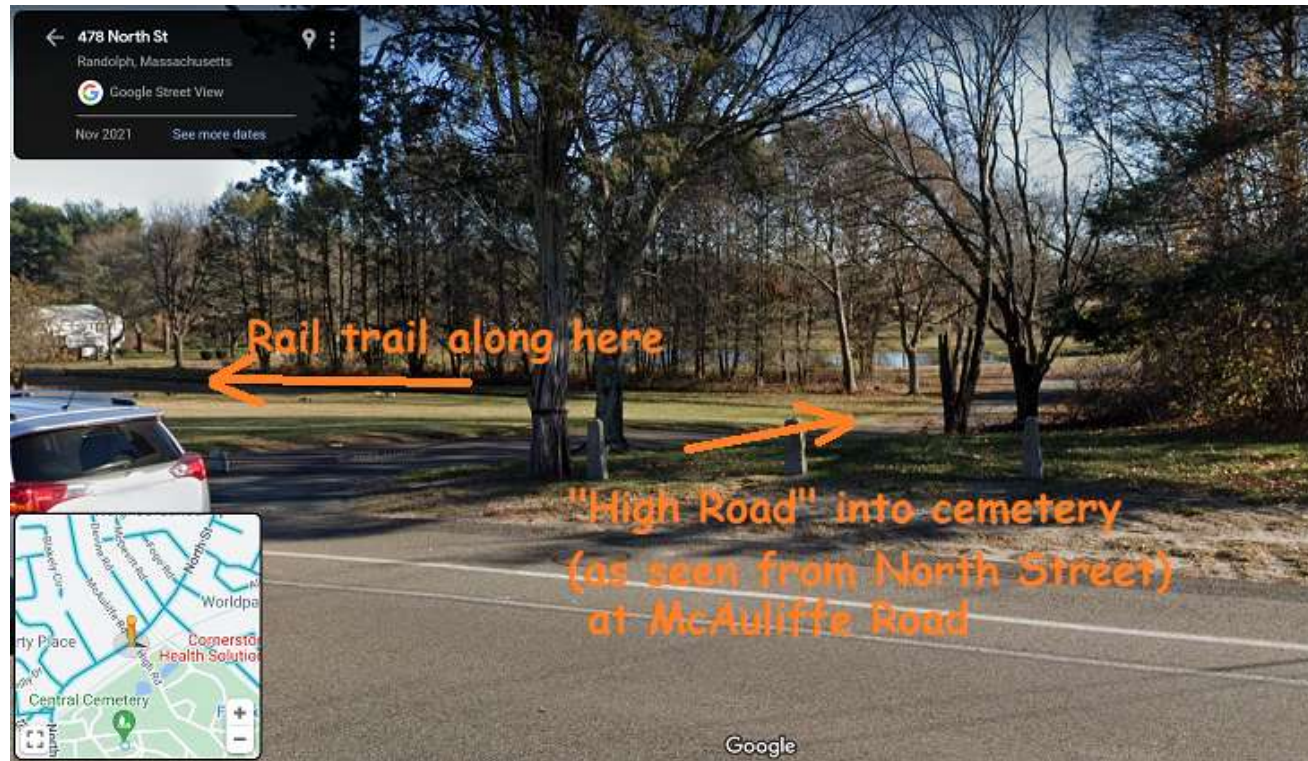
6. Lots of litter cleanup and brush clearing needed just to get to underpass to design a plan



7: Cemetery “High Road”

7. The cemeteries don't actually OWN the rail trail -- but people entering the cemeteries have to cross over the rail-trail and it will feel like people using the rail-trail are passing through a cemetery. The task I'm proposing to the CPC is to clear the brush and make it part of the regular DPW maintenance schedule to keep it clear.

And also to hire a surveyor/land title investigator consultant to clarify the ownership limits, along the whole route



8: Cemetery “Low Road”

8. The rail-trail itself in this section is ok -- it's level and wide, like a good railroad bed -- you can walk it now. It's not quote stroller/wheelchair accessible in some points, because you feel like have to walk on the railroad tracks. Clearing cleanly to the property boundaries would help that – then strollers and wheelchairs could go alongside the railroad track.



