

Route 20 In Wayland

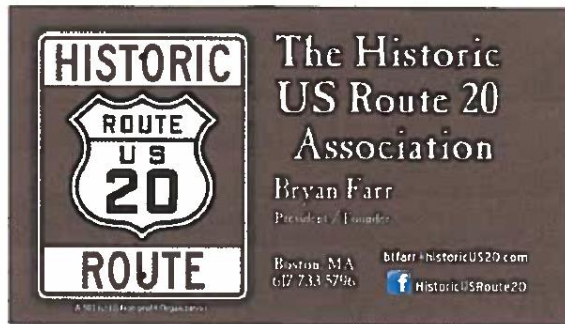
History and recreation on our
stretch of America's longest road

For anyone who has heard the romantic call of Route 66 or followed the Lincoln Highway, US 20 is the original concourse to the great American road trip.



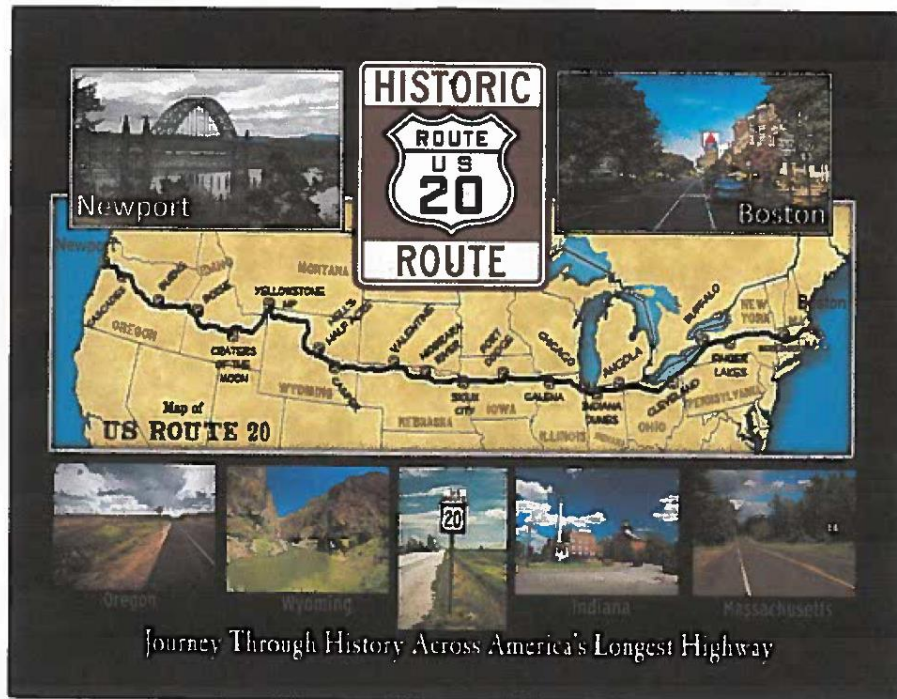
America's Longest Highway, US Route 20 is a 3,365 mile journey through the nation's history and its most breathtaking wonders. This visual story, spanning the continent through twelve states, from the Atlantic to Pacific Oceans, is captured in more than 200 color photographs.

Route 20 reveals the broad scope of American expansion from an early Native American trail through the very first National Park, Yellowstone. Travelers can connect with history by visiting the homes of Presidents Grant and Garfield, stand in the place where Lincoln once debated Douglas, and even experience where the first Women's Rights Convention was held. Motorists will view classical architecture in New England towns, traverse the striking beauty of the Finger Lakes as well as the grandeur of the Great Lakes, experience inspiring possibilities of the wide open farm lands of the Great Plains, cross high mountain sage brush deserts, climb the Rockies and Cascades before they reach the shores of the Pacific.



