

INVITATION TO BID
Squannacook River Rail Trail
Townsend and Groton, Massachusetts
Permitting of Rail Trail Extension in Groton and Townsend -
Version 2

The Squannacook River Rail Trail is a 3.7-mile aggregate hard-pack trail along an abandoned right-of-way owned by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). The western end of the trail is presently at Depot Road in the center of Townsend, MA and the eastern end is at the Bertozzi Wildlife Management Area in Groton, MA, running along the former Peterborough and Shirley rail corridor.

Squannacook Greenways built the existing rail trail over four construction years, from 2020 to 2024. Since the first quarter of the rail trail opened, it has been loved by the whole town and residents of the area. Figure 1 shows a map of the existing rail trail.

Squannacook Greenways is now pursuing extensions of the completed rail trail in both directions. Going to the northwest in Townsend, we are seeking to extend the rail trail 4.3 miles from the Depot St parking area to the New Hampshire border, as shown in Figure 2. Going to the southeast in Groton, we are seeking to extend 1.2 miles from the Bertozzi parking area to the furthest point at which the leased MBTA property has direct access to the road, across from 426 Townsend Road. This extension is shown in Figure 3.

The goal of this work will be to obtain all needed state and local permits needed to allow construction to start. Engineering of the trail design should only be done as needed to proceed with the permitting. As it has done in the past, Squannacook Greenways is building this rail trail with funds from MassTrails grants and additional fundraising. This construction is not done to MassHighway protocols as is done with paved rail trails. Squannacook Greenways has already built 3.7 miles of stone dust, and for normal stretches of the extension we will follow the specifications we have used in the past, as can be found at https://sqrrt.org/pdf/SRRT_Construction_Guidelines_Section_4.pdf.

Statement of Work

The final deliverable of this project is to obtain all permits from the state and from the towns of Groton and Townsend needed to allow construction to start.

As one of the first steps in this project, the two wooden trestles will be tested to see if they can be reused or must be replaced. Given that both trestles are listed in the Massachusetts Historical Commission database, and are much loved in town, we will need hard evidence that they cannot be reused before replacing them.

Based on the outcome of this step, we would need the crossing to be designed only to the level required by the permitting agencies. We understand that the design work required for a replacement bridge may have a significantly different cost than a reuse of the existing bridge. For this reason, we are requesting two separate cost estimates. The first is if both bridges can be reused, the second is if one or both bridges must be replaced.

As noted above, the final deliverable of this project is to obtain all permits from the state and from the towns of Groton and Townsend needed to allow construction to start. The section below lists our

best view of expected permitting challenges, which we expect to be factored into the cost estimate.

Expected Permitting Challenges

General

The planned work is located within NHESP Priority Habitat of Rare Species/Estimated Habitat of Rare Wildlife, Flood Hazard areas, and jurisdictional areas under the Wetlands Protection Act. In addition, the scope of the project may trigger MEPA filings that include Environmental Justice Notice & Public Outreach, Expanded Environmental Notification Form, and MEPA Rollover Environmental Impact Report. We were told that permitting only a section at a time of this project was not acceptable, so we are permitting a project that we expect will take many years to complete.

Townsend Section

During a walk on this proposed section on Jan. 15, 2025 with Tim McGuire, Endangered Species Review Biologist at Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Tim noted that this section does not contain the issues with endangered species that the Groton section does. From his perspective, the main permitting challenge of this section are the two crossings of the Squannacook River, as shown in Figure 2. As discussed above, there are two wooden trestles crossing the river, built in approximately 1930. Trestle 1 (Townsend Center) spans approximately 134 ft and has a 27 foot missing section, and is shown in Figure 4. It was built in 1920. Trestle 2 (West Townsend) is shown in Figure 5, and some fire damage about 25 years ago. It was built in 1936.

The Townsend section also has two state road crossings, Route 13 in Townsend center, and Route 119 in West Townsend. If these road crossings need to be designed to allow permitting, then the design work needed for permitting should be done.

