

Boston Globe

Cochituate Rail Trail Won't Happen Soon

By Alison O'Leary Murray, Globe Correspondent, 6/21/2001

Putting a bike and pedestrian trail on the rail line that runs about 1.5 miles along Lake Cochituate from Natick center to Cochituate State Park is an idea that is unlikely to see the light of day for at least three more years. The rail trail has garnered a lot of attention in recent years, but there are several factors holding it up.

While trail supporters accurately predicted that Wonderbread would cease operations - and train service - a year before the company moved from its Speen Street bakery, the businesses that remain on the spur line say they're not going anywhere. Peter Lewis, president of MetroCold Storage, a Chrysler Road business near the former bakery, said business is picking up, not shutting down. One of his best and oldest customers is the Whipple Co., the North Main Street pie filling company, that also uses the rail line that runs up behind the plant.

Both Dight "Nick" Crane of the Whipple Co. and Lewis say they are upset by rail trail supporters' claims that CSX, the owner of the railroad, will close the line because of declining revenue.

According to Craig Della Penna, Northeast representative of the Rails to Trails Conservancy, CSX has to hold onto the rail line there for at least three more years to comply with an agreement made when it purchased the tracks from Conrail.

Despite other states' successful ventures in combining recreation and transportation, CSX regional spokesman Bob Sullivan said that while rail trails are a good way for railroads to retain rights of way, having pedestrians and trains share the space is not something his company will permit.

This story ran on page W7 of the Boston Globe on 6/21/2001.

© Copyright 2001 Globe Newspaper Company.