Bryan Farr

- A primary researcher of Route 20 history
- Founder and President of The Historic US Route 20 Association
- Author of "Historic US Route 20: A Journey Across America's Longest Highway"





BY CHRISTOPHER MUTHER | GLOBE STAFF



Everyone knows the song. It's been covered by artists ranging from Bing Crosby to Chuck Berry to the Rolling Stones to Depeche Mode to John Mayer.

"Would you get hip to this kindly tip. And take that California trip. Get your kicks on Route 66."

Soon we may need a new song for an even longer historic highway. Is there anything that rhymes with Route 20? Budding songwriters get to work now, because if one Massachusetts man has his way, Route 20, which begins in Boston and stretches to Oregon, will become just as renowned as the iconic 66.

In July, the Massachusetts House of Representatives approved a bill designating US Route 20 as a historic highway. The bill is currently under review in the Senate. The designation would allow Massachusetts cities, towns, and, most importantly, businesses, to promote the road as a landmark. Get ready for an onslaught of Historic Route 20 T-shirts.

The idea to turn Route 20 into a historic highway came to Chester resident Bryan Farr when he was looking for an alternative route for his artistic eye and adventurous spirit.

Farr, 42, a meteorologist-turned-bartender who loves both photography and road trips, wanted to author a road trip coffee table book. However he wasn't interested in digging around for material along the oversaturated 66, which has already been immortalized in literature, music, TV, film, and enough refrigerator magnets to fill the Grand Canyon. He needed a new artery to tap into.

"I would see all of these exits for Route 20 off the Mass Pike, and then I would think 'Where does 20 go?' I looked it up, and it goes all the way across the country. That's kind of awesome," he said.

MUTHER, Page M3

U.S. Route 20 in Massachusetts



SOURCE: Census Bureau, Nextzen, Openstreetmap

GLOBE STAFF

Making an Icon

- "Get ready for an onslaught of Historic Route 20 T-shirts." Wayland should take advantage of its position on Route 20
- Route 20's extensive history and importance makes it a candidate for historic highway status
- Local businesses will take this opportunity to utilize the benefits that attention surrounding Route 20 can offer

'Get your kicks on . . . Route 20.

► **MUTHER**
Continued from Page 347

In fact, at 3,365 miles, it's the longest road in the United States. It begins in Kenmore Square and ends within a mile of the Pacific in Newport, Ore. By way of comparison, Route 66 is just 2,448 miles and travels from Chicago to California. For exact Route 66 directions, please refer to the lyrics of the song.

In Route 20, Mather had found his epic road trip, but he also found a cause.

"My Route 20 road trip in 2010 was supposed to be a once-in-a-lifetime

Scenes along Route 20 (from top): The view along the Keystone Archway trail in Chester; a marker denotes where George Washington addressed the residents of Palmer; A festive dinosaur greets passers-by outside an antiques store.

thing," he said. "Go one time and take pictures, I wanted to write the book and move on from that. Then maybe do other roads, or some other photography project, but just get my name out there a little bit."

Mather spent two weeks on Route 20, taking 1,800 pictures across 12 states. He showed an early prototype of the book to friends, who told him they wanted to know more about the towns in the photos. So Mather began sending e-mails and collecting information about mom-and-pop shops, quirky museums, old monuments, and small towns along the highway. A friend told him he should use all of his newfound knowledge and start an organization to help promote the highway, its well-abstracted past, and its small towns.

"I thought 'Why not look into it?'" And a few months later we were officially a nonprofit organization," he said. "The Historic Route 20 Association is now a public charity with a mission to promote travel and tourism."

Mather's official title is now president of the Historic US Route 20 Association. It's become his full-time job and the state recently awarded the organization \$75,000 to open a Historic Route 20 Gateway Hill Towns visitor center. He said the group will soon be applying for a historic highway designation in Iowa and has already started the process in New York and Nebraska. After that he said he'll begin working in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

If you live in the Boston area and eastern Massachusetts, you may find all of this hoopla about Route 20 to be a head-scratcher. Route 20 is the road that Waze tells you to take if there's an accident on the Mass Pike. After the tony suburbs of Boston, Route 20 can get, to be polite, downright bland. But then the character of the road begins to shift. In Starbridge and Brimfield there are blooms of black-eyed Susans, Queen Anne's lace, and tiger lilies lining the road. There are quaint antique stores, and, well, there's a bar with topless dancers in Palmer. But let's call it a gentleman's club and make it sound like a charming throwback.

