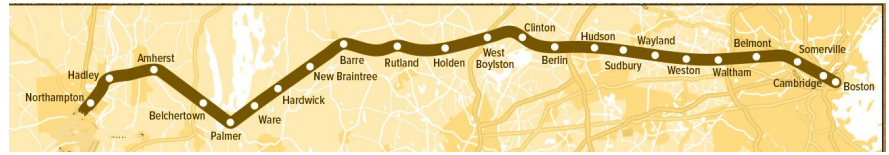




MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL —BOSTON TO NORTHAMPTON—104 MILES



Request for Proposals

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COMPLETING THE MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL

The NORWOTTUCK NETWORK, Inc. (NN) requests proposals to:

- 1.) design and develop an assessment of volume of use, profile of users, and economic impact of the currently open 50± miles of MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL (MCRT) and the currently open and usable intersecting shared-use paths.
- 2.) the projected economic and health impacts to the state and the communities along the route of a completed 100± mile trail.

Proposals are due on Wednesday, June 22, 2022 at 5:00 PM to CraigDP413@Gmail.com
For questions, contact Craig Della Penna at the above email address.

About the Norwottuck Network

NN is a 501(c)3 organization set up to help buildout the MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL. A full history can be found on our website. <https://www.nnetwork.net/about-us> The proponent/firm will be responsible to the Norwottuck Board and/or their representative.

Background

Within 150 miles of the Norwottuck Network base in Northampton, Massachusetts lies the densest network of former steam railroad corridors in the northeast United States. The longest, most complex of these corridors is the MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL (MCRT), which runs 104 miles from North Station in Boston to Union Station in Northampton.

In 2021, the MA Department of Transportation (MassDOT) acknowledged the concept of a statewide rail trail by completing a feasibility study of the 68.5 mile central MA section detailing existing gaps and the work-arounds required to enabling the corridor's successful completion. Over time, these provisional solutions will be authentically restored by replacing missing bridges and by restoring other historic details. A link to the three-volume study may be found here: <https://www.tinyurl.com/massdotstudy>

According to the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT), tourism is an integral part of the state's economy.

- Tourism generates **\$1.5 billion** in state and local taxes, **\$22.9 billion** in travel-related expenditures, and **149,400** in-state jobs.
- Massachusetts ranks **6th nationally** as a destination for international visitors. Many of them are accustomed to bicycle tourism at home, and our delightful MCRT will invite our visitors to explore Massachusetts's stunning natural beauty and rich history and lore. But we want to know more.

Examples of recent reports providing guidance on how to develop the Economic Impact Report effectively may be found here:

- Great Allegheny Passage Economic Impact Report. 2021. [LINK HERE](#)
- MassTrails, Impacts of Shared Use Paths. 2021. [LINK HERE](#)
- The Economic Impact of the Erie Canalway Trail. 2014. [LINK HERE](#)
- Walkway Over the Hudson, Poughkeepsie, NY. 2018. [LINK HERE](#)
- Schell Bridge Northfield, MA. 2011. [LINK HERE](#)
- Complete George, NYC. 2015. [LINK HERE](#)

The MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL will connect to 17 other trails

A unique feature of the completion of the MCRT is that it will enable users to explore all parts of the Commonwealth. On an experiential level, there is little to rival this in all of southern New England. Its easy access will facilitate discovery of the many unfamiliar regions of our state, many of which are somewhat isolated by geography. Large population centers in eastern and central Massachusetts can travel relatively short distances to experience our beautiful state. A growing list of current connecting trails and links to their websites for these connecting trails can be found here:

1. The [Boston HarborWalk](#), a pedestrian path
2. The [Mystic to Charles Connection](#) in Somerville, a multi-use recreational trail. Shared use path (SUP)
3. The [Minute Man Commuter Bikeway](#) in Cambridge. SUP
4. The [McLean Woods Trail](#) in Belmont. Walking
5. The [Western Greenways Trail](#) in Waltham. Walking
6. The [Charles River Greenway](#) in Waltham. SUP
7. The [Bay Circuit Trail](#) in Weston. Walking
8. The [Southborough Aqueduct Trail](#) in Wayland. Walking
9. The [Bruce Freeman Rail Trail](#) in Sudbury. SUP
10. The [Assabet River Rail Trail](#) in Hudson. SUP
11. The [Sterling Rail Trail](#) in Sterling. (eventually to [Twin Cities Rail Trail](#).) SUP
12. The [Mid-State Trail](#) at Rutland State Park. Walking
13. The [Ware River Valley Rail Trail](#) in Barre to Winchendon (eventually into New Hampshire.) SUP
14. The [Chickadee Trail](#) in Belchertown. SUP
15. The [New England National Scenic Trail](#) (NET) in Belchertown. Walking.
16. The [Literary Trails](#) in Amherst. Walking
17. The [New Haven & Northampton Canal Greenway](#) in Northampton. SUP

