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Old Colony Planning Council

# Nunckatesett Greenway: A call to action

South Coast Rail Technical Assistance Study

Prepared in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of  
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## NUNCKATESSETT GREENWAY: An Introduction

The Nunckatessett Greenway is a project that will link an existing network of trails and the Town River into a contiguous natural recreation area, connecting the Town Halls of Bridgewater and West Bridgewater as well as historical sites and educational institutions. The genesis of the project steams from a grassroots movement of local Bridgewater and West Bridgewater residents that wish to see a nature corridor that will elevate people's awareness of the Town River, historical sites situated along that river, as well as promote alternative means of travel between the two town centers and Bridgewater State University.

## NUNCKATESSETT GREENWAY ACTION PLAN

This action plan has been developed by the Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC) on behalf of the Town of Bridgewater through the Commonwealth's South Coast Rail Technical Assistance program in order to guide the town in seeing the Nunckatessett Greenway reach its full potential as a contiguous greenway corridor. This action plan will focus on a number of needed elements that must be put in place to concentrate the efforts of those involved in the planning and advocating of the Nunckatessett Greenway. Elements that will be touched upon are:

- Development of a management structure to implement recommendation from this action plan
- The development of Nunckatessett Greenway promotional media and website
- Funding needs and source
- Development of Nunckatessett Greenway Master Plan

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## Management Plan

A well-structured and thoughtfully laid out management plan will help tremendously in the development of the Nunckatessett Greenway. A Nunckatessett Greenway coordinator position should be created, or a town department should be selected, to allow for a focused effort on developing the greenway. Without a dedicated person or Town department to lead the process of developing the Greenway, the development of the greenway could be hindered if there is no single person, town, or other interested party able to work on the project exclusively. The need for such a management structure was also suggested in the 2009 Bridgewater *Open Space and Recreation Plan* and some of these elements of a management plan exist today in other bodies of work such as the management plans for the Ironworks Park and Carver's Pond. It should also be noted, that the management position could then be refocused to manage other projects and tasks once the Nunckatessett Greenway is completed.

Along with the creation of a greenway coordinator position or the selection of a town department to head up the execution of a greenway plan, an organizational structure to maintain the greenway should be established to ensure proper maintenance of the Nunckatessett Greenway once it is developed and open for public use. Included in this maintenance plan should be a strategy that considers how the Town of Bridgewater can partner with local trail maintenance organizations, natural preservation groups, or form its own trail maintenance corps. It has been mentioned in the management plans of both Carver's Pond and Iron Works Park of the existence of volunteer parkland stewards. These existing stewards should be called upon in the Nunckatessett Greenway management plan to help maintain the greenway. The stewardship training program cited in these management plans sponsored by the Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater should be utilized or replicated to help recruit and train new stewards in the mission of maintaining the Nunckatessett Greenway to yield enjoyment for many years to come.

## Public Outreach / Outreach Media

One of the most important elements in gaining popular support in completing the Nunckatessett Greenway is through a robust public outreach and media exposure campaign. The Town of Bridgewater should establish a dedicated website or webpage to help spread the word on the Nunckatessett Greenway and provide a central place where interested organizations and individuals can go to learn about the greenway and find out how they can

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participate. This website or webpage could be developed as part of a larger website development project regarding open space in Bridgewater as has been mentioned as a need according to the Bridgewater *Open Space and Recreation Plan*. On that website or webpage, one should be able to find maps showing what the greenway will look like when it is completed and what parts exist today. This website or webpage should be designed to be interactive to keep a visitors attention, which will spur visitors to tell other people about the website or webpage, sparking greater interest in the Nunckatessett Greenway project.

Along with a website or webpage to promote the development of the Nunckatessett Greenway, paper media in the form of brochures or other types of handouts should be designed and printed to be distributed at special events, community meetings, and other public happenings. These handouts should have a conceptual map of the greenway at full build out, a map that shows what already exist, and contain contact information of the lead person managing the development of the greenway and how a person can get involved making the project a reality. While this material in one form or another already exists today, the material should be refreshed to keep the Nunckatessett Greenway project on the communities mind and to brand the project for greater public support.

Besides outreach materials to inform citizens and interested organization in the community about the Nunckatessett Greenway, portions of the website or webpage along with paper media should be developed for abutting property owners along the corridor. Information about the project and how it will affect these owners' property rights along the greenway will do a lot in helping to diminish any anxiety these property owners might have towards the development of the Nunckatessett Greenway. Extensive outreach to these abutting property owners by phone or email should be one of the first goals of the appointed coordinator or lead town department. It is paramount to start communicating with these abutting property owners early in the Nunckatessett Greenway planning. By engaging these property owners early in the process, it will help alleviate any possible mistrust in the development of the greenway and any infringement of the property rights of these individuals or business abutting the greenway might have.