After talking to people about Route 20, I decided to drive it through Massachusetts. There are towns where it's

idyllic. The highway is 153 miles from Boston to the New York border. Sadly I didn't have time to drive it across the country. I put my Route 20 emphasis on central and western Massachusetts. It winds through an impressive and historic stretch of downtown Springfield (also near the new MGM casino), then past Westfield. It becomes truly special.

Have you ever taken the time to drive through Russell, Huntington, and Chester? These are bucolic towns with attractions such as the Huntington Country Store (home of the wrap-ple!) and the Keystone Arch Bridges Trail in Chester. It then continues to Jacob's Pillow in Becket and Shaker Hancock Village in Pittsfield. If you're interested in road tripping Route 20 through Massachusetts, or across the country, Mather has guides on his website (historicroute20.com).

According to State Representative Ticia Farley-Bourcier, a Pittsfield Democrat and one of the sponsors of the bipartisan Route 20 bill, the designation would likely be most beneficial to small towns and businesses along 20 in western Massachusetts.

"What I'm understanding is that there's this whole movement of people who really want to be off the beaten path," Farley-Bourcier said. "It's an experience to go off the Pike and kind of meander and learn about these quiet towns. There's some pretty amazing things on Route 20."

Mather knows all about amazing things along Route 20. After that initial 2010 plan of a one-time road trip, he drove the route a second time. He also made it as far as Wyoming six times, and Iowa 12 times.

"Every town has a story," he said. "You drive into a small town and you think you'll be there for an hour, and it ends up being four hours because there's so much history, or just very talkative, friendly people. But this is what I hope people find on Route 20. It's not just getting from point A to point B. It's about hearing the stories of what the country is all about."

Christopher Mather can be reached at mather@globes.com. Follow him on Twitter @Chris_Mather and on Instagram @Chris_Mather.

History of Route 20

- Route 20 travels the entire length of the country
- Originally designed by Ben Franklin
- Many other towns have decided to capitalize on showcasing this historic road
- The history of route 20 is under represented in Eastern MA
- Many residents are unaware that they live near America's longest road
- A cohesive theme along Route 20 could showcase Wayland's history and tie the area together



George Washington Memorial Highway

These markers are placed in historic sites where Washington came through MetroWest after he became President.

6/29/2014

WV Daily News



A detail shot of George Washington Memorial Highway marker



On Rte. 20 at Williams Street in Marlborough



On Rte. 20 in front of the First Parish Church in Wayland



On Rte. 20 in front of the Northborough Town Offices; behind the marker is a Minuteman statue



On Rte. 20 at Prospect Street in Marlborough



Most Knox Trail markers include this distinctive sculpture; this one is in Framingham

Henry Knox Trail

Each of these markers commemorates Col. Henry Knox's route bringing cannons from Fort Ticonderoga to the Continental Army camp near Boston early in the American Revolutionary War

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George Washington Memorial Highway and Knox Trail

- Route 20 in Wayland was an important component of some of the town's most prominent historical events
- George Washington himself passed through Wayland on Route 20
- All we have to remember this important event is a small marker in front of the First Parish Church
- Henry Knox brought cannons through Wayland during the Revolutionary War

to formally name the road the "George Washington Memorial Highway," which is why most people who travel Rte. 20 now know nothing about it.

towns, though spotting them can be difficult given the modern buildings that have sprung up around them. While the marker in front of the First Parish

too fast to notice them," said Farr. "They're hidden markers" of the past. Another piece of history passed by thousands of times

teams of oxen, Knox's men transported the cannons - many weighing more than a ton - through New York and the snow-covered Berk-

Boston, Oregon Connect 3,365 Miles Apart

The longest continuous road in America is now bookended by two unlikely highway signs.

