

# Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

#### *Media Contact*

Jeffrey J. LaValley, Vice Chair and Director of Programs and Events

Cell: 951-295-3090

Email: jeff\_lavalley1966@yahoo.com

columbiagreenway@gmail.com

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GREENWAY RAIL TRAIL AWARDED NON-PROFIT STATUS**

Westfield, MA – The Board of Directors for Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail (FOCGRT) announced today that the organization has received full 501C3, not-for-profit tax exemption status, from the Internal Revenue Service.

According to Jeffrey LaValley, Vice Chair, “This is an important step for Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail as we move forward in our work to achieve 100% design and construction of the Rail Trail. Because of our receiving (this) status, all of the contributions that donors make to the group are now fully tax deductible, including those from individuals, organizations, or businesses. Additionally, we are now able to apply for various grants that are available, but are restricted to not-for-profits.”

Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, an outgrowth of the downtown Westfield visioning and strategic planning sessions, is an educational public charity existing to ensure that the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail project is realized. Specifically, Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail will work to: (1) achieve 100% design and construction of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, (2) establish (upon construction) maintenance of the trail; and, (3) educate on the benefits of a comprehensive infrastructure to respond to the need for safe, viable, and active alternative transportation routes in Westfield. The Columbia Greenway Rail Trail is an elevated multi-modal pathway stretching along an abandoned rail bed from Southwick, Mass. to the south, to the Great River Bridge to the north, for a total of 3.2 miles.

Recent accomplishments of the Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, include: advocating for and achieving the successful installation of bicycle racks on new Pioneer Valley Transit Authority buses; advocating for and achieving the successful installation of 20 share the road signs throughout Westfield; and, advocating for and achieving the inclusion of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail as part of the City’s Open Space Master Plan. FOCGRT has made great strides toward our goal of achieving 100% design (and construction) of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, with the Westfield City Council approving a bond measure to support completion of the long-awaited design portion of this project.

To learn about various ways to support the work of FOCGRT, or to make a contribution contact: Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, P.O. Box 595, Westfield, MA 01086-0595. Or, email [columbiagreenway@gmail.com](mailto:columbiagreenway@gmail.com). Contributions to FOCGRT are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

For more information about Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, follow us on Facebook by searching for *Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail*.

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