



SELECT BOARD

TOWN OF HADLEY

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February 18, 2025

To whom it may concern:

The Select Board of the Town of Hadley expresses our strong support for the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) and the continued efforts to complete this essential multi-use path. The MCRT is a 104-mile corridor that could serve as a vital artery connecting 26 communities from Boston to Northampton and beyond. The Town of Hadley has seen tremendous public benefits from the MCRT since it was first constructed in 1993.

Once fully completed, the trail will offer remarkable economic, health, and environmental benefits to Hadley and the Pioneer Valley. Economic impact studies conducted by the Norwottuck Network, a citizens group promoting the MCRT, predict that a fully realized MCRT will boost the MA economy \$212 million annually, attract 5 million new visitors and create nearly 1000 jobs.

Today, 63 miles of the 104-mile corridor are complete, with another 12 miles under construction. The MCRT will have the longest rail trail in New England and intersect with 18 other developing trails including the New Haven & Northampton Canal Greenway. The support of local, state, and federal governments is essential to complete key gaps in the route and the future possibility of further connections to the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail in Pittsfield.

The combination of the completed MCRT and the existing trails will form the backbone of an extensive trail network throughout New England. Other areas of the country have learned that the better the connections are between trails and the communities they serve, the more these trails get used, reducing traffic congestion and air pollution.

If you take the time to walk, ride, or ski the trail and speak with people who use the trail for safe commuting, shopping, exercise, and recreation, it is easy to recognize the transformative potential that this project holds.

We, the Hadley Select Board, strongly encourage state officials and other local leaders to support the completion of the MCRT as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Molly Keegan
Select Board Chair
Town of Hadley