By Alison Batic, (Patch Staff) - December 8, 2016 3:39 pm ET

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BOSTON, MA — Ever wondered where the longest continuing road in America begins? Step outside the Kenmore Square T Station, and you'll wonder no more.

Now planted in the middle of Kenmore and Comm Ave is the 3,365-mile marker to tell you exactly where Route 20 starts, and how long it runs.

The Mass. Department of Transportation placed the marker Thursday morning in a ceremony that will be mirrored more than 3,000 miles away in Newport, Oregon, where the route terminates.

"There are many things that divide our country, but Route 20 is one thing that connects us," Highway Administrator Thomas Tinlin said of Thursday's sign installation.

America's Longest Continuous Road

- Route 20 connects the entire country, 3365 continuous miles
- Connects Wayland directly to every state in its path
- Original final destination was Yellowstone National Park, but was extended in 1940

Get your kicks on Route 20

Recently, thanks to one Don Smith of Wayland, N.Y., I stumbled into a little factoid that, while it may not change anyone's life drastically, is nonetheless fascinating.

We'll get to this instead in a minute — but here's the question it answers: What's the longest road in the United States? Route 66? Route 1? Interstate 90?

None of the above. It's little Route 20, which runs right through the center of Wayland, Mass.

I checked out Smith's story on the Internet, and it seems to be true.

Don Smith, alert readers may recall, is the man who is looking for the person from Wayland, Mass., who was kind enough to pick him up along a highway in western New York in 1973 or 1974 in his orange (or perhaps yellow) VW Beetle. Smith was in his early 20s at the time and was wearing his Wayland N.Y., variety jacket.

If you know who that person might be or if you are that person, Smith would love to hear from you at "ballyhoo49@yahoo.com". Smith is about to head out on a trip to yell all the Waylands in the U.S., and we may be getting reports from him along the way. Stay tuned.

Back to the factoid — Route 20 runs east to west for a total of 3,365 miles from Kansas Square in Boston to Newport, Ore., a mile from the Pacific

Coast. The next longest road in the country, at 3,064 miles, is Route 30, which also runs through Wayland.

If you've ever tried to drive to the far side of Maniborough Island, Route 20 from Wayland center, you know why it's so long — it's circuitous — and much of it winds its way through older

towns and villages rather than serving merely to link up major urban and industrial centers.

After leaving Boston — and Wayland — Route 20 makes its way south of Worcester, into Springfield, and thence on to the famous Jacob's Ladder, a scenic rural highway through the foothills of the Berkshire.

It crosses over to New York right near the Hancock Shaker Village. In the Empire State, it goes out to Albany and south of Syracuse. Just west of Syracuse, on the way to Buffalo, Route 20 goes through Seneca Falls with its National Women's Hall of Fame, where our very own Lydia Maria Child is among the inductees.

From Buffalo, the road heads southwest along the eastern shore of Lake Erie and into Pennsylvania, where it continues through the city of Erie and into Ohio.

From Cleveland, it takes a relatively southern route to Toledo and then traverses the very northern part of the state into Indiana. Here, the route is one of the main access roads to the Indiana Dunes National Seashore. It also goes through heavily industrialized

areas, such as Gary.

Just west of Gary, Route 20 enters Illinois right south of Chicago, heads into the very hilly southwest part of the state and crosses the Mississippi into Iowa at Dubuque. From here, it heads almost due west across the state to cross over the Missouri River at Sioux City into Nebraska.

After Sioux City, the route gets increasingly rural and scenic and passes through or near by such attractions as the Niobrara National Scenic River, the Samuel H. McElroy National Forest, the Nebraska National Forest, and the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument.