A number of open houses concerning the development of the Nunckatessett Greenway should be held throughout the project timeline. At these open houses, there should be engagement with the public by the lead project proponents to explain the goals of the Nunckatessett Greenway and to answer any questions and address any concerns that might be brought to the proponent's attention. Specialty stakeholder meetings should be convened to help drive the development of the Nunckatessett Greenway. People from the business community, advocacy organizations, and governmental departments from both the Towns of Bridgewater and West



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Bridgewater along with those from the Commonwealth involved in the Nunckatessett Greenway project should be brought together to strategize on getting the greenway built.

## Funding

Funding is a key element in getting the Nunckatessett Greenway built. During these lean times of governmental spending and budgets, no one source of funding can be depended upon to build the Nunckatessett Greenway. The first course of action by the lead agency or individual charged with seeing the Nunckatessett Greenway built is to find funding to draft a master plan for the greenway. Having a plan that comprehensively looks at what is needed to construct the Nunckatessett Greenway will put the project in a good position when the search for monies to build the project begins.

If financially viable, the Town of Bridgewater should put aside funding to complete the Nunckatessett Greenway Master Plan. West Bridgewater should also contribute Master Plan funding assistance since they too will be benefiting from such a plan and enjoying the benefits brought by a realized Nunckatessett Greenway. Grants provided by the Commonwealth and Federal Government should be researched to understand if the Nunckatessett Greenway qualifies to apply for available funds through these grant programs. The Commonwealth through the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) offers a number of different grants that the greenway may qualify for. One such grant that should be further investigated in the Nunckatessett Greenway Master Plan is the eligibility to apply to DCR's Recreational Trails Program. Through the Recreational Trails Program, money is reimbursed to the entity constructing the greenway for things like signage, purchasing of land easements, and the development of trailside and trail facilities. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) may be another avenue the Town of Bridgewater might want to explore for possible funding opportunities. It should be noted in order to get TIP funding; the project would need to have a transportation element in the project to be considered for TIP eligibility. Please review chapter 2 *MassDOT's Project Development and Design Guide* to better understand the needs and requirements for possible inclusion on the TIP.

Another option for securing funding for the Nunckatessett Greenway Master Plan and the greenway once it is ready to be constructed is through private donations. The greenway's lead person or organization should start to approach different philanthropic organizations or the philanthropic arms of private corporations to see if they would be willing to donate money to the Nunckatessett Greenway. Individual citizens and families could also be another source of

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funding through the selling commemorative plaques, stones, or bricks honoring their donation to the building of the project. Fundraising events such as dinners and community events could also be hosted to raise monies for the greenway. Holding such fundraising dinners or events has the benefit of doing two things, raising funds for the greenway and promoting the idea of the project among those who attend these engagements.

## Need For Comprehensive Nunckatessett Greenway Plan

In order for the Nunckatessett Greenway to be a success, it needs a good foundation from the beginning and that foundation can be built and should be built through the drafting of a greenway master plan. The creation of a greenway master plan will provide a more detailed road map for the Nunckatessett Greenway. The establishment of a master plan that advances the development of the topics laid out in this action plan along with additional subject areas such as an environment analysis, infrastructure needs assessment, survey of property owners, and other elements that might be identified in the future will go far in helping get the Nunckatessett Greenway developed. The drafting of a Nunckatessett Greenway Master Plan will also take the project from a grassroots movement to a project that has strong recognition and having the official backing by both the towns of Bridgewater and West Bridgewater as well as the Commonwealth. The master plan will also provide interested parties and citizens with a document they can reference to gain a better understanding about what the Nunckatessett Greenway is, what it will be, and how it is proposed to be built and funded.

## Moving the Nunckatessett Greenway Forward

The Nunckatessett Greenway has moved from an idea drafted by private citizens to a loose network of trails that seek to one day become a continuous greenway corridor. Now the next steps in this evolution must be taken to see the Nunckatessett Greenway become a reality. With a more comprehensive approach and the development of those elements listed in this action plan of: management structure, promotional media, funding, and the development of a Nunckatessett Greenway plan will one day allow people to enjoy a Nunckatessett Greenway. Until these items and those not yet identified are investigated more intensely, the Nunckatessett Greenway will continue to face challenges to its growth which will only push its establishment out further into the future.