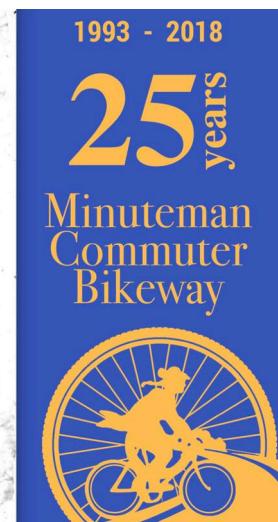




Sam Doran and Tom Fortmann

Presented at the Lexington Depot
September 5, 2018

Sponsored by the Lexington Historical Society
and the Friends of Lexington Bikeways



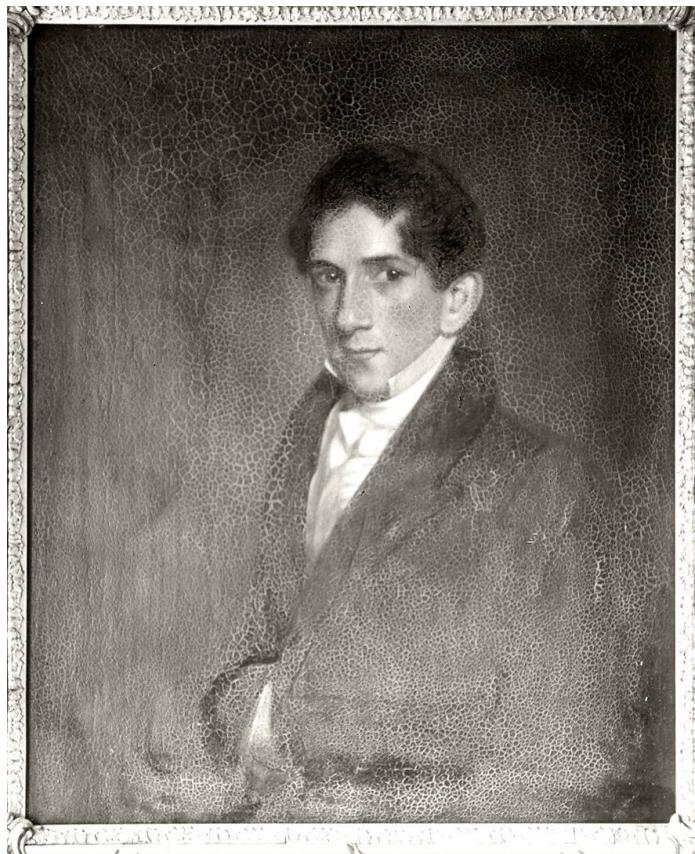
Part 1

When the Railroad Came to Town

Remarks and notes by Sam Doran appear at the end of Part 1



Engine No. 1, Lexington Railroad Station, 1886

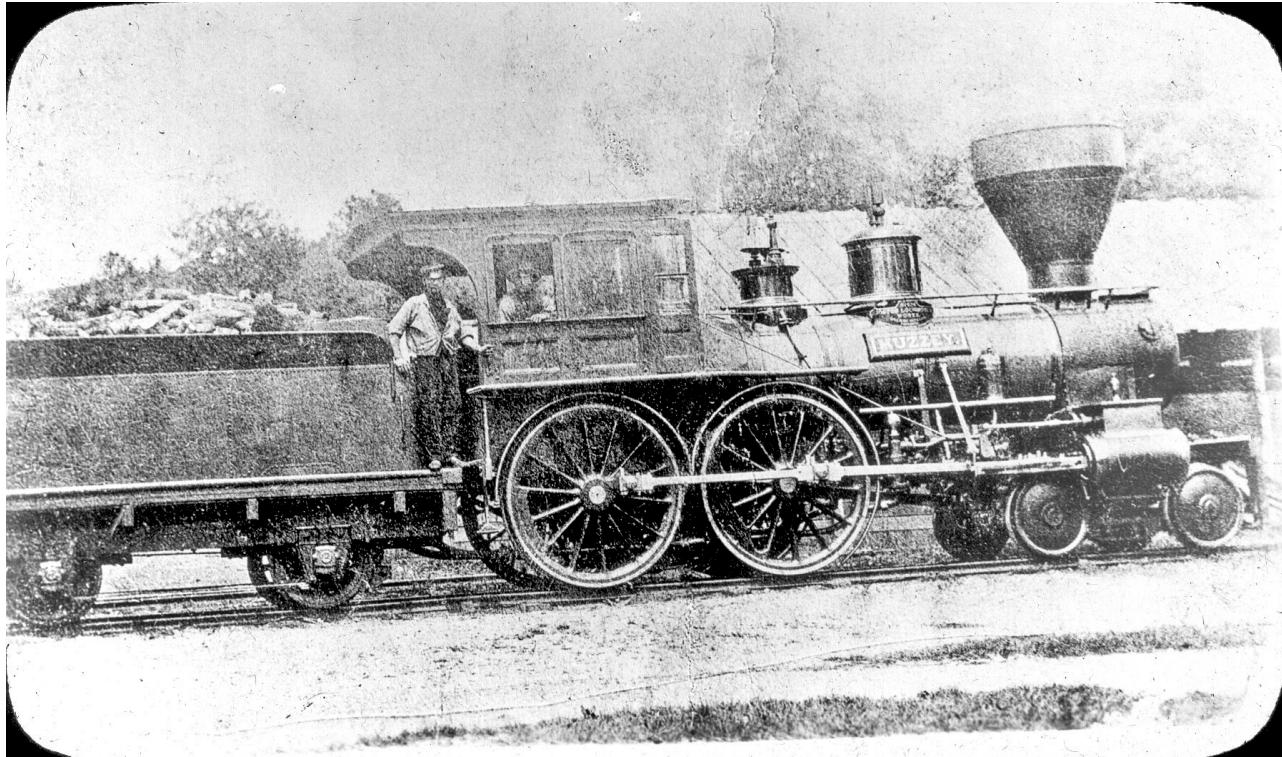


Benjamin Muzzey



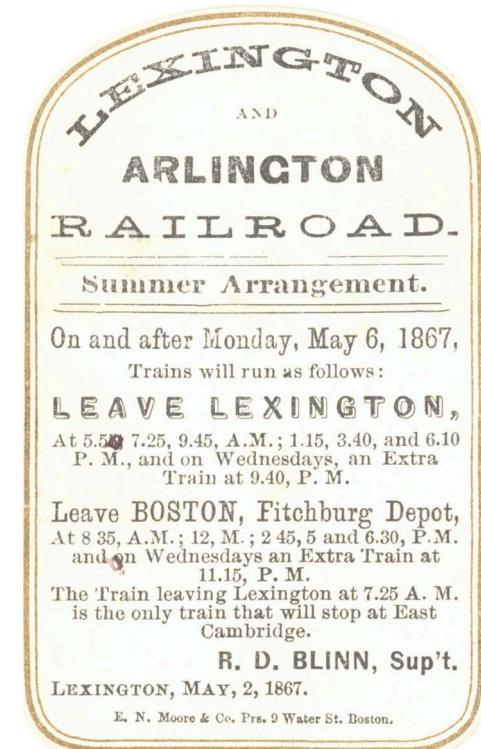
L&WCRR stock certificate

Post-revolutionary Lexington had bustling thoroughfares and a thriving tavern business, but commercial traffic shifted to turnpikes and canals in the early nineteenth century and by 1844 only Cutler's Tavern and Benjamin Muzzey's Monument House remained. Muzzey, seeing an opportunity to attract new traffic, obtained a charter and organized investors for the [Lexington & West Cambridge Railroad Company](#).