Just west of here, the road enters Wyoming. Here, the largest city it goes through is Casper, with a population of about 53,000, thence to Cody, which is about half the size of Wayland, at the foot of the Rockies, and then straight into Yellowstone National Park. Until 1940, this was the western endpoint of Route 20.

In the park itself, the road is not numbered, but this picks up again as it leaves Yellowstone and enters Montana, where it covers a nice 40 miles before entering the Caribou-linguist National Forest in Idaho. A relatively southern loop in Idaho takes Route 20 into Idaho Falls and Boise and, in between, to the Snake River Plains and the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve.

Finally, the road crosses over into Oregon near the two small towns of Ontario and Prineville. From here, once again, the route takes a southern loop and on into Bend, at the foot of the Cascade Mountains. After weaving its way through this range over the Santiam Pass, the route goes due west out of Corvallis and terminates at the intersection of U.S. 101.

Susan L. Wagner can be reached at "susanwagner@ymail.com."

WAYLAND BY THE WAY

SUSAN L. WAGNER



Route 20 Connects Wayland to important scenic destinations

- Route 20 takes us to many scenic areas
- Adirondack Mountains
- Indiana Dunes National Seashore
- Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
- Yellowstone National Park
- Route 20 connects many of our nation's most culturally significant locations

WITHOUT KNOWING IT, you've almost surely walked it or driven it, maybe on your way to the grocery store in Wayland, or a restaurant in the South End.

Since it became America's first mail route back in 1673, the Boston Post Road has connected Boston to New York City, delivering messages, guiding travelers, and tying the Northeast together. In that time, some legs of the route have shifted, and most of it is now known by other names — Washington Street, Route 20, Main Street, or Mass. Route 9. But if you know how to follow the thread, you can still trace the Post Road beneath our modern streets and highways. A few stretches, as residents of Marlborough and Sudbury know, among others, are still called Boston Post Road.

THE ROAD THAT BUILT US

How the Post Road wrote New England's history

TEXT BY ERIC JAFFE
GRAPHIC BY JAVIER ZARRACINA

The road in its Colonial form began in downtown Boston, at the Old State House, and followed modern Washington Street over what was once a thin neck of land into Roxbury. It split into two branches at the "parting stone" near what's now Roxbury Crossing; the northern branch linked Boston and Springfield (with a spur up through Cambridge) before hooking toward Hartford, while the southern branch ran through Providence to New Haven. There the branches unified en route to New York.

To trace the Post Road through its history is to witness how important one connective thread can be to a growing region — and how it can still determine the shape of the city and state hundreds of years later.

1 BORN FROM INDIAN PATHS

In November 1645, John Winthrop Jr., son of the Massachusetts Bay Colony governor, embarked on a grueling, unprecedented 26-day tour of southern New England. In choosing his route, he relied on Indian trails: the so-called Connecticut Path running west from Boston and the Bay Path heading into Springfield. The Colony also grew along these lines: Watertown residents followed the Connecticut Path to establish Sudbury (now Wayland), and Worcester emerged from a request for a town "in the roade way to Springfield." Three decades after his trip, when Winthrop Jr. was governor of Connecticut, he was asked to chart the Colonial mail route between Boston and Manhattan. He used those Indian paths as his blueprint for what would become the Post Road.



