

Results of 2013 Belmont Community Path Questionnaire



Community Path Advisory Committee (CPAC)
24 October 2013



Overview of Belmont Community Path Questionnaire

- **Questionnaire posted using online SurveyMonkey service**
- **Questionnaire promoted widely throughout Belmont**
 - Announced via newspapers, community email lists, Town webpage, Town department heads and committee chairs, Town Meeting members
 - BMLD mailings to all residents
 - Hardcopies available at library and accepted by Office of Community Development (~20 received)
 - 1,500 responses over 3-month period from Feb. to May 2013
 - 1,050+ responses from Belmont
- **Questionnaire content**
 - Asked questions about support level, trail features, how used, rail-with-trail concept
 - Open-ended questions elicited over 1000 written responses

CPAC performed significant publicity and outreach to Community for this Questionnaire



Questionnaire Questions



Questions in SurveyMonkey Questionnaire (1 of 5)

Belmont Community Path Questionnaire

The Belmont Community Path Advisory Committee (CPAC) is seeking your input on a future community path through Belmont. The path would serve the entire community by providing safe access for children and parents walking to school, a route for bicycle commuters, an open space for walking, jogging or in-line skating and other recreational needs. The path would connect residents to town facilities, businesses and public transit. A community path is motor-vehicle free and as such it generally promotes wider uses of basic transportation modes like walking and cycling.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to understand what is most important to town residents and business owners. Your responses will help inform which aspects should be prioritized when assessing potential path routes.

Thank you for your help.

1. In what town or city do you live?

☐ Belmont

☐ Cambridge

☐ Somerville

☐ Watertown

☐ Arlington

☐ Lexington

☐ Waltham

Other _____

2. What is the nearest major intersection to your home? (e.g. Concord Street and School Street)

3. In general, how supportive are you of a community path through Belmont?

☐ Very Supportive

☐ Supportive

☐ Neutral

☐ Opposed

☐ Very Opposed

*Minuteman Bikeway,
Arlington, MA*



Questions in SurveyMonkey Questionnaire (2 of 5)

4. Please indicate for which purpose you would use a community path:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping at Local Businesses | <input type="checkbox"/> Jogging/Running |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Errands to Local Destinations (e.g. Library) | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking or Biking to School or Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Inline Skating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Cycling | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

5. On average, how often would you say you use off-road paths? (Examples include the Minuteman Bikeway, McLean Conservation Land, Audubon Habitat, Alewife Brook Greenway, Brighton St-to-Alewife path, and Fresh Pond paths.)

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A few times per year | <input type="checkbox"/> Daily |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About once per month | <input type="checkbox"/> Never |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a week | |

*Minuteman Bikeway,
Arlington, MA*



Questions in SurveyMonkey Questionnaire (3 of 5)

6. In this section, we will ask you how important the following aspects are to the community path. Think about how you would like to see the path used, and how the path can serve the Belmont area.

For a community path, how important is it that the route ...

	Not at all		Neutral		Very important
be off-road, as opposed to sharing roadways with motor vehicles?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
creates connections to existing businesses and other resources?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
complements future land uses?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Not at all		Neutral		Very important
has no hills or sharp turns?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has availability of car parking for path users?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has natural beauty?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
provides access to other existing paths?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
provides access to Alewife MBTA station?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
provides access to other transit facilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has 24-hour access?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
be designed to limit construction and maintenance costs?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. What level of safety concerns do you have about using a trail next to active rail, assuming a barrier were placed between the trail and rail line?

No Safety Concerns		Neutral		Significant Safety Concerns
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Questions in SurveyMonkey Questionnaire (4 of 5)

8. Do you have specific suggestions for what the Community Path Advisory Committee should focus on?

9. Do you have any other general comments or concerns regarding a community path in Belmont?

10. To be kept informed of the Committee's ongoing activities, please provide your e-mail.



Questions in SurveyMonkey Questionnaire (5 of 5)

11. What is your gender?

12. What is your age?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18 to 24
- ☐ 25 to 34
- ☐ 35 to 44

- ☐ 45 to 54
- ☐ 55 to 64
- ☐ 65 to 74
- ☐ 75 or older

13. What is your race/ethnicity? Mark one or more.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White (non-hispanic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African-American | <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaskan Native |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | |

14. What is your highest level of education?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some High School | <input type="checkbox"/> Some Graduate School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graduated from High School | <input type="checkbox"/> Completed Graduate School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some College | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graduated from College | |