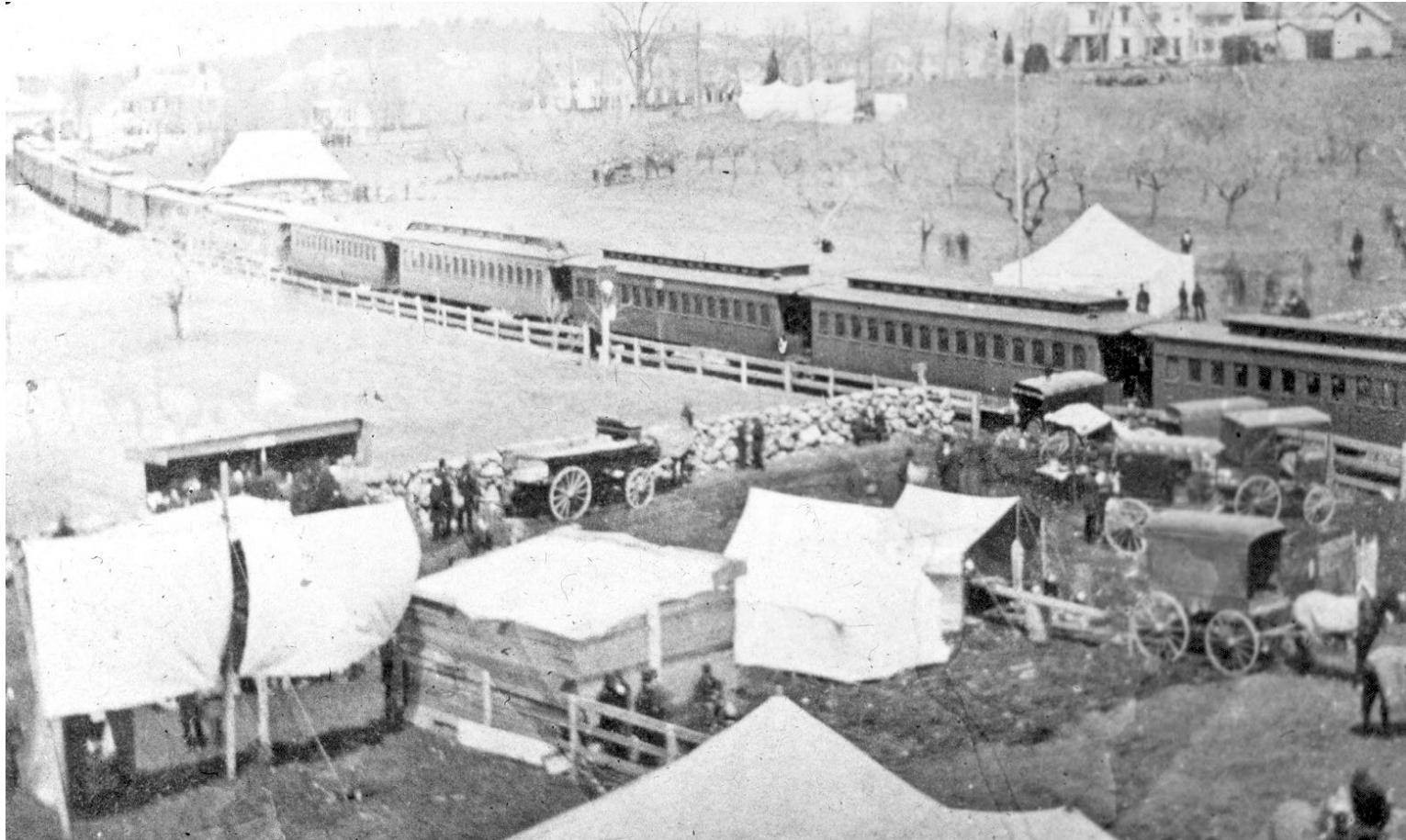


The Muzzey: Lexington's first locomotive, 1846

Muzzey's railroad business was disappointing for its first two decades. An awkward and time-consuming train connection to Boston, the Civil War, and competition from "horse railroads" all took their toll and left the stockholders under water. By then called the Lexington & Arlington Railroad, it was sold to the Boston & Lowell Railroad in 1870, extended to Bedford and to the Reformatory in West Concord, and a direct link to Boston was added.



Business improved in the 1870s. Lexington's hotels soon became a weekend and summer "countryside" destination for Boston tourists, and both passenger and commercial traffic increased.



Centennial train delivering visitors in 1875



Lexington Depot circa 1850. It originally served as the town's function space, auditorium, banquet hall, and even temporary ballroom



East Lexington Station in 1894

Wooden walkover and 26,630-gallon water tower in the railroad yard behind Lexington Depot, February 1916.

LEXINGTON BRANCH PASSENGER SCHEDULE

BOSTON • SOMERVILLE JUNCTION, LOWELL & REFORMATORY

Table 51 ♦ 1923

miles	Stations	Train Numbers: 3201 3205 3207 3209 3211 3213 3215 3217 3219 3221 3223 3225										
		A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	
.....	Boston	5:35	7:15	\$12:20	12:51	3:05	3:48	#4:21	4:23	4:40	4:50	5:35 u10:25
.....	East Cambridge	v5:40	.....	.....	12:56	.....	3:53	.....	.....	4:35	.....	.....
.....	Prospect Hill	5:42	.....	.....	12:58	.....	3:55	.....	.....	4:38	.....	10:31
.....	Winter Hill	5:44	.....	.....	1:00	.....	3:57	.....	4:31	4:40	4:58	10:33
0.0	Somerville Junction	5:46	.....	.....	1:02	.....	3:59	.....	4:33	4:42	5:01	10:36
0.7	Somerville Highlands	5:48	7:25	.....	1:04	.....	4:02	.....	4:35	4:45	5:45	10:38
1.1	West Somerville	5:50	7:30	\$12:30	1:06	3:15	4:04	.....	4:38	4:48	5:05	5:47
1.6	North Cambridge	5:52	7:32	.....	1:08	3:17	4:06	4:34	4:40	4:50	5:49	10:42
2.7	Lake Street	.....	.....	.....	f1:10	.....	4:09	.....	4:43	4:54	.....	e10:44
3.5	Arlington	5:57	7:39	\$12:36	1:13	3:22	4:12	4:39	.....	4:59	5:12	5:53
4.4	Brattle	f6:01	f7:41	\$12:39	f1:16	.....	f4:16	f4:42	f4:51	—	f5:16	f5:56
5.2	Arlington Heights	6:04	f7:43	\$12:43	1:19	3:27	4:20	4:44	4:54	.....	5:20	5:59
6.2	East Lexington	f6:06	f7:45	\$12:47	f1:22	3:30	f4:23	f4:46	f4:57	.....	5:24	6:02
6.9	Pierce's Bridge	f6:08	.....	\$12:50	f1:24	f3:32	f4:25	f4:48	f4:59	.....	f5:27	f6:04
7.3	Munroe	6:10	f7:48	\$12:54	f1:26	3:34	4:27	4:50	.....	5:29	6:06	e11:00
8.2	Lexington	6:18	7:52	\$12:59	1:31	3:39	4:32	4:55	f5:05	.....	f5:34	6:10
9.5	North Lexington	f6:21	f7:56	\$1:03	f1:35	3:43	f4:37	f4:59	—	.....	f5:39	6:15
12.0	Bedford	6:26	8:01	\$1:08	1:40	3:48	4:43	5:04	.....	5:46	6:20	11:10
12.7	Springs Road Crossing	—	f8:02	f7:09	—	f3:49	.....	f5:05	—	f5:48	—	—
14.0	Bedford Springs	.....	f8:06	f7:13	—	—	f3:54	.....	f5:11	—	f5:51	—
15.1	South Billerica	.....	f8:08	f7:17	—	—	f3:57	—	f5:15	—	f5:54	—
16.3	Tumpline	.....	f8:11	f7:20	—	—	f4:00	—	f5:19	—	f5:57	—
17.3	Billerica	.....	8:13	f7:23	—	—	4:03	—	f5:24	—	f6:00	—
17.9	Bennet Hall	.....	f8:15	f7:25	—	—	f4:05	—	f5:26	—	f6:02	—
19.8	North Billerica	.....	8:20	f7:30	—	—	4:11	—	f5:31	—	f6:07	—
21.3	South Lowell	.....	f8:23	f7:33	—	—	4:15	—	f5:35	—	f6:10	—
22.7	Bleachery	.....	f8:26	f7:36	—	—	4:21	—	f5:38	—	f6:13	—
23.6	Lowell	.....	8:30	f7:40	—	—	4:24	—	f5:42	—	f6:17	—
13.2	Shady Hill	.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
14.0	West Bedford	.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
16.2	Concord	.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
18.8	Reformatory Station	.....	—	—	—	—	—	5:01	—	—	—	—

REFERENCES

- f stops to receive or discharge passengers on notice to conductor
- e stops only to discharge passengers on notice to conductor
- u no baggage carried
- v stops only to receive passengers on signal
- t except Saturday
- § Saturday only
- train goes no further



1923 schedule

The [Boston & Maine](#) (B&M) acquired the Lexington Branch in 1887. An abundance of trains (nineteen daily round trips in 1908) established Lexington's early adoption as a commuter suburb, and commercial traffic grew as well.



Pierce's Bridge Station (at Maple Street) in 1947



RR crossing at South Road near the Bedford Depot in 1956.
The building on the right is now the Bikeway Source.



[Buddliner](#) crossing Mass Avenue in Arlington Center, June 1975.

The [B&M](#) filed for bankruptcy in 1970 and in 1976 sold the Lexington Branch to the MBTA, which continued to operate one train per day until a major snowstorm terminated passenger service in January 1977. Timothy Mellon's [Guilford Transportation Industries](#) purchased the B&M in 1983 and its residual rights in the right-of-way—two decades after the bankruptcy—became the final obstacle blocking construction of the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway.