3 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S STAMP

2 THE FIRST INFORMATION HIGHWAYS

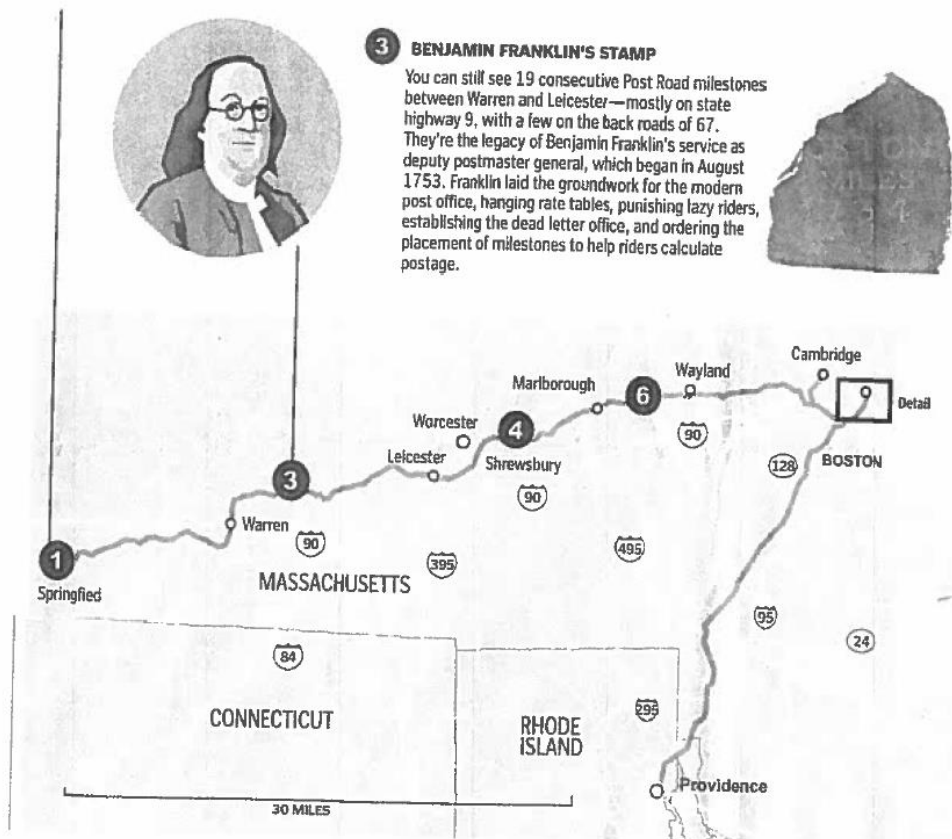
The Boston News-Letter, widely considered America's first regular newspaper, was inaugurated in April 1704 by John Campbell, who was also postmaster of New England. (Boston's original mail room dated back to 1639, when the downtown tavern of Richard Fairbanks, at the foot of the future Post Road, was designated as office for overseas letters.) Riders carried the newspaper along the Post Road with the regular mail, connecting towns big and small in a common conversation — and, by the eve of the Revolution, common cause.





3 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S STAMP

You can still see 19 consecutive Post Road milestones between Warren and Leicester—mostly on state highway 9, with a few on the back roads of 67. They're the legacy of Benjamin Franklin's service as deputy postmaster general, which began in August 1753. Franklin laid the groundwork for the modern post office, hanging rate tables, punishing lazy riders, establishing the dead letter office, and ordering the placement of milestones to help riders calculate postage.



4 AMERICA SPEEDS UP

Blacksmith Levi Pease began advertising what became the country's first successful long-distance stagecoach service on Oct. 15, 1783. Pease orchestrated a network of taverns and coach drivers along the northern branch of the Post Road to facilitate the daunting weeklong journey from Boston to New York. His success changed the speed of life in America—even convincing Congress to send the mail by stagecoach instead of lone rider—and he retired in Shrewsbury as "Father of the New England Roads."

