

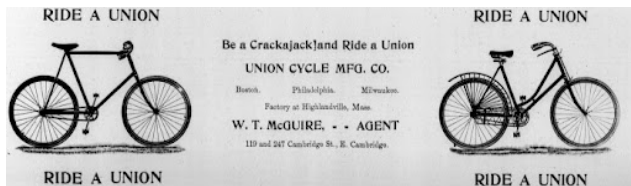
Bicycles and Trains in and around Cambridge

Both bicycles and trains go back to the early 19th century, have spread around the globe, and have vastly evolved since then. Trains have a rich history in Cambridge and while we continue to rely on them and even build new routes (such as the Green Line extension), some older routes have been abandoned or no longer need as much space. This has provided some great opportunities to build multi-use paths across the city to connect Cambridge with neighboring towns. Some have been around for some time, some were just opened to the public, and some are about to begin their transformation.



Cambridge Port Cycle Club (1890s)

The first train track on the edge of East Cambridge along the banks of the Millers River was the Boston & Lowell Railroad, opened in 1835. Interestingly, the first substantial railroad development in Cambridge was built to support an ice business. To respond to increased demand for ice in the Caribbean, Europe and beyond, the Charlestown Branch Railroad built a line west to the north bank of Fresh Pond in 1841. Many more lines followed: the Fitchburg line, the Harvard Branch Railroad, and the Central Line to Northampton, among others.



Advertisement in the Cambridge Tribune, April 25th 1896



Charles River Park on Mass Ave 134 (circa 1896)

Cycling development in Cambridge: The sport of cycling gained popularity shortly after the Civil War. An indoor velocipede rink opened in Central Square in 1869, and by the early 1870s neighborhood cycle clubs were advertising excursions to outlying towns. Charles River Park, a stadium constructed expressly for bicycle racing was built on a ten-acre site on Massachusetts Avenue at Landsdowne Street in 1896 and operated at least through 1902. Bicycling maintained its popularity until the introduction of automobiles; unfortunately, most of the local cycling clubs disappeared by the time of World War I. It would take another 70 years before we would see the first Rail to Trail conversion in Cambridge.



Bicycle Shop on Mass Ave 424 (1899)

CAMBRIDGE
CDD @ 344
 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



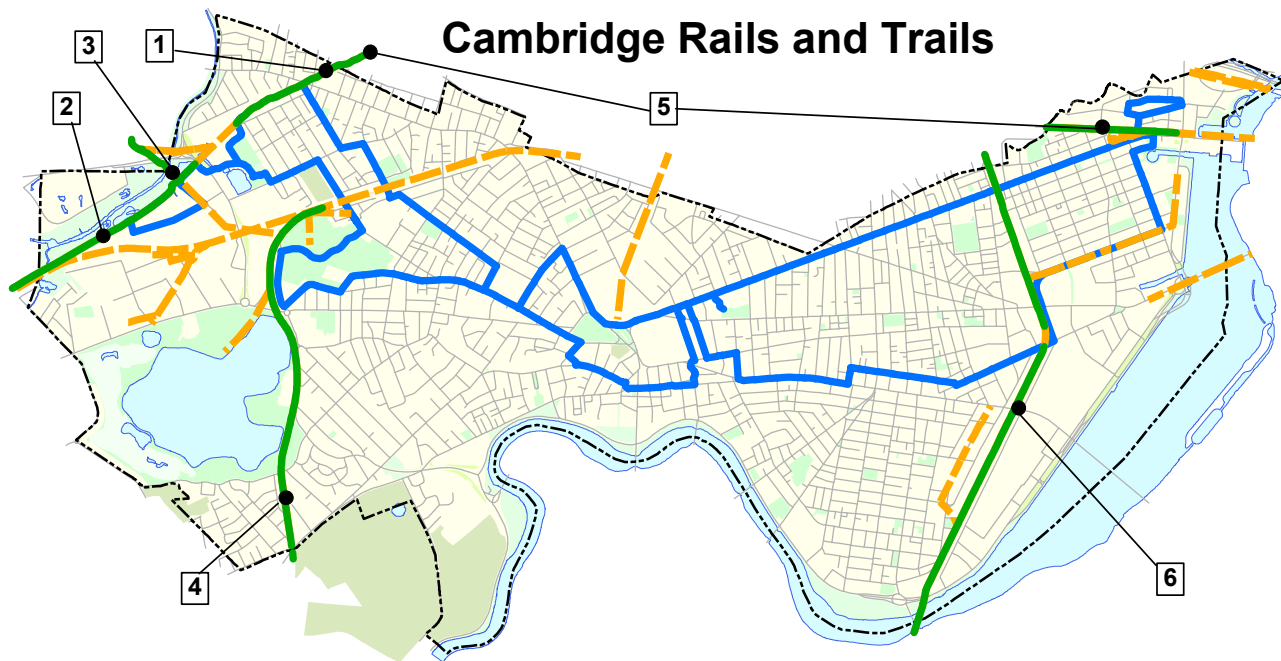
When you want to go further or need some help getting to your destination, you can load your bicycle on the commuter trains as well as the red line. More information is available on the MBTA website: Bringing Your Bike on the Train at mbta.com/bikes/bringing-your-bike-the-train

2022 Route
<https://www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/communitydevelopment/cambridgebikerides>

Acknowledgments
 Charles Sullivan, Executive Director Cambridge Historical Commission, for providing pictures and historical context.

Thanks to the following for supporting the ride:





Legend

- Existing and Upcoming Rail-To-Trail Conversions
- Current and Historic Rail Lines
- 2022 Bike Route

Rails to Trails - some great examples around Cambridge

- (1) Linear Park**, opened in 1985. This multi-use trail was the first rail-to-trail conversion in Cambridge. Connecting Davis Square to Alewife, the path was constructed concurrently with the extension of the Red Line to Alewife, taking over a portion of the long distance Central Massachusetts Railroad that had opened in 1881.
- (2) The Fitchburg Cutoff**, a former rail line by the same name, extends from the Alewife T Station to Belmont
- (3) The Minuteman Bikeway** also starts at the Alewife Station and goes all the way to Bedford, and is a member of the national Rail-Trail Hall of Fame.

- (4) The Watertown-Cambridge Greenway** is a conversion of the B&M Railroad line that just opened, with another section opening soon, eventually linking the Charles River paths with the Minuteman.
- (5) The Somerville Community Path** connects to Linear Park at Davis Square, and leads to Magoun Square in Somerville. It will soon extend to Lechmere Station alongside the new Green Line extension. At Lechmere, you can discover the new Cambridge Crossing neighborhood or continue your ride to Boston using existing trails.
- (6) The Grand Junction Multi-use Path** will run along the existing railroad tracks from the Boston University Bridge to Somerville. This path will connect the MIT, Central Square and East Cambridge business districts. The first section of this corridor was completed in 2016 and construction on additional sections is anticipated to start in 2023.

City of Cambridge Bicycle Committee

ANNUAL Trails to Rails SPRING to Rails BICYCLE RIDE