Remarks and Notes by Sam Doran

On this special occasion for the Bikeway, it's good to "look back"—and I'm pleased to offer a few historical notes tonight on what came before the Bikeway. Really a prelude, the context, for Tom's remarks.

One theme I'll highlight in passing tonight—perhaps not fundamental, but one I find interesting—is that of community-building. The railroad brought people together. At a basic level, it did so in "this building" that we're gathered in tonight. The Centre Depot originally acted as the town's function space, auditorium, banquet hall, even temporary ballroom ... in those early years, from its opening in 1846 (172 years ago next month) until the town relocated our town hall to the Centre, from the Munroe District, in 1871.

Prior to 1846, Lexington wasn't lacking in "direct routes" to Boston, before the arrival of our first steam engine—the engine was appropriately named "the Muzzey," by the way, after the father of the Lexington RR, Benjamin Muzzey.

We had "three" roads that each ran the length of the town, as the railway later did. We had the Concord Turnpike, or Concord Ave., the Middlesex Turnpike on the north side of town, and the Old Concord Road, or what is now Mass. Ave., straight through the Centre. These three roads were served by stagecoach lines, and certain places were designated stagecoach stops—taverns, or homes—like the house that is now the rectory of the evangelical church on Lowell Street. But these are old roads, some parts of them from the 17th century, and they wind. Which is why even today, as bikers and walkers and runners, we should thank Benjamin Muzzey for his resourcefulness in clearing a pretty straight line through the town.

Founding of RR, motivations (a RR and corporate enterprise that would also enhance business holdings of Muzzey, but also a civic contribution to enhance the town, publicly minded), purpose as a connection to Boston—Muzzey was proprietor of the Monument House which was in need of business—though RR wasn't initially successful. Best laid plans. He came from the town's first family,

literally, innkeepers since they opened the tavern later called Buckman's.

Muzzey was resourceful in clearing that right-of-way—in dealing with his fellow townsmen to acquire land rights across farms. Supposedly, one unnamed farmer refused to allow his barn to be demolished, and Muzzey dumped gravel against the barn until it fell in.

Corporate origins of RR—As we would years later, Lexington had to deal with the folks down the road in Arlington. Men from Arlington, then West Cambridge, had been agitating for a RR. They banded together with the Lexingtonians for a combined effort. Route was surveyed, and in 1844 the group applied for a charter. First meeting was April 14, 1845, with stock offerings not to exceed \$200,000! Larkin Turner, well known retired sea captain, and Benjamin Muzzey were among the first officers—Lexington men took the lead on the board. And in 1846 Amos Locke, another Minuteman descendant, was operator of the Muzzey engine on its inaugural run up the single track.

This was just a single-track railroad, for nearly 50 years, and you could only travel as far as this Depot in Lexington Centre.

It wasn't so easy to get out here from Boston in the early days. Board a train car in the city, and it was just one car from the train that would make it to Lexington. The engine would leave that car on a spur track near Fresh Pond. You would wait there in the car praying that the schedule held and another engine would pick up the car from the spur and pull it to Lexington.

The hometown railroad, Lexington and West Cambridge, sold out to the regional Boston and Lowell in 1870 after Lexington stock had plummeted due to the Civil War. The price tag for our local line was all of \$140,000. That's estimated around \$2.7 million in today's currency. The Boston and Lowell seems to have then pushed to invest in their newly-acquired line, which had been hard up on cash.

In the summer of 1873, a major extension was opened, to carry passengers from Lexington Centre through North Lexington and on to Bedford and Concord, with a connection available to Lowell.

This was well-timed, and perhaps not coincidentally. “1875”, the great Centennial of the Battle of Lexington, brought a wave of tourism to Lexington and Concord. Passengers clung to the roofs, and sides, of train cars ... to clamber their way out here in April 1875. Some couldn't even manage that, the likes of Mark Twain, for one, who went to the station in Boston but took a look at the crowd and gave up on his hopes of visiting Lexington Common. Traveling with Twain was William Dean Howells.

Howells eventually made it out here some years later, and wrote of his time visiting Lexington for a British magazine at this time. He stayed at the latest Muzzey hotel, a grand Victorian building originally built as an exhibition hall at the Philadelphia exhibition of 1876. “It was like arriving at some enchanted castle, or if it were not, so much the worse for the enchanted castle.” he wrote. The railroad—“A railroad that was on domestic and almost affectionate terms with us all. When the trains came scuffling and wheezing up the incline from Boston, the sound was as if the friendly locomotive were mounting the back stairs, and might be expected to walk in without ceremony, and sit down at the fire like any other boarder. We could see the trains backing and filling at the station as we sat at breakfast, and such of us as were going to town could time ourselves to the last half-minute and count upon some sympathetic delay when we were late. Saturday evening, the trains all drew in with the air of having done an honest week's work, and the engines having run their empty cars up the siding, found their way to the locomotive house at their leisure, as if they were going to wash up there for Sunday while a sabbath peace settled with the nightfall upon the village.”

A second parallel track was laid in 1886, ensuring more trains per day, each way.

As the railroad built its success, the Boston and Lowell was absorbed by the Boston and Maine the next year in 1887. It's the B&M name we know, for they operated the commuter trains until the MBTA acquired the right-of-way in the 20th century.

And how the railroad blossomed—by the early 20th century there were more than 20 trains per day each way. Some of the improvements made in the 19th and 20th centuries to the “railbed” continue to benefit us today. A number of bridges were built in 1905 to eliminate grade crossings, so the trains passed either over or under the major cross streets. Just across the municipal parking lot, that bridge over Grant Street was built more than 100 years ago, in 1905—in what was the “backyard” of the Muzzey family homestead.

One bridge, the one at Maple Street, has regained notice in recent years for its historical, long disused, name of Pierce's Bridge. There was a station there for many years, and it's convenient to have precise place-names available. So, I've heard several people in recent years refer specifically to “Pierce's Bridge.” It's nice when the old becomes new and useful again.

Circling back to camaraderie on the RR—a favorite anecdote of mine from modern times, actually told here in the Depot several years ago at a panel discussion: this man had been a regular commuter on the B&M Lexington branch, at the point in the 1970s when service was down to just one train a day each way. When you commute to work on the train with the same people every day, you get to know each other. This man was on one of the final commuter trains before the commuter line was suspended in 1977 following a major snow storm. He recalled that the “regulars” on the train popped a bottle of champagne on board to recognize the end of the Lexington Branch.

Because of the establishment of the Bikeway, which Tom will detail in a moment, this right-of-way “again” fosters a useful social space in the Lexington community. And, importantly, it serves as a direct, “smooth-grade” transit link ... still fulfilling its early mission to attract visitors to our historical town as the RR did on this same path in 1875 ... and serves still as a commuter link for those who commute via bicycle.

Part 2

Birth of a Bikeway



Back in the Last Century

Does anyone here recall the 1970s?

Three events led—over 17 years!—to the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway.

1975: The Lexington Recreation Committee recruited a subcommittee to plan local bikeways near the Vine Brook and Lincoln Fields. Participants included

Judy Uhrig	Tom Fortmann	Jeanne Krieger	Sue Solomon
Betsy Whitman	Erna Greene	Mickey Hinkle	Weiant Wathen-Dunn

Members soon drifted off-topic to speculate about turning the B&M railway—by then down to one train per day—into a commuter bikeway.

1977: A major snowstorm* shut down B&M passenger service and freight service ended 3 years later.

1978: Angela “Jere” Frick of the Lexington Conservation Commission received a letter from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council ([MAPC](#)) soliciting air-quality proposals to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Clean Air Act of 1963.

She sent it to Tom Fortmann, who proposed to lure commuters out of their cars with a bikeway along the B&M right-of-way from Bedford to the planned Red Line station** at Alewife.



* One year before the Blizzard of 1978.

** Eventually completed in 1985.

The Proposal

"The Minuteman Bicycle Highway"

Here it is: three typewritten pages, estimated cost \$450,000, dated 14 November 1978.