9: Teed Drive crossing (looking east)

9. The next segment goes through an Industrial Park on Teed Drive. This is also overgrown. The task here is just to clear the overgrowth.



9: Teed Drive crossing (looking south)

9. This rail crossing sign once proudly heralded trains crossing Teed Drive. Let's leave it standing and clear the brush along the rail trail!

This photo is from the Teed Drive crossing, looking southward toward the cemeteries. The trail IS there, just overgrown.



Abandoned rail signage near rail trail

9: Teed Drive crossing (looking north)

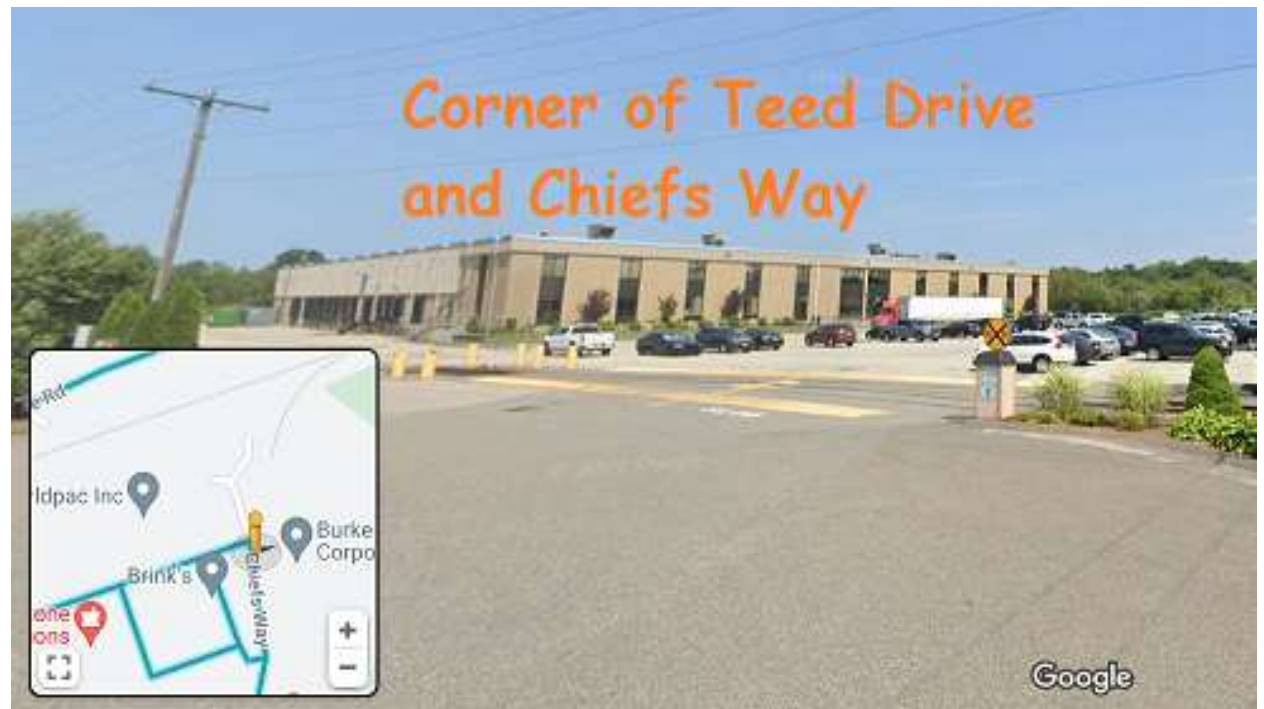
9. This is an excellent location for another "Welcome" sign -- that's sign #4 (including the two already underway). It'd be very visible from people entering Teed Drive and also from North Street.



10: Chief's Way at Teed Drive

10. The intersection of Teed Drive and Chiefs Way is the end of the rail trail for this year. Beyond this point is an unnamed Conservation Area (adjacent to South Stret Conservation Area in Braintree) which I'll propose linking from here, next year.

The rail trail does continue into Braintree – Braintree has its own CPC, and its own activist groups -- those people all say "I've been thinking about this rail trail for years" -- it would complete an off-road connector from Randolph to the Braintree MBTA station.