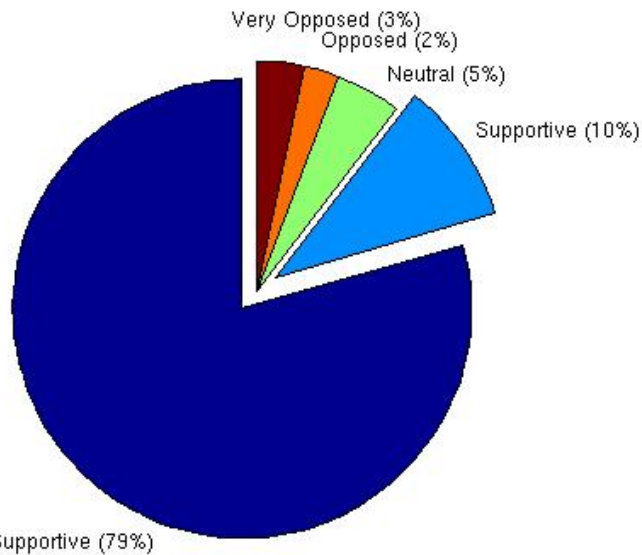


Questionnaire Results



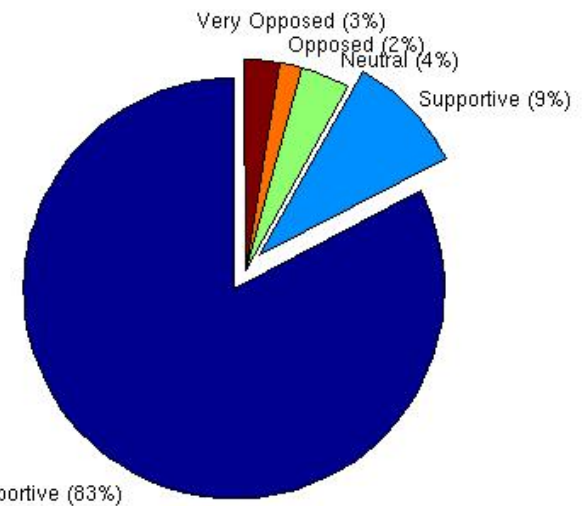
Results: Support for Belmont Community Path

Belmont Data on Support Level



Responses to Question #3: "In general, how supportive are you of a community path through Belmont?"; 1051 responses (Belmont-only).