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT

Present evidence based data to project the nature and volume of resultant economic activity for the state and surrounding trail communities if the entire 104± mile MCRT is fully completed.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Use existing literature to review methodologies and present an overview of current data on trail-related expenditures (soft goods and durable goods) and volume of trail use in the U.S. NOTE: Data on trail use in selected locations along the MCRT has been gathered by Regional Planning Agencies and MassDOT and can be found on their websites.
2. Develop a methodology for gathering, analyzing, and extrapolating business and trail user survey data for this study, which can be utilized in subsequent years and to facilitate comparison with existing studies
3. Develop a survey questionnaire for trail users that collects data on user characteristics and spending habits including:
 - A. Level of involvement in and reasons for use of the trail.
 - B. Typical expenditures per trail visit for soft goods – food, lodging, gas, souvenirs, etc.
 - C. Typical annual expenditures for durable goods – footwear, clothing, bicycles.
 - D. Channels of communication used to gather information for prior planning and while undertaking MCRT trips.
 - E. Distribute the trail user survey widely on-line and through cycling clubs and trail friends group members and local businesses that trail users frequent (bike shops, restaurants, lodging) and as an intercept survey of MCRT users, including day trippers and long-distance cyclists, administered at representative sampling locations to be determined in conjunction with NN.
 - F. Conduct additional primary source research on expenditures by MCRT users through interviews with cycling club and trail friends group members, owners of local businesses (bike shops, restaurants, lodging).
 - G. Develop and distribute a survey questionnaire for trail-related businesses that collects data on the nature and volume of the impact of the MCRT on their business.
 - H. Determine number and locations to conduct manual and/or infrared trail usage counts across the MCRT. Data collection could be undertaken by consultant or by NN and local volunteers with direction and assistance from consultant. Results will be combined with existing data on trail usage.

DELIVERABLES

Survey methodology and questionnaires that can be utilized in the future to:

- Analyze and compare changes in trail usage, business activity, and economic impact over time at originally selected locations and additional sections of MCRT when they are built.
- Final report (10 hard copies and USB Flash Drive) to include, but not be limited to:
- Review of existing data on trail-related expenditures (soft goods and durable goods) and volume of trail use in the northeast.
- Survey data on MCRT-related expenditures and trail-related business activity.
- Survey data from local businesses and tourism agencies associated with shorter connecting trails, including how they believe their local economy will be affected by completion of the MCRT.
- The MassTrails Report from 2021 has health impacts methodology that should be included in this report as well.
- Raw trail count data and annual trail traffic estimates
- Estimates of annual trail traffic volume for the several open sections of the MCRT.
- Methodology for calculating subsequent annual trail-wide estimates as more sections of trail are completed
- Projections of trail use if the MCRT is fully completed, based on current MCRT data, population density of nearby cities, and connections to existing popular trails.
- Current direct and indirect economic impact of the MCRT including impact on jobs and impact on business activity what type of expenditures.
- Projections of direct and indirect economic impact of the MCRT when all 104 miles are complete, including impact on jobs and impact on business activity.
- An executive summary, infographics, and other presentation/marketing materials to help NN promote the study to various stakeholders including MassDOT, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Mass Office of Travel and Tourism and all the Regional Tourism Councils along the corridor, the municipalities along the way, members of the state legislature from those communities, and members of the state legislature's Tourism, Economic Development and Transportation committees.

SUBMISSIONS

Proposals received after 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 22, 2022 will not be considered.

Deliver proposals to:

Craig Della Penna, Executive Director

Norwottuck Network

62 Chestnut Street, Florence, MA 01062-1405

413 575 2277 CraigDP413@Gmail.com

Receipt of an RFP does not commit Norwottuck Network to award a contract, to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation of the proposal, or to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation of the contract for services. NN reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received, or to cancel, in part or in whole, this RFP.

Questions regarding clarification of the RFP must be submitted in writing (letter or email) to Craig Della Penna, Executive Director before June 8, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. NN's response(s) will be provided to all parties.

4. EVALUATION CRITERIA

NN will review and rank the proposals using the evaluation criteria listed below to select the Preferred Consultant. Based upon the evaluation, NN reserves the right to invite or not invite any or all consultants for an interview before making a final selection. Such an invitation does not commit NN to pay any costs incurred in participation in this interview.

The evaluation criteria:

Experience, Qualifications and Capacity (i.e. recent relevant experience with similar projects).

Proposal Quality (project understanding, clarity of proposal, proposed scope and approach).

Cost The price is commensurate with the value offered by the proposer. As a non-profit institution, NN accepts *pro bono* service and will recognize the provider to the full extent allowed by the Internal Revenue Service, including naming the proposer as a supporter and partner.

PROVISOS PROCEDURES NOTES

1. Any proposal received after the closing time and date will not be considered or accepted.
 2. Members of Norwottuck Network Board will review the merits of the proposals received in accordance with the criteria defined in the RFP.
 3. If needed, the Board may schedule interviews with bidders to obtain more information or clarification of information contained in the proposals received.
 4. The final selection of the proponent will be made by the board based on prior and any relevant experience, merit of proposal, clear methodology and project design or cost.
 5. The Norwottuck Network board reserves the right to reject any and all proposals. All materials conceived and produced in the performance of this agreement shall belong to the Norwottuck Network.
 6. We understand and accept that NN, its contractual partners, grantees and other parties with whom we work are expected to commit to the highest standards of Transparency, Fairness, and Integrity in procurement.
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