Preliminary Air Quality Project Identification Form

A. Project or Program Outline

- What is the name of the project/program?
The Minuteman Bicycle Highway
- Briefly describe the major components of this project/program and which public and/or private functions within your municipality would be affected.
A commuter bikeway would be constructed along the B & M right-of-way (Fitchburg line and Bedford branch), from Boston through Somerville, Arlington and Lexington to Bedford. This route is direct and flat, with very few grade crossings. It provides commuter access to the Arlington Heights Bus Terminal, the Alewife Station of the Red Line, Cambridge, and Boston, and it provides local access for shopping and other activities within the various towns. Moreover, it is a pleasant route, passing by various parks and open areas.
- How will this project/program contribute to the improvement of air quality through the reduction of automobile emissions?
This project represents a rare opportunity to bring about a significant increase in bicycle commuting. It is difficult to imagine a more ideal bikeway for luring commuters out of their automobiles. There are already numerous cyclists who commute along Mass. Avenue and other parallel routes in this corridor into Cambridge and Boston, and there are a great many others who say they would commute if such a safe, flat, direct route existed. The possibility of cycling to the bus or rail terminals and continuing on public transportation greatly increases the pool of potential users of this bikeway.
- Aside from air quality benefits, what other value to your community would this project/program generate? As examples, would it reduce local auto congestion, improve parking for residents or businesses, make a shopping district more appealing, etc?
In Lexington and Arlington, this bikeway would be extremely useful for local traffic, shopping, etc. Consequently, it would alleviate some parking and traffic problems. Moreover, its attractiveness for recreational cycling should not be overlooked.
- In your opinion, is this project/program of a type which would be attractive to other municipalities in the Boston region? If so, why?
This project would represent an important transportation link in the four towns mentioned above, as well as several adjoining towns.

Project Planning Status

- Have any planning and/or implementation cost estimates for this project/program been calculated? Only guesses. If so, what are these?
Planning Cost Estimate: \$45,000
Implementation Cost Estimate: \$450,000
- Has this project/program received any endorsement from responsible public officials in your community? Yes
If so, what is the nature of these endorsements?
The Arlington Board of Selectmen has endorsed the placement of a bikeway on the railroad right-of-way. The Cambridge Department of Community Development has also endorsed this concept.
- Has this project received any endorsement from local citizens or business groups? Yes
If so, which groups are these and what is the nature of the endorsement? The Lexington and Arlington Bicycle Committees have enthusiastically endorsed this concept, and various other committees will almost certainly do the same when the issue comes up.
- What mechanisms exist in your community for citizen involvement in the planning of this project?
The Bicycle Committees in Lexington and Arlington have had public hearings and extensive citizen involvement in the planning of bikeways for some time.
- Do you think these citizen participation mechanisms would sufficiently involve the public in the planning of this project? Yes
If not, what additional citizen participation mechanisms would be necessary?
- Does this project fall within the set of projects* established by E.P.A. as being "reasonably available"? Yes

* See "Executive Summary of Clean Air Act" and "Preliminary List of Transportation Control Measures for the Boston Region"; both are attached.

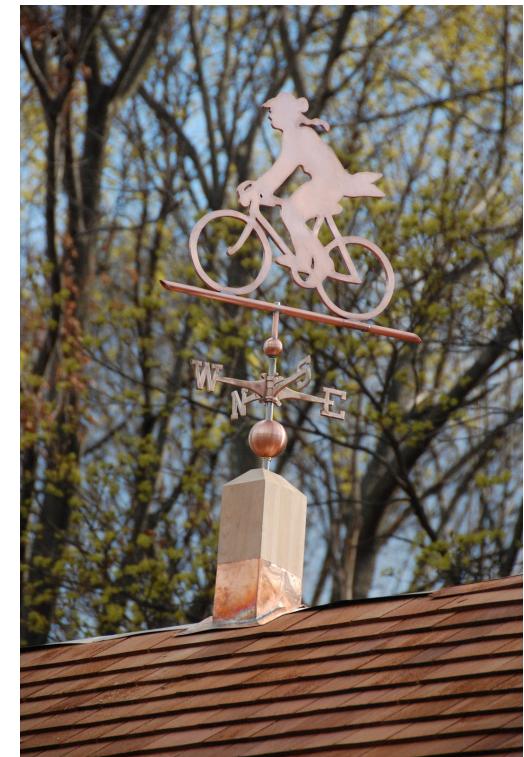
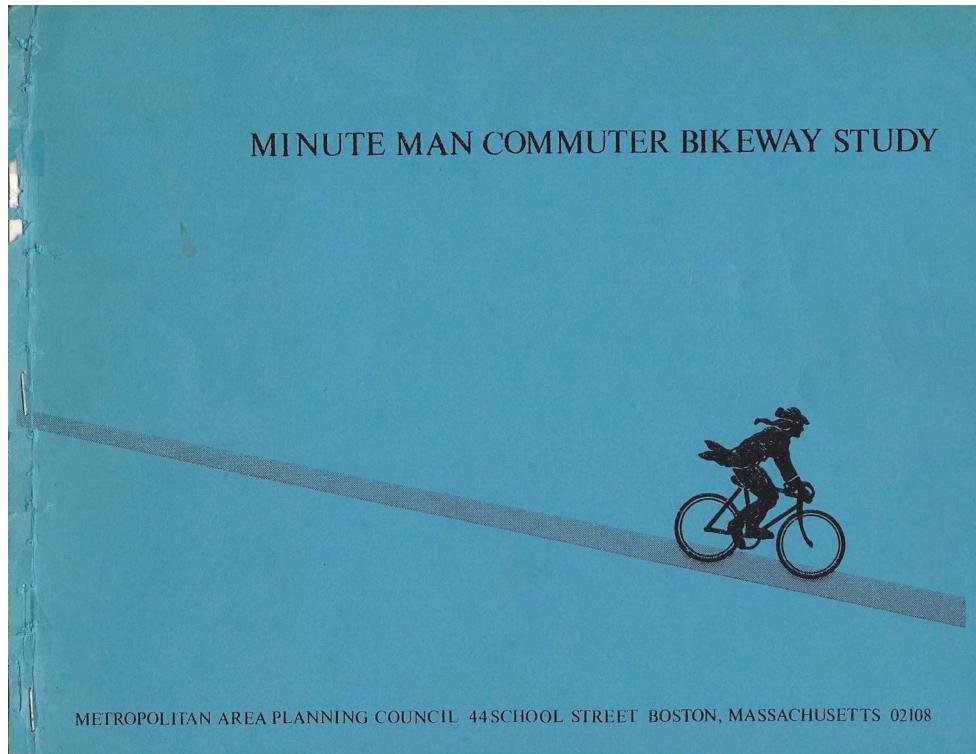
C. Project Implementation Status

- Does your municipal government have all necessary authority for this project? No
If not, what other local agencies' involvement are needed for project implementation?
The MBTA owns the right-of-way and would have to agree to this usage. Building the bikeway would not preclude eventual extension of the Red Line, but it would probably commit the MBTA to including the bikeway in that extension.
- Who is the key person in your municipality who should be contacted in this project/program if more information is needed?
Name: Tom Fortmann Phone No. 861-7296
Address: 21 Colony Road 491-1850 ext. 521
Lexington, MA 02173
- Your Name: Tom Fortmann
Address: 21 Colony Road
Lexington, MA 02173
Position: Chairman, Lexington Bicycle Committee
Richard Withers
3 Viking Court, Apt. 28
Arlington, MA 02174
Arlington Bicycle Committee
President, Boston Area Bicycle Coalition
John Hixon
Department of Community Development
Cambridge City Hall
Cambridge, MA 02139
Don Blake
1 Gleason Road
Bedford, MA 01730
Mike Campbell
Office of Planning and Community Development
Somerville City Hall
Somerville, MA 02143

The Study

- Arlington Planning Director Alan McClenen (also their MAPC representative) and Town Manager Don Marquis were hatching similar plans and the towns' efforts soon converged. Don Blake coordinated Bedford's part of the project.
- The proposal, supported by the [MAPC](#) and the four towns, received critical behind-the scenes support from Cathy Buckley, a bicycle activist on the Central Transportation Planning Staff ([CTPS](#)).
- The EPA funded a study, completed and published in 1981. Estimated cost: \$1,520,000, including some lighting.

The Study



Minuteman Commuter Bikeway Study, February 1981, 92 pages.
Conducted & published by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC).
The authors were Barbara Bernard, Cathy Buckley, and Tom Humphrey.
The marvelous Minuteman logo was designed by David Speidel.

The Foundation

- The Cycling Transportation Foundation (CTF) was formed in August 1981 to advocate for construction of the bikeway.

Board members:

Sen. Paul Tsongas	Jean Mayer (Tufts Pres.)	Mrs. Paul Dudley White	David Gordon Wilson (MIT)	
Joel Bard	Cathy Buckley	Dave Fisher	Tom Fortmann	Dick Fryberger
Alan McClenen	John Scalley	Howard Gilbertson	Eric Vogt	Rich Withers

- In March 1982 CTF's proposal to Mass DPW & MBTA called for an "innovative alliance of the public and private sectors" with a budget of
 - \$1,123,000 (including lighting) from Bikeway Bonds
 - \$ 500,000 in donated equipment, scrap value, volunteer labor, & local in-kind services
 - \$1,623,000
- A key contact was made with State Representative Mary Jane Gibson of Belmont, Assistant Majority Whip and Vice-Chair of the legislature's Transportation Committee.