Path Support Levels for Belmont and Neighboring Communities

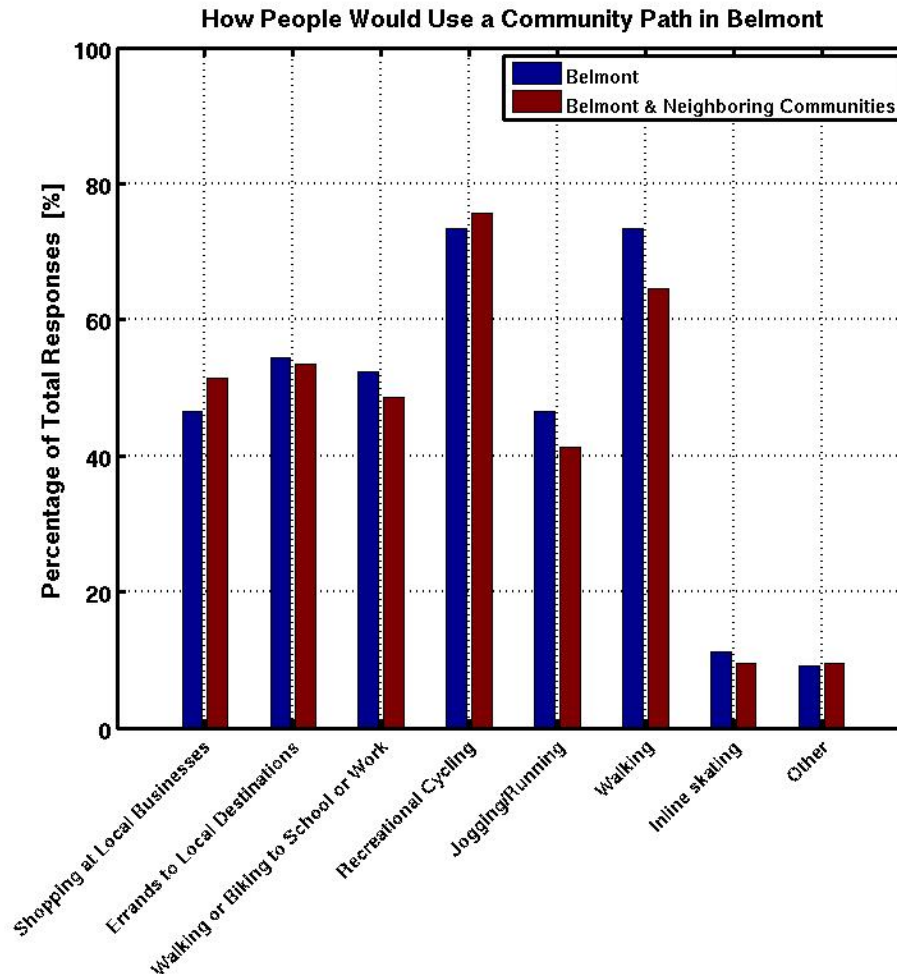


Responses to Question #3: "In general, how supportive are you of a community path through Belmont?"; 1427 responses (all towns).

Community overall very supportive of path as indicated by small margin of error ($\pm 3\%$) in responses



Results: How People Want to Use a Community Path

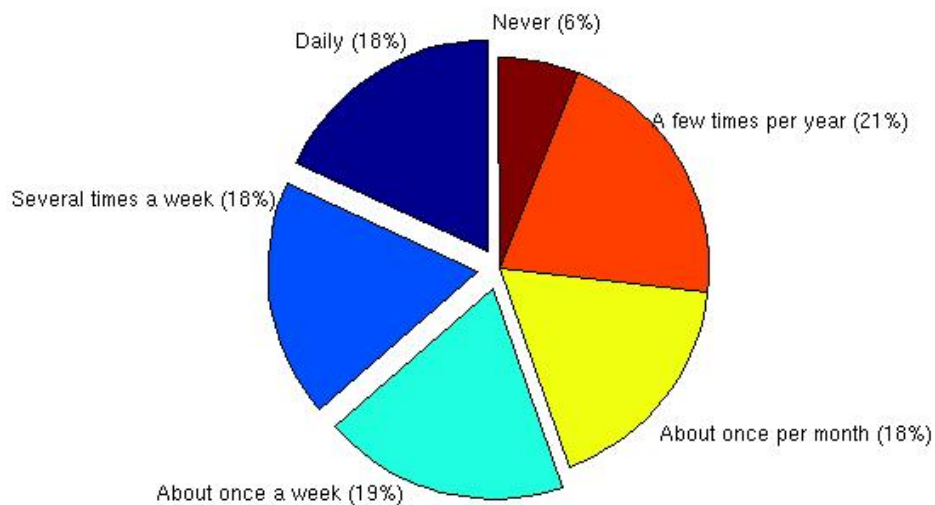


Wide spectrum of desired uses for Community Path



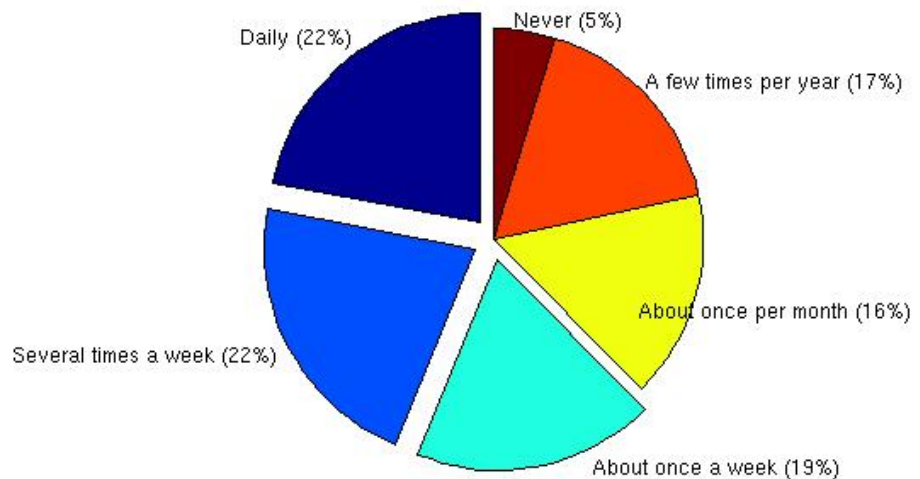
Results: How Often People use Off-Road Trails

Off-Road Path Use for Belmont



Responses to Question #5: "On average, how often would you say you use off-road paths?"; 1052 responses (Belmont-only).