5 THE ANCESTRAL MBTA

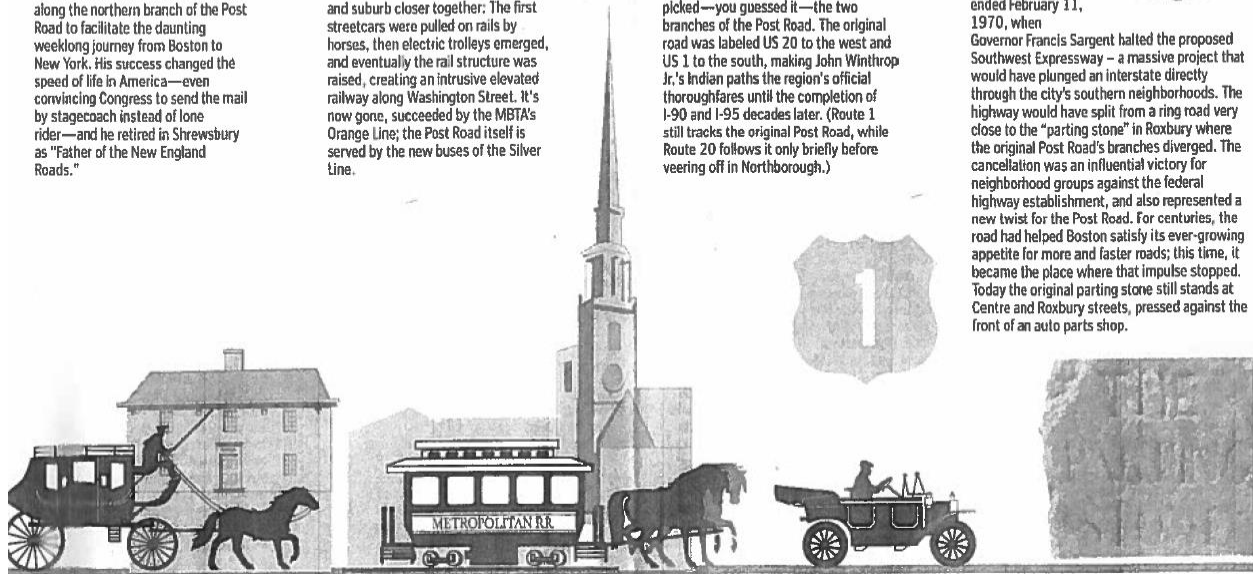
This stretch of the Post Road became a commuter line when the Metropolitan Railroad Co. received a charter in May 1853 to run local streetcars from downtown Boston. Each technological advance over the decades knitted city and suburb closer together: The first streetcars were pulled on rails by horses, then electric trolleys emerged, and eventually the rail structure was raised, creating an intrusive elevated railway along Washington Street. It's now gone, succeeded by the MBTA's Orange Line; the Post Road itself is served by the new buses of the Silver Line.

