

November 6, 2022

Mr. Matthew Johnson, Chair  
Town of Concord Select Board  
Concord Town House  
Concord, MA 01742  
*Delivered via email*

Dear Mr. Johnson,

During the October 24<sup>th</sup> Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee (BFRTAC) meeting, Marcia Rasmussen, Concord Director of Planning and Land Management, shared the implementation plan for the short-term improvements to Junction Park which had been presented to the Select Board on October 3rd. We'd like to thank Ms. Rasmussen for her thoughtful approach and hard work on the plan.

While the plan mostly aligns with the conceptual redesign recommendations that had previously been presented to the Select Board by the BFRTAC in July 2022, it differs in one significant way: *the addition of four large planters in the already narrow pathways of the Park.*

These planters were added at the request of some individuals who have been advocating for a different approach. In fact, it was largely their advocacy that led to the Select Board to charge the BFRTAC to undertake the task of a conceptual redesign of Junction Park to improve a perceived safety risk. To carry out the charge, the BFRTAC spent months conducting committee and subcommittee meetings, site visits, public forums, data collection, interviews with town staff, discussions with outside experts, and analysis of over 600 resident surveys regarding safety in the park and how to improve it.

The idea of putting objects like large planters in the pathways (aka "Tactical Urbanism") was considered during this very deliberate, public process. The Committee in fact had considered and purposely excluded similar components after discussion and deliberations of the committee with significant public input. The addition of physical obstacles within the BFRT path creates a safety hazard as it narrows the passable space and pushes park users (both on wheels and off wheels) into closer contact.

A motion was passed unanimously on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 by a roll call vote of a quorum of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee:

*The proposed planters are not in keeping with the Committee's principles for the short-term design for the Junction Park section of the rail trail, they detract from the aesthetics of the park, and create a potential safety hazard. The Committee co-chairs are authorized to communicate this position to the Select Board*

The BFRTAC urges the Select Board to direct Ms. Rasmussen and the Planning Department to remove these four planters from the plan and then proceed with implantation plans. The BFRTAC would be pleased to revisit the effectiveness of the recommended short-term design in the Spring and Summer of 2023 in public hearings.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendation and please let us know what next steps we need to take to have the planters removed from the plans.

(Signed)

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee

Adrienne Boardman, Co-Chair

Nathaniel Welch,

Richard Fahlander

Deborah Adlema

Dorcas Miller

Tracy Hansen

Mary Beth Barker

Sam Stearns

John Soden