Off-Road Path Use for Belmont and Neighboring Communities



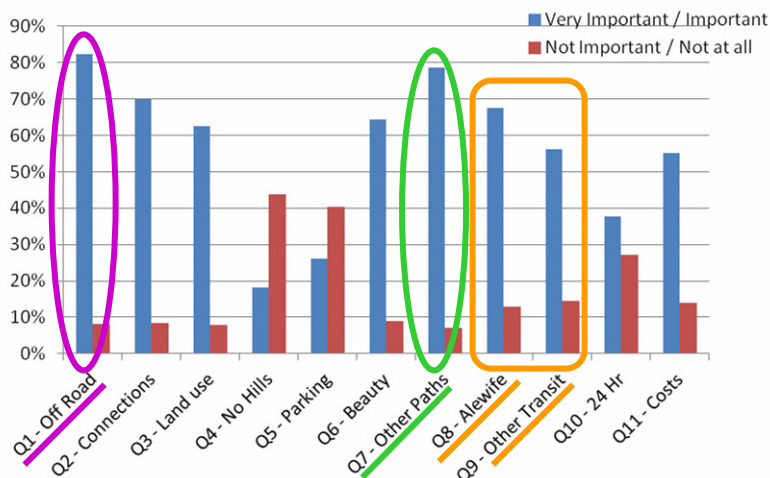
Responses to Question #5: "On average, how often would you say you use off-road paths?"; 1427 responses (all towns).

Approximately 60% of respondents would likely use an off-road community path on a weekly basis

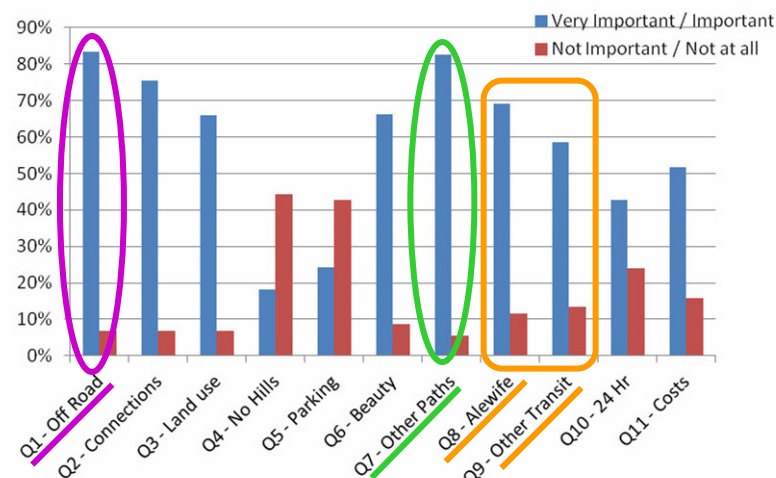


Results: Desired Features for Community Path

**Characteristics of the Community Path
Belmont Residents Only**



**Characteristics of the Community Path
Belmont and Neighboring Communities**



Q1	Importance of off road vs sharing roadways with motor vehicles?
Q2	Importance of creating connections to existing businesses and other public resources?
Q3	Importance that the route complements future land uses?
Q4	Importance that the route has no hills or sharp turns?
Q5	Importance that the route has availability of car parking for path users?
Q6	Importance that the route has natural beauty?

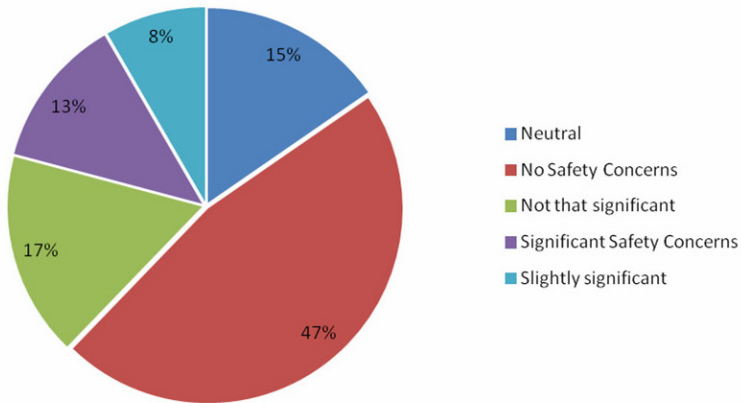
Q7	Importance that the route provides access to other existing paths?
Q8	Importance that the route provides access to Alewife MBTA Station?
Q9	Importance that the route provides access to other transit facilities?
Q10	Importance that the route has 24-hour access?
Q11	Importance that the route be designed to limit construction and maintenance costs?