6 A ROUTE FOR CARS

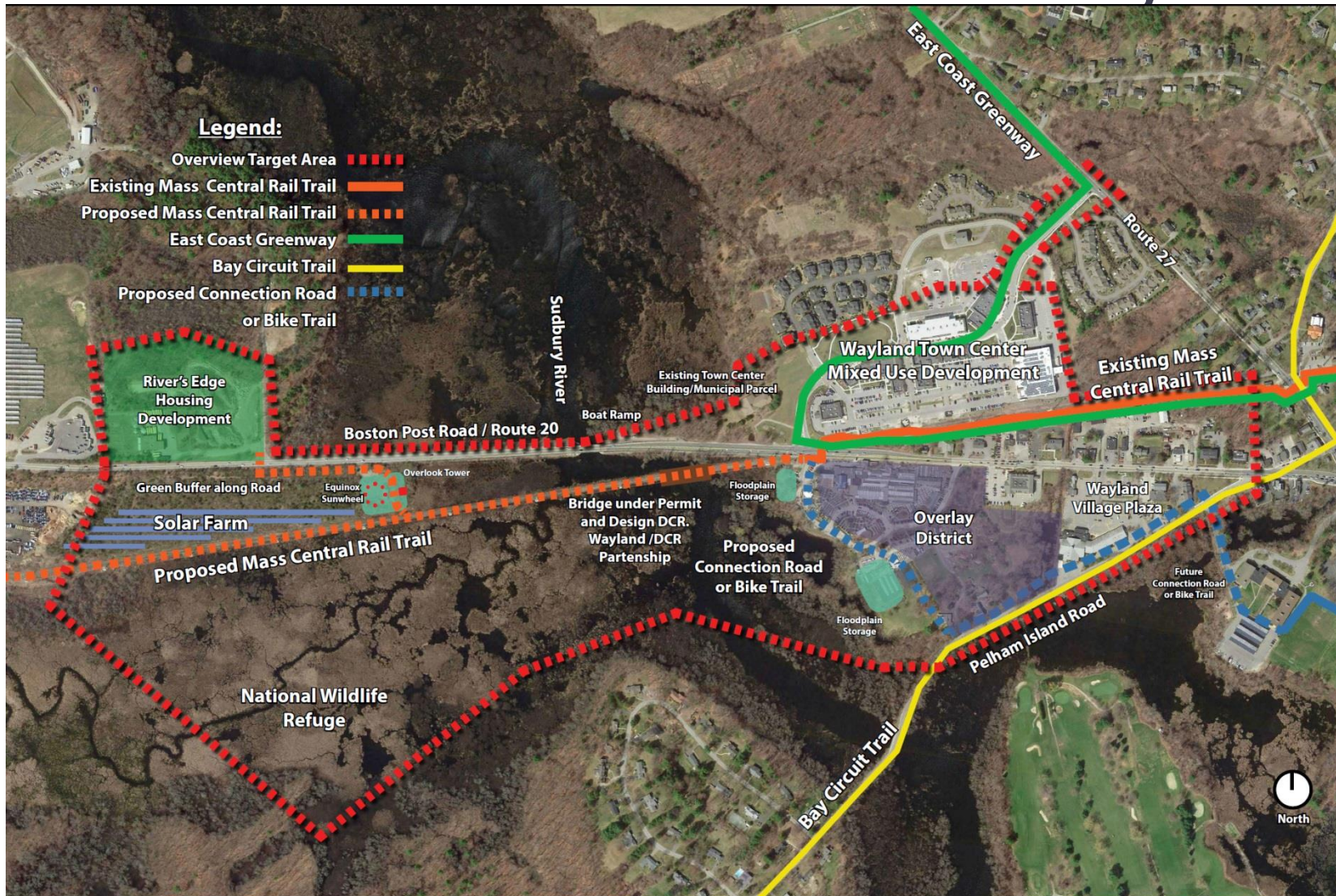
With the advent of car travel came the need for a numbered national road system. The federal government asked each state to designate its principal routes, and on Aug. 27, 1925, the Massachusetts public works chief picked—you guessed it—the two branches of the Post Road. The original road was labeled US 20 to the west and US 1 to the south, making John Winthrop Jr.'s Indian paths the region's official thoroughfares until the completion of I-90 and I-95 decades later. (Route 1 still tracks the original Post Road, while Route 20 follows it only briefly before veering off in Northborough.)

7 DEATH OF AN INTERSTATE

One of the biggest planning controversies in Boston history ended February 11, 1970, when Governor Francis Sargent halted the proposed Southwest Expressway—a massive project that would have plunged an interstate directly through the city's southern neighborhoods. The highway would have split from a ring road very close to the "parting stone" in Roxbury where the original Post Road's branches diverged. The cancellation was an influential victory for neighborhood groups against the federal highway establishment, and also represented a new twist for the Post Road. For centuries, the road had helped Boston satisfy its ever-growing appetite for more and faster roads; this time, it became the place where that impulse stopped. Today the original parting stone still stands at Centre and Roxbury streets, pressed against the front of an auto parts shop.



The Future of Route 20 In Wayland



East Coast Greenway



- Stretches 3000 miles from Northern Maine down to the Florida Keys
- Covers the entirety of the East Coast
- Passes through Wayland in the Route 20 area
- Longest walking and biking route in America

Bay Circuit Trail

Bay Circuit Trail



- The Bay Circuit Trail connects Plum Island to Duxbury with 200 miles of biking opportunities
- Passes through Wayland in the Route 20 area
- Gives Wayland residents access to explore the entire Eastern portion of the state

Mass Central Rail Trail



- Bike trail