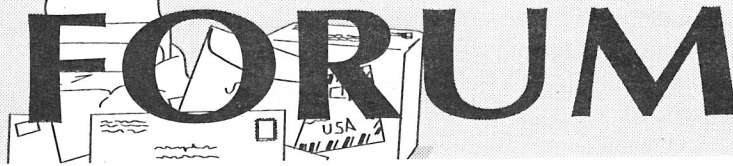


FORUM



Rail trail is a long-term endeavor

Reading the article on the Rail Trail on page one of Tuesday evening's Item has prompted me to get back in touch with Forum readers.

The word "delay" in the headline is the issue with me. As someone who has been working on this project since 2004, I am well aware that this is a long-term endeavor. The engineering/design report is a major milestone along the way. We want to make sure every aspect of the trail is addressed and properly examined.

Lynnfield's decision to hold off their town meeting article concerning the trail through their town and Reedy Meadow is indeed the proper thing to do. We need the report from WorldTech in order to truly conceptualize the design of the trail and be able to analyze how to make it the best fit for our towns. And until we have the benefit of seeing that report, we cannot answer many important questions.

But some facts that I DO know are: Instead of having abandoned, trespassed and over-grown railroad tracks going through our neighborhoods, there would be a clear paved path for mothers with baby carriag-

es, bicycle-riders, joggers and walkers to use without dodging cars. The fact that children in either town can use this path as a "Safe Route to School," walking or biking without being out in vehicular traffic, has always been a very positive benefit.

Trails are self-policing. The police chiefs of towns along trails now in use have said that their statistics show that. As for real estate values, houses close to, or adjacent to, trails have not decreased in value. It seems to be a plus for a growing number of couples looking to buy.

Economically, our towns would see some new customers for our restaurants and businesses due to exposure to new clientele.

We have always thought that the real jewel of the trail would be going through Reedy Meadow. The engineer's report is key in that decision. I am looking forward to finding out if it is possible to deliver on our vision.

Dot Halpin
Chair, Wakefield Rail to Trail Committee

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