Primary desired features are Off-Road Route, Access to Other Paths, and Access to Alewife and Other Transit

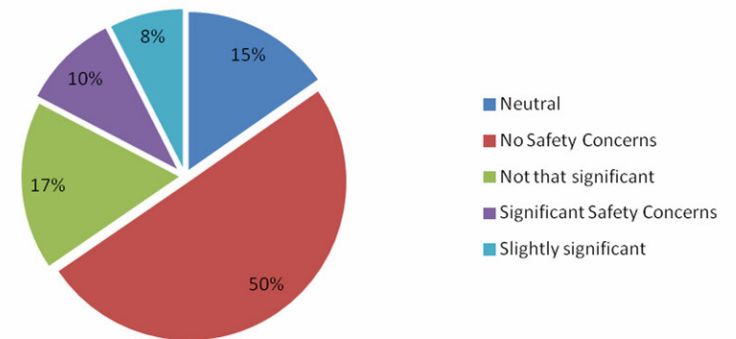


Community Path Questionnaire: Rail-with-Trail

**Safety Concerns for trail next to Live Rail
- Belmont Residents Only**



**Safety Concerns for trail next to Live Rail
- Belmont and Neighboring Towns**



Majority of people accept rail-with-trail approaches



Open Ended Questions

First 526 Answers (Scored by Two Independent Analysts)

- **Nearly half the respondents answered Q8/Q9**
- **We scored respondents as “Highly Enthusiastic” if mentioned:**
 - **Advantages of a Path (e.g., economic or social benefit to town, families, children, commuters)**
 - **Frustration with delays or progress**
 - **Desire for high quality path (i.e., don’t scrimp)**
 - **Success of other paths and trails**
 - **Positive slogans (Get it done, thank you, do it now, high time, great idea !!!, CAPS, upbeat)**

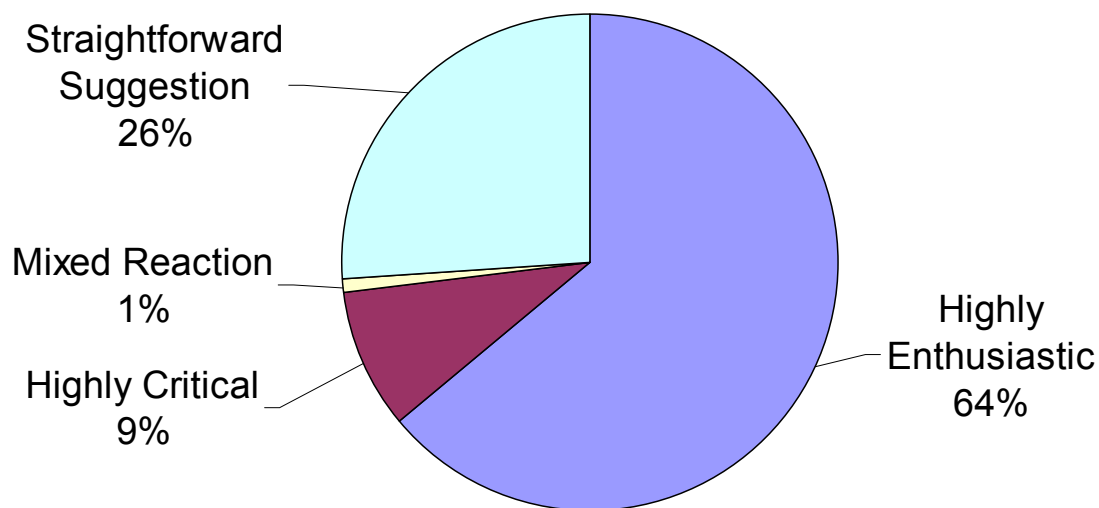


Open-Ended Questions

- **We scored respondent as “Highly Critical” if mentions**
 - Being against a Path "on Channing Road" or “behind a house”
 - Legal implications
 - Being against a Path because of strong concerns (e.g., railroad safety, cost, crime)
- **CPAC has discussed all the issues and concerns identified in this category of responses**