Groton Section

When we walked the Groton section with Tim McGuire of Fish and Wildlife and Tom Rebula, DEP Central Region Wetlands two main issues were brought up. The first is that this section is known to contain endangered turtle habitat. The second is that there are two sections with significant wash outs under the rail bed. These two wash outs are shown in Figures 6 and 7. There are also significant wetlands nearby toward the southern terminus.

We also desire to permit a small parking area at the southern terminus.

Payment details

This work is funded by two grants, a Community Preservation Committee grant from the Town of Groton, and a MassTrails grant to Squannacook Greenways. The Groton Community Preservation Committee grant can only pay for Groton work, whereas the MassTrails grant can cover any work. For this reason, we would like a bid divided into three parts:

1. Groton only work
2. General work covering both towns, and Townsend only work, assuming both trestles can be reused (both trestles are in Townsend).
3. General work covering both towns, and Townsend only work, assuming both trestles must be

replaced (both trestles are in Townsend).

When billing for work, bills must specify whether they are Groton only, or the general/Townsend category.

Tour of the Rail Corridor

Squannacook Greenways invites potential bidders to tour the rail corridor to view the site and clarify the scope of work. Contractors should contact Squannacook Greenways to arrange a meeting time and place. We will answer questions on-site during the tour and/or in a follow-up communication. In addition, bidders are welcome and encouraged to tour the site on their own.

Timeline

Event	Date
ITB released (Version 2)	Oct. 23, 2025
Bids due	Dec. 15, 2025
Selection of contractor	Dec. 31, 2025
Project start	Jan. 1, 2026
Project finish	June 15, 2027

Minimum Requirements for Contractors

Bidders must hold all pertinent licenses in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Squannacook Greenways, Inc. reserves the right to accept or refuse any or all bids at our sole discretion.

Bid Submissions

Bidders must submit the following:

1. Bidder Information Form
2. Bidder Qualifications Form
3. References
4. Price Quote

All bids must be received by **Dec. 15, 2025 midnight EST** at the following email address:

Bill Rideout

Treasurer, Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

email: rideout01469@gmail.com

Payment for Work Performed

The awarded contractor shall submit to Squannacook Greenways, Inc. a billing statement for the project tasks listed in the Bid Quote. Each task must be labeled as Groton only or General/Townsend. This statement shall describe and give the cost of the completed work as listed in the awarded contract.

Bidder Information

Attach additional pages if needed.

Company Information:

Company Name:
Website:
Address:
Brief business description:

Primary Contact:

Name:	
Telephone:	Cell:
Email:	

Secondary Contact (optional):

Name:	
Telephone:	Cell:
Email:	

Bid:

Groton only section bid:

General work covering both towns, and Townsend only work, assuming both trestles can be reused:

General work covering both towns, and Townsend only work, assuming both trestles cannot be reused:

Bidder Qualifications

Bidders shall respond to the questions on this form to substantiate their qualifications. Use additional pages if necessary. Bidders may attach documents and other information to demonstrate that they are qualified to perform the work covered under this Invitation to Bid.

1. How many years has your organization been in business as a contractor performing the type of services outlined in the Invitation to Bid?

2. Describe at least two projects your organization has completed that are relevant in size and scope to the Squannacook River Rail Trail project.

3. Do you have other projects underway or scheduled that might interfere with the start and completion schedule for the project covered under this Invitation to Bid?

4. In the past five (5) years, has your organization ever failed to complete an awarded project within the specified contract time? If so, where, when, and why?

5. Summarize your relevant licenses.

References

Provide a reference for a project completed within the last two years, including the company name, contact name, telephone number, email address, and a brief description of the project. Please inform your references that Squannacook Greenways intends to contact them to ask about your performance on their project.