The Abutters

“I don’t want people from the high-crime areas of Cambridge and Somerville riding by my house.” ——Ingleside Road resident, at a public hearing

- Abutters in Lexington attended public hearings and Selectmen’s meetings in force to oppose the bikeway.
- A pre-Internet “telephone tree” summoned supporters to turn out in response.
- The most contentious hearing was chaired by Selectman Jim Crain, September 22, 1982. 60 people spoke: 21 opposed, 37 in favor, 2 neutral.
- Opponents portrayed the bikeway as a major threat to civilized life in Lexington.
- Objections included invasion of privacy, noise, vandalism, burglary, litter, intrusion of “undesirables” from out of town, inadequate policing, decreased property values, cost, safety at grade crossings, threat to wildlife, environmental damage, etc.
- Opposition was almost non-existent in Arlington, Bedford, and Cambridge.

The Secretary

- Fred Salvucci was a well-regarded Secretary of Transportation (twice, under Governor Dukakis), but he didn't accept bicycles as a serious mode of transportation *and* he wanted to retain the option of extending the Red Line to Route 128.
- He opposed the Minuteman Bikeway and stalled its funding from 1983 until August 1985. In September 1986, he and Rep. Mary Jane Gibson announced approval and funding (\$1.5M) in a press conference at the newly opened Alewife Station.
- Vollmer Associates carried out the design phase during 1987-88 and construction cost estimates ballooned to as high as \$4.3M.
- Construction funding (\$3.5M) did not appear until the Weld administration took office in early 1991.

The Commonwealth

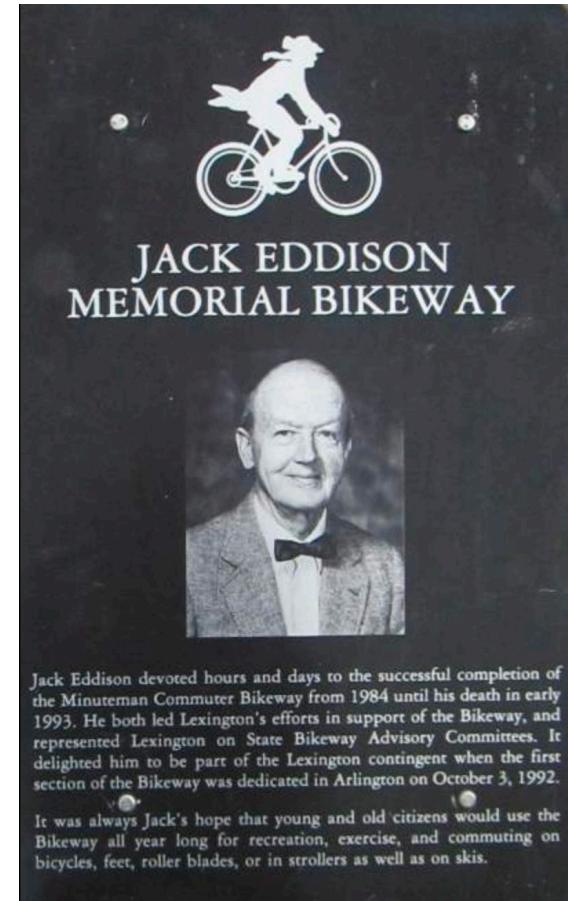
- Mary Jane Gibson, State Representative from Belmont & East Arlington, Assistant Majority Whip and Vice-Chair of the Transportation Committee, inserted a million-dollar bikeway line into a billion-dollar transportation bond bill in 1985.
- Gibson and Deputy Secretary Ann Hershfang persuaded Fred Salvucci to accept the bikeway, announced at the 1986 press conference.
- Dick Kraus, State Senator from the 4th Middlesex District and a bicyclist, built support for bikeway funding in the Senate, as did State Senator Carol Amick.
- [CTPS](#) Bicycle Coordinator Cathy Buckley and Director Arnie Soolman (both bicycle commuters) shepherded the project around the shoals of state government.
- After five more years' delay, the legislature passed and new Governor Bill Weld signed a transportation bond bill with \$3.5M for bikeway construction in May 1991. The lowest of nine bids was only \$2M.
- In an economic downturn, Weld wanted bond funds committed quickly and the “shovel-ready” Minuteman was first in line.

The Selectman

Jack Eddison was elected Lexington Selectman in 1984

- He campaigned on support of the Minuteman Bikeway.
- He rallied the Board against naysayers and abutters.
- He worked with towns & [MAPC](#) to sustain momentum.
- He lobbied legislators & negotiated with Secy Salvucci.
- He chaired the Lexington Bikeway Implementation Committee.
- He served on the MassDOT Bikeway Advisory Committee.
- He passed away in January 1993, before completion.

The Lexington section was dedicated to Jack in May 1993.



Jack Eddison devoted hours and days to the successful completion of the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway from 1984 until his death in early 1993. He both led Lexington's efforts in support of the Bikeway, and represented Lexington on State Bikeway Advisory Committees. It delighted him to be part of the Lexington contingent when the first section of the Bikeway was dedicated in Arlington on October 3, 1992.

It was always Jack's hope that young and old citizens would use the Bikeway all year long for recreation, exercise, and commuting on bicycles, feet, roller blades, or in strollers as well as on skis.

The Maestro

[Alan McClenen](#), Arlington's Planning Director, supported and encouraged by Town Manager Don Marquis, worked quietly and effectively behind the scenes to make the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway a reality.

- He lobbied the [MAPC](#), MPO, MBTA, Mass DPW, towns, Mass Departments of Transportation and Environmental Management, and key legislators.
- He provided moral and political support to bikeway proponents facing serious opposition in Lexington.
- With legal abandonment of the right-of-way the final obstacle, he collaborated with the [Rails-to-Trails Conservancy](#) (RTC) to convince Timothy Mellon's [Guilford Transportation Industries](#) and the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) to accept it.
- His patience, perseverance, and perspicacity paid off after 17 long years.
- [Alan McClenen Park](#) on Summer Street is a tribute to his service.



The Construction



- Conway Construction broke ground in October 1991.
- Arlington & Cambridge sections opened October 3, 1992.

The Launch

- Lexington and Bedford sections were completed in the spring of 1993.
- A grand opening ceremony was held May 29, 1993.
- The Lexington section was dedicated to Jack Eddison.
- The [Rails-to-Trails Conservancy](#) (RTC) dubbed it the “Nation’s 500th Rail-Trail.”



The Result

“I went out on your bloody bikeway yesterday. It looked like the start of the Boston Marathon!”
—David Wells



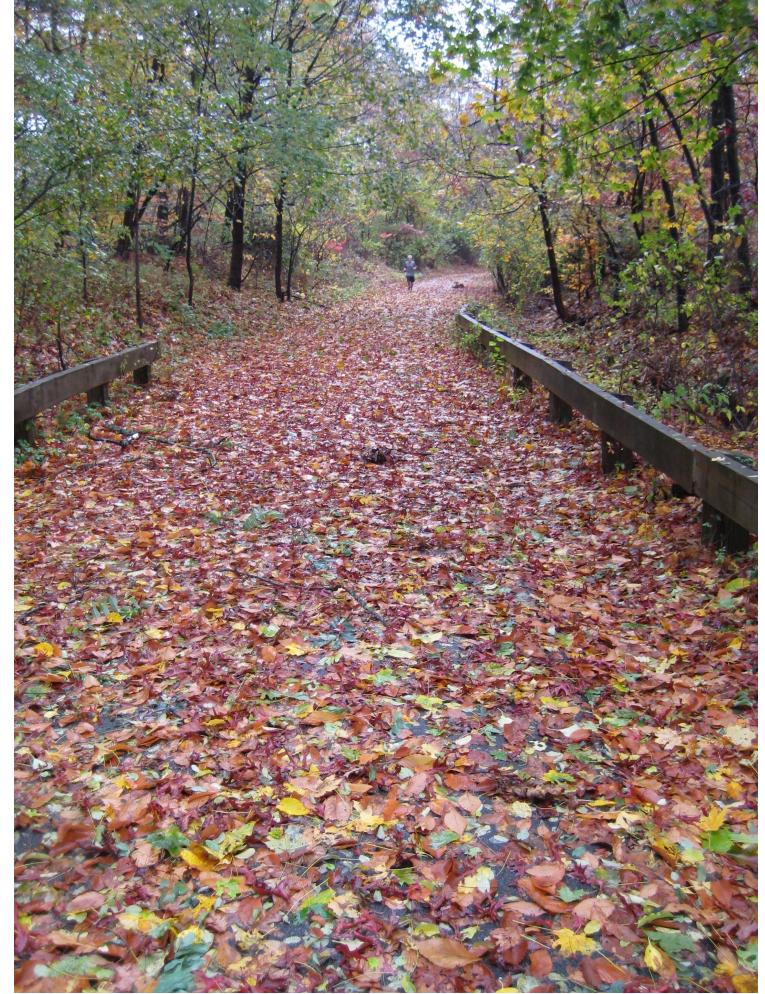
- The Minuteman Commuter Bikeway was and continues to be a phenomenal success, inspiring other bikeways throughout the region.
- It was the fifth inductee into the national [Rail-Trail Hall of Fame](#) in October 2008.
- Usage is difficult to measure but is probably around 300-500,000 trips/year.
- [CTPS](#) surveys indicate that it's the busiest bike path in Massachusetts.



Bicycle parking cage at Alewife Station



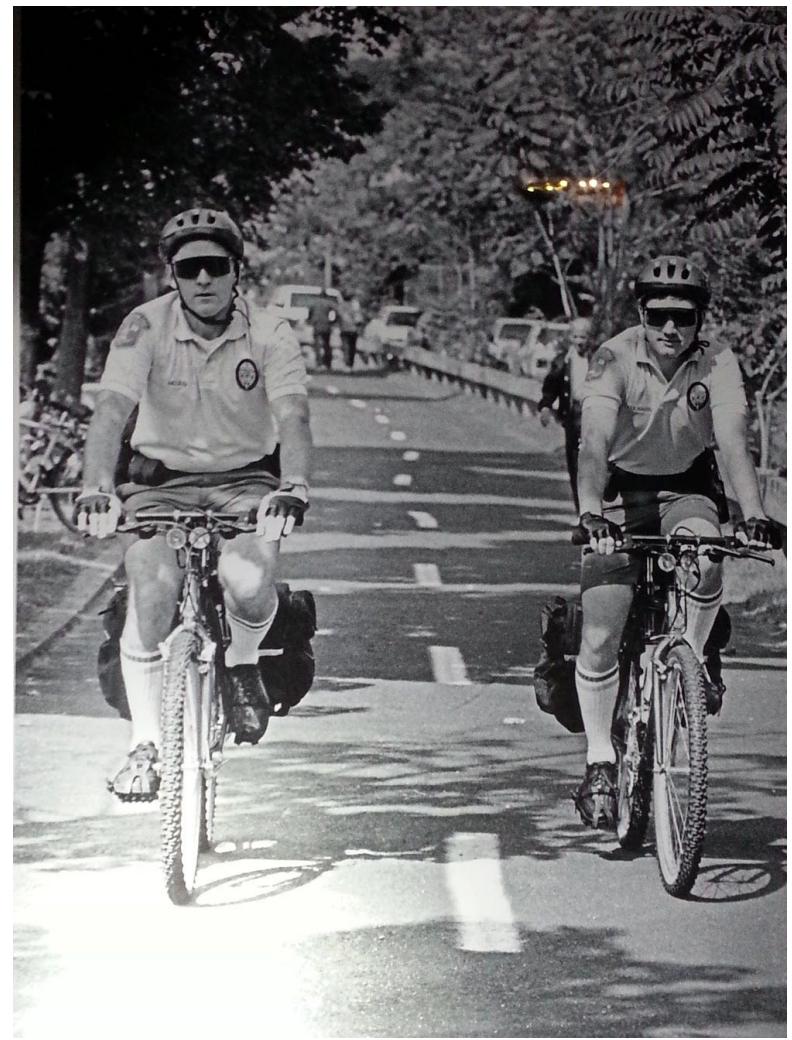
Original Buddliner at Bedford terminus



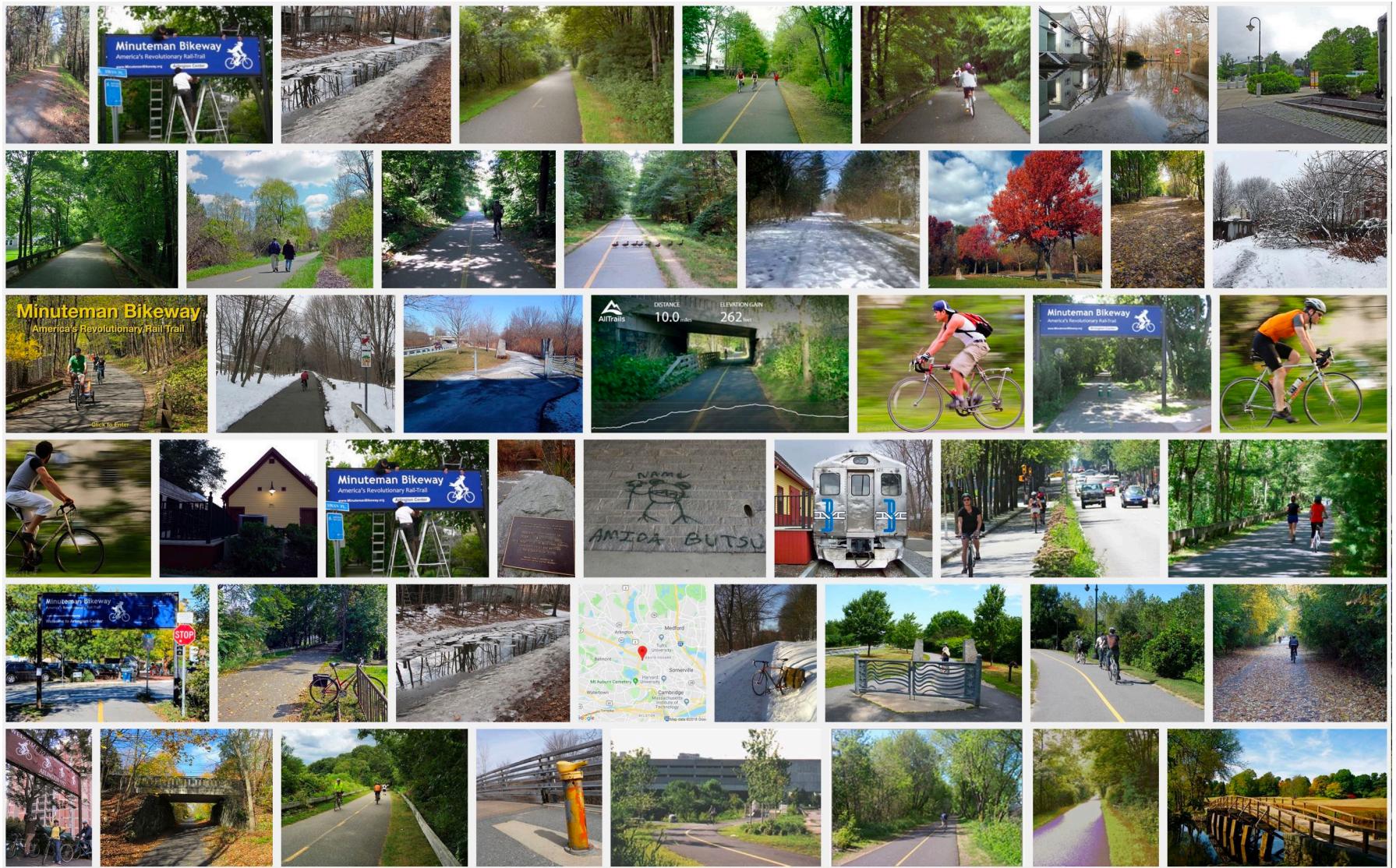
Autumn runner



The original four members of Lexington's "Bikeway Bobbies:" Officers Paul Callahan, Rick Corazzini, Dan Hoag, and Dana Ham



Officers Dan Hoag and Paul Callahan on patrol in 1993 or 1994



More railroad and bikeway photos are on display this month in the CVS windows.

The Friends

LEXINGTON FRIENDS OF THE MINUTEMAN BIKEWAY
NEWSLETTER Issue No. 1, Spring 1993

Chairperson Jerry Van Hook 862-7043

Vice-Chairperson Wendy Reasenberg 862-8281

Treasurer Alan Lazarus 861-0093

Newsletter Editor Bill Stern 862-4072

On May 29th, the Lexington section of the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway will be dedicated in memory of the late Jack Eddison. See page 3.

THE FRIENDS ORGANIZATION, PAST PRESENT AND FUTURE
By Jerry Van Hook

This is the first issue of our Newsletter that we hope will be published at least once each year, representing the activities of the **Friends of the Minuteman Bikeway**. We are a volunteer organization dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway, an 11 mile path which follows the former B&M railroad right-of-way from Alewife station in Cambridge through the centers of Arlington and Lexington to the present terminus a few blocks south of Bedford center. The

Arlington section was completed last year and a dedication ceremony was held on October 8th. Construction of the Lexington and Bedford sections is being completed this Spring and these sections will be officially opened with a dedication ceremony on May 29th. In addition to commuter and recreational biking, we hope to encourage other forms of human-powered travel along the Bikeway such as walking, jogging, roller-blading, and cross-country skiing in the winter.

Continued on page 2

Lexington Friends of the Minuteman Bikeway, 1993
Became Friends of Lexington Bikeways, 2007:
www.folb.net

Bedford Friends of the Minuteman Bikeway, 1993:
sites.google.com/site/bedfordbike



Jerry Van Hook leads the Friends on the first official ride

More Friends

Here are some members of various bikeway committees and other supporters in Lexington, collected for posterity

Harvey Bingham
Dick Canale
Dave Cannon
Laurel Carpenter
Bob Dangel
Jack Eddison
Peggy Enders
Robert Enders
Tom Fortmann
John Frey
Jere Frick
Andy Friedlich
George Gagliardi
Erna Greene
Steve Groves
Bill Hadley
Joyce Hals
Mike Hanauer

Marita Hartshorn
Bob Hausslein
Steve Hill
Mickey Hinkle
Steve Hurley
Peter Kelley
Stew Kennedy
Jeanne Krieger
David Kucharsky
Patria Lanfranchi
Alan Lazarus
Carolyn Levi
Alan Levine
John Livsey
Jennifer Melot
Barbara Munkres
Keith Ohmart
Dan Palant

Joe Pato
Dave Pinsonneault
Wendy Reasenberg
Bob Sawyer
Sandra Shaw
Abe Shenker
Jackie Smith
Sue Solomon
Richard Spencer
Bill Stern
Webb Sussman
Mike Tabaczynski
Judy Uhrig
Jerry Van Hook
Weiант Wathen-Dunn
Betsy Whitman
David Williams
Rich Withers

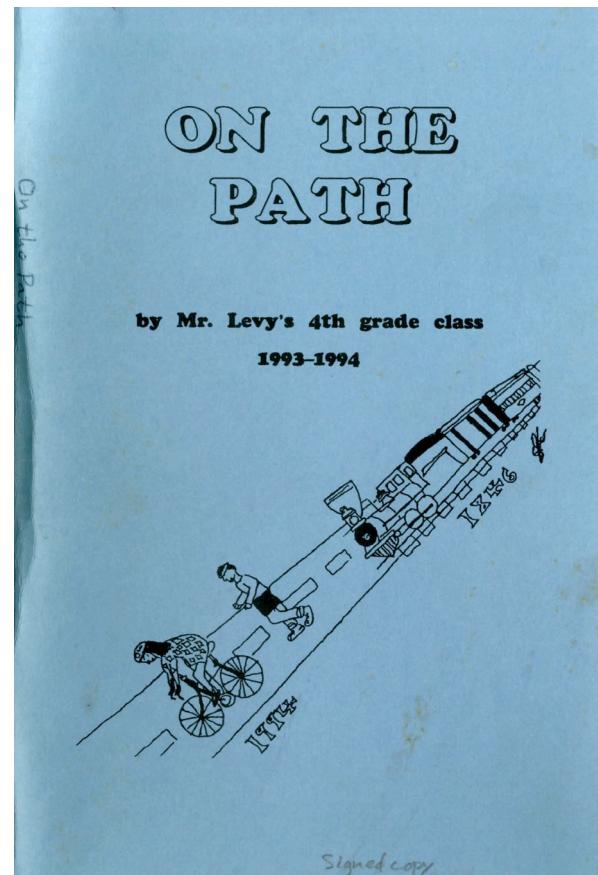
If your name or that of someone you know belongs on this list, tell me and I'll add it.

The Book

In September of 1993, at Lexington's Bowman School, Steven Levy* asked his 4th-grade class, "What is the biggest change in your town since you were born?" An amusing variety of answers ensued until finally an astute 9-year-old said, "The bike path was built."

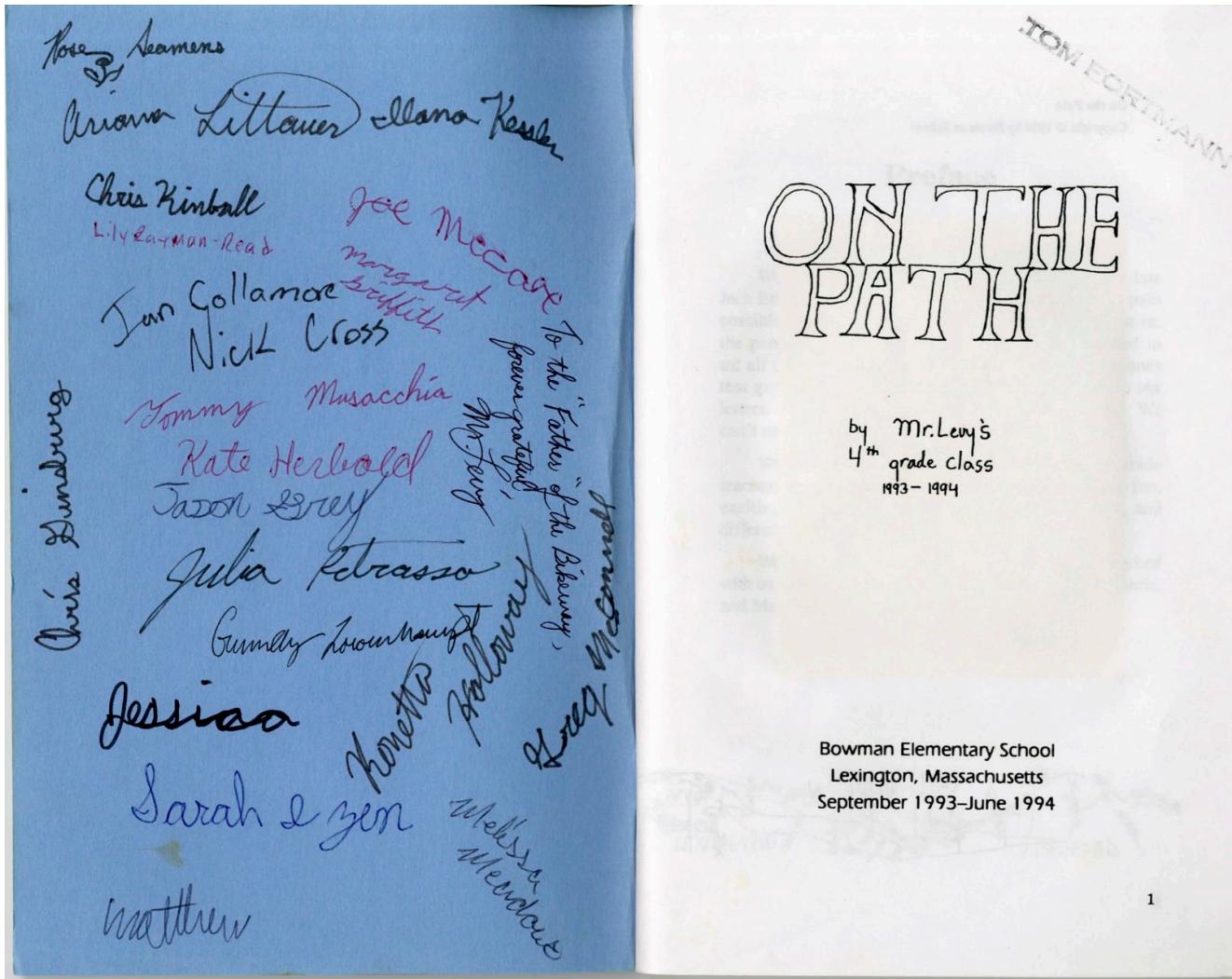
They then embarked upon a 9-month intellectual odyssey, researching every aspect of bicycling and the bikeway, interviewing key players, polling abutters, counting users, repairing bicycles, and documenting their efforts in this marvelous 80-page volume.

The book has been reprinted verbatim in a 25th Anniversary Edition that is on sale now.



* 1993 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year

The kids autographed my copy in 1994. Mr. Levy is here tonight to autograph your copy of the 25th Anniversary edition (\$5 each).



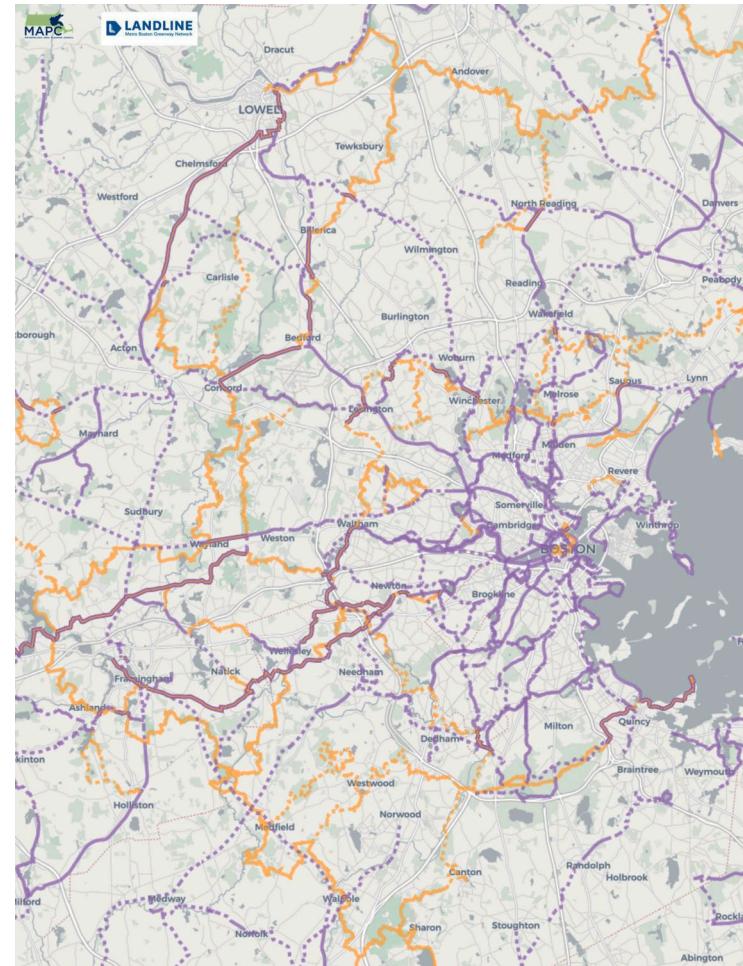
The Future

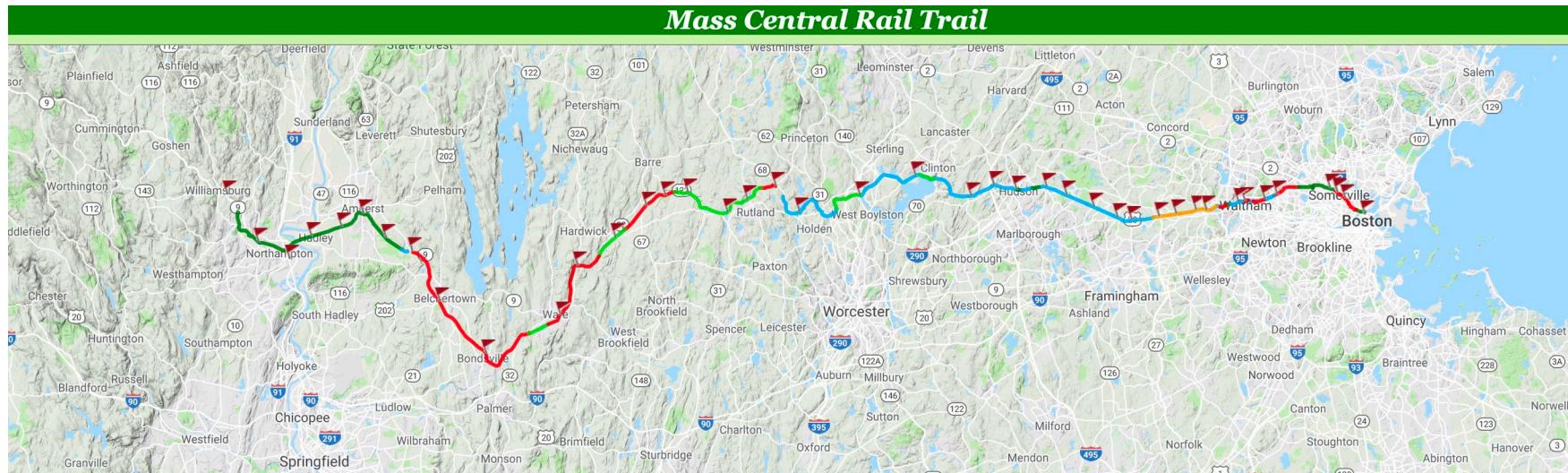
“Middlesex County, with more than 200 miles of bike paths and another 150 miles in the works, is poised to become the Netherlands of America!”

—Richard Fries, former MassBike Executive Director

Middlesex County Bikeways

- Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
- Assabet River Rail Trail
- Nashua River Rail Trail
- Somerville Community Path
- Minuteman Extension West
- Narrow Gauge Rail Trail & Yankee Doodle Bikeway
- Bay Circuit Trail
- Cochituate Rail Trail
- Upper Charles Trail
- Mass Central Rail Trail (next slide)





Mass Central Rail Trail: tkmaps.com/MCRT, masscentralrailtrail.org

Also see the MAPC's *LandLine Vision Plan*:

“We are proposing 913 miles of greenways and
515 miles of foot trails across the MAPC region.”

mapc.org/resource-library/landline-vision-plan

trailmap.mapc.org

[Rails-to-Trails article](#) about LandLine

Railway to Bikeway Timeline

- | | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------|--|
| 1846 | Lexington & West Cambridge Railroad opens | 1978 | Proposal for EPA air quality funds to study “Minuteman Bicycle Highway” |
| 1873 | Boston & Lowell Railroad extends to Bedford | 1982 | Cycling Transportation Foundation proposal to Mass DPW & MBTA |
| 1895 | 21 trains run each day between Lexington & Boston | 1986 | State approval with design funding |
| 1930s | Route 2 widens to 4 lanes for car travel to Boston | 1991 | Bikeway construction begins |
| 1951 | Route 128 connects Lexington to points north & south of Boston | 1993 | Minuteman Commuter Bikeway opens as the nation’s 500th Rail Trail |
| 1974 | First discussion of converting railway to bikeway | 2008 | Bikeway inducted into Rail-Trail Hall of Fame |
| 1977 | Ice storm halts passenger train service to Boston | 2009 | Bikeway plowed in winter for first time in Lexington |
| | | 2018 | 25th Anniversary Celebrations in Lexington, Arlington, and Bedford |

Web Links

- Lexington HS: lexingtonhistory.org & lexingtonhistory.pastperfectonline.com
- Cary Library—Worthen Collection: carylibrary.org/worthen
- Arlington HS: arlingtonhistorical.org & arlingtonhistorical.pastperfectonline.com
- Bedford HS: bedfordmahistory.org & bedfordmahistory.pastperfectonline.com
- Beverly HS: historicbeverly.net & beverlyhistory.pastperfectonline.com
- Boston & Maine RR HS: bmrrhs.org
- Mystic Valley Railway Society: mysticvalleyrs.org
- Friends of Bedford Depot Park: bedforddepot.org/history
- Abandoned Rails: abandonedrails.com/Lexington_Branch
- Rail-Trail Hall of Fame: railstotrails.org/our-work/trail-promotion/rail-trail-hall-of-fame
- Minuteman Bikeway: minutemanbikeway.org & wikipedia.org/wiki/Minuteman_Bikeway
25th Anniversary Sites: bikeway25.org & lexingtonhistory.org/bikeway25
25th Anniversary Video: youtube.com/watch?v=gBY81vjAD2E
Friends groups: www.folb.net & sites.google.com/site/bedfordbike
- Wikipedia: wikipedia.org/wiki/Minuteman_Bikeway
wikipedia.org/wiki/Lexington_and_West_Cambridge_Railroad
wikipedia.org/wiki/Lexington_Depot
wikipedia.org/wiki/Bedford_Depot
wikipedia.org/wiki/Arlington_Centre_station
[wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Street_station_\(Arlington,_Massachusetts\)](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Street_station_(Arlington,_Massachusetts))
wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierce%27s_Bridge_station



Thanks to all for attending.

Don't miss the big 25th anniversary event on Sept 29th
bikeway25.org and lexingtonhistory.org/bikeway25



Photo credits

- Slide 1: Edwin B. Worthen Collection at Cary Memorial Library; Jixue Yang; Worthen; Worthen
- Slide 2: Worthen Collection
- Slide 3: Arlington Historical Society; Lexington Historical Society
- Slide 4: Worthen Collection; Lexington Historical Society
- Slide 5: Worthen Collection
- Slide 6: Lexington Historical Society; Worthen Collection
- Slide 7: Unknown; Historic Beverly
- Slide 8: Historic Beverly
- Slide 9: Historic Beverly
- Slide 10: Alan E. MacMillan
- Slide 13: Historic Beverly
- Slide 14: H. Bentley Crouch
- Slide 15: Tom Fortmann
- Slide 17: Tom Fortmann
- Slide 22: Tom Fortmann
- Slide 23: Alan McClennen
- Slide 24: Lexington Minuteman
- Slide 25: Kim Downey
- Slide 26: Jixue Yang; Stephan Miller
- Slide 27: Kim Downey; Kim Downey; Peggy Enders
- Slide 28: Paul Callahan
- Slide 29: Various (DuckDuckGo search)
- Slide 30: Friends of Lexington Bikeways
- Slide 32-33: Mr. Levy's 4th-graders
- Slide 38: Worthen Collection; Jixue Yang