Summary of Open-Ended Responses



Majority of open-ended feedback strongly in favor of Community Path



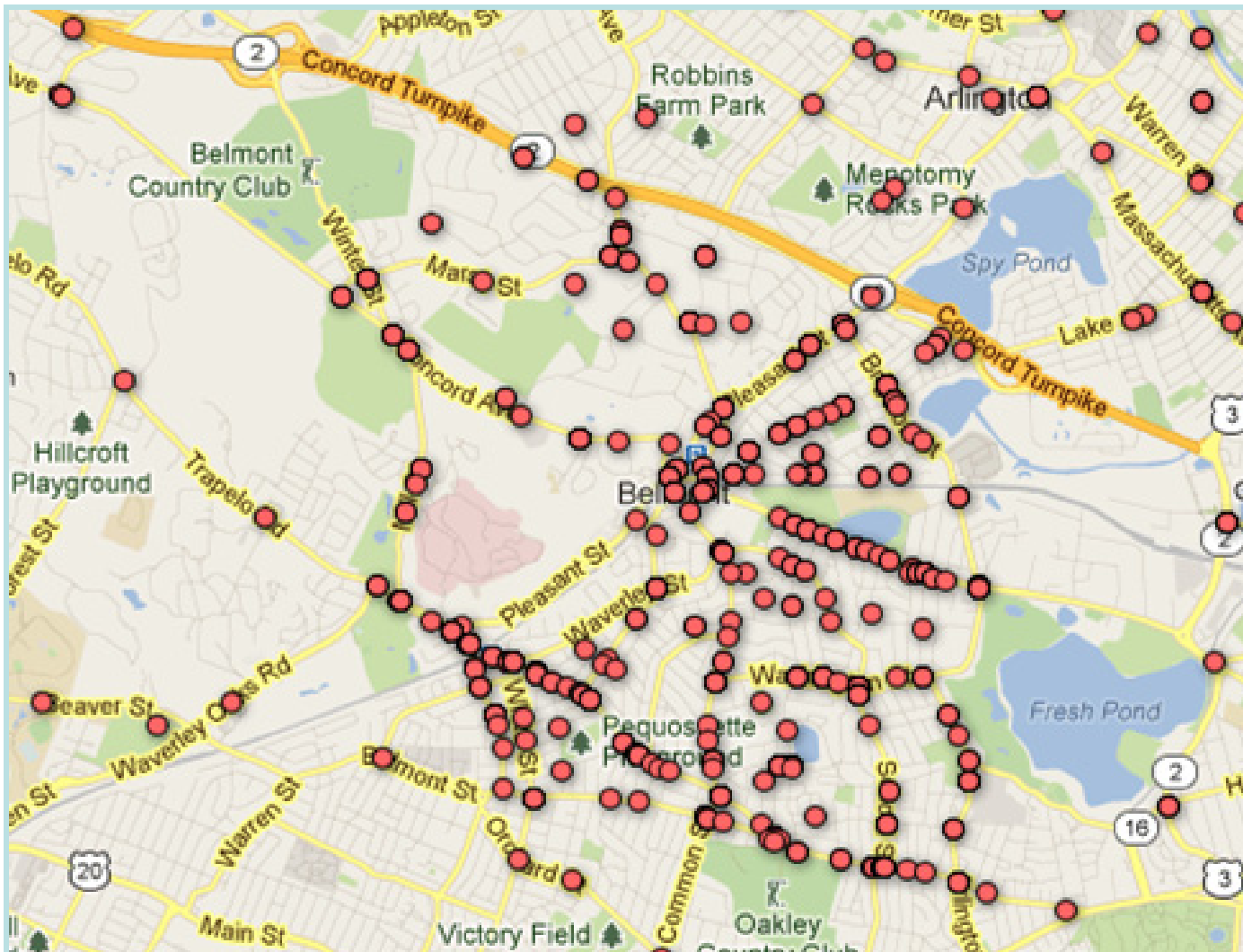
Word Map for "Specific Suggestions" in Open-Ended Responses