10: Chief's Way (looking south)

10. This is the north end of the current project proposal.

People can walk from the cemeteries to here; or can start from Teed Drive.

A "Welcome" sign at the arrow would mark the start of the trail. That makes the 3rd newly-proposed sign, for a total of 5 signs along the whole rail-trail length.

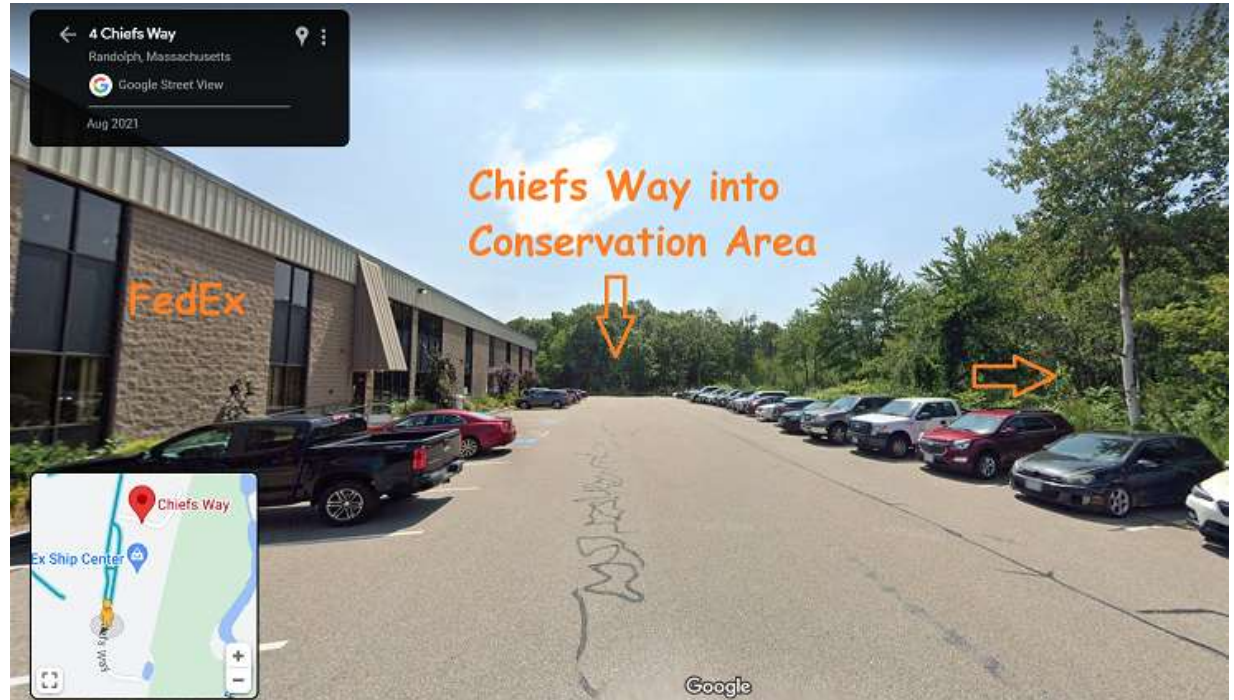


11: Chief's Way (looking east)

You can see the Conservation Area at the end of Chief's Way, which is the FedEx building shown on the left. The Conservation Area is at the end of the road and off to the right.

This Conservation Area is very large and very inaccessible. I'll propose next year a footpath/boardwalk project to make it accessible.

The footpath/boardwalk would connect from this point to Kellaway Drive and into Holbrook, and to the Richardi Reservoir and into Braintree.



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April 28, 2023

Old Colony Rail Trail Project
(Randolph to Braintree)

- 2023 plans:
 - Open from Depot Street to North Street
 - Open from North Street to Braintree border
- 2024 plans:
 - Open from Braintree border to Braintree MBTA
 - Open North Street crossing



Conclusion: Let's open up the Old Colony Rail Trail

Parcel map for Randolph only:
<https://randolphma.mapgeo.io/datasets/properties>

Parcel map including Braintree and Holbrook:
maps.massgis.digital.mass.gov/MassMapper/MassMapper-Avon.html

Map highlights by Jesse Gordon jgordon@randolph-ma.gov