Reference

Contact name:	
Telephone:	Cell:
Email:	
Project location:	
Project description:	
Relevance to this project:	

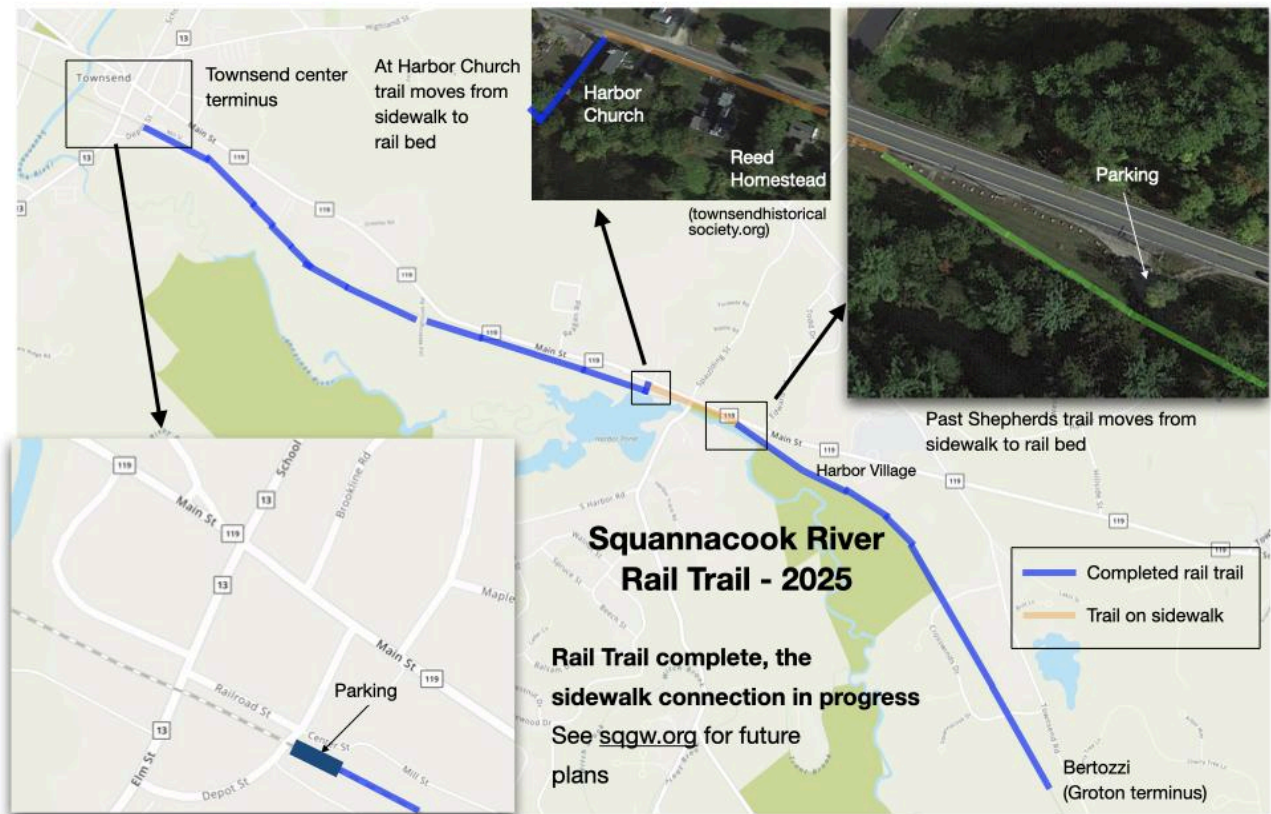


Figure 1. Map of existing 3.7 mile Squannacook River Rail Trail



Figure 2: Map of proposed extension 4.3 miles northwest to New Hampshire state line, including locations of the two existing wooden trestles.

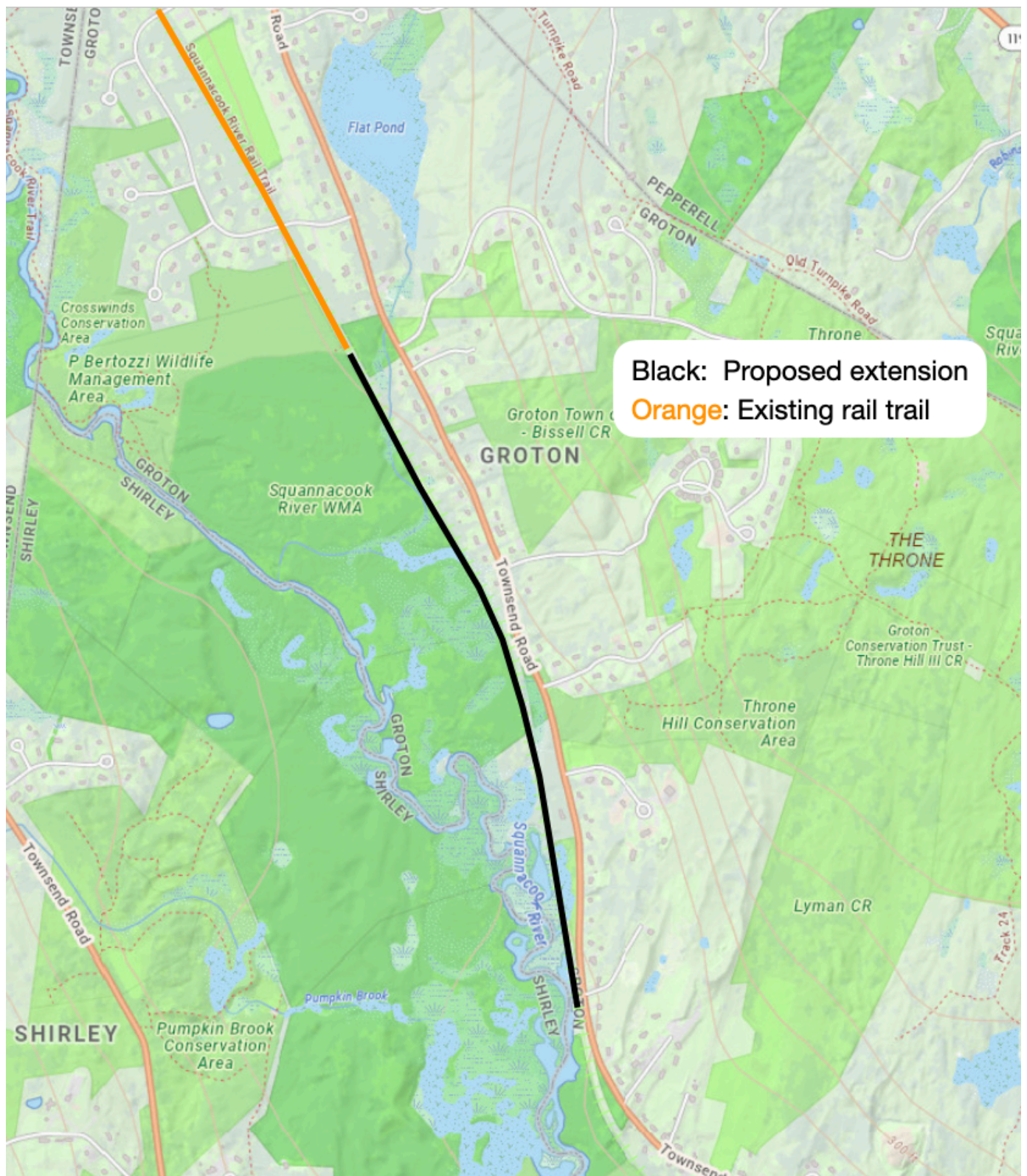


Figure 3. Map of 1.2 miles proposed extension south in Groton



Figure 4: Trestle 1 (near Townsend center)



Figure 5. Trestle 2 in West Townsend



Figure 6: Northern washout in Groton section.



Figure 7: Southern washout in Groton section.