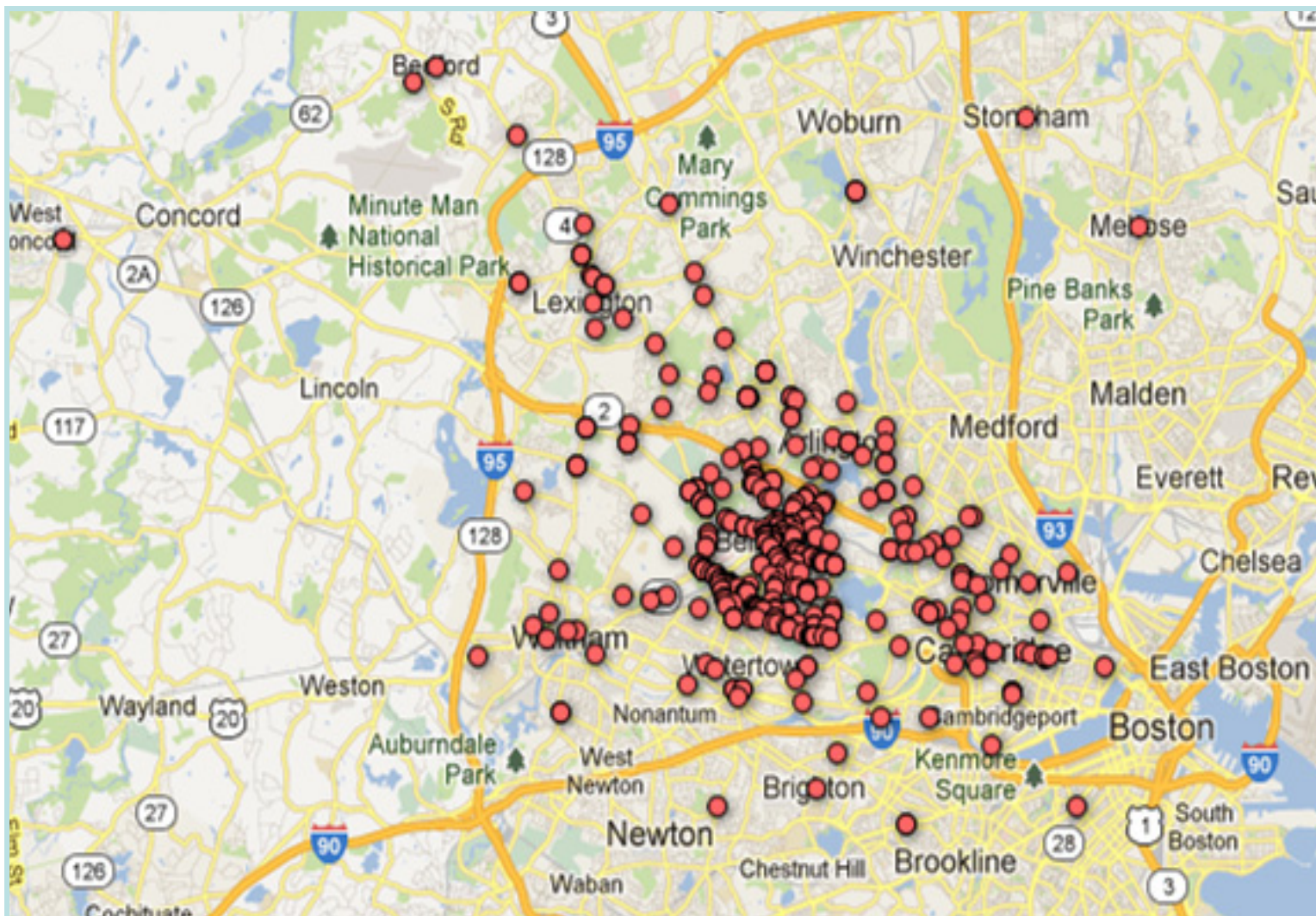


Voices of Belmont: Where Questionnaire Responses Came From





Voices of Greater Community: Where Questionnaire Responses Came From





Questionnaire Summary and Conclusions

- **Strong public support for potential Belmont Community Path**
- **Wide range of uses for Path**
 - Primary uses would be walking, recreational/commuting cycling
- **Current use of other trails indicates Path would be worthwhile investment by Town**
- **Primary desired features for Path**
 - Off-road routes
 - Access to other trails
 - Access to Alewife and other transit
- **Majority of people accept rail-with-trail concept**
- **Analysis of open-ended responses reveals community eager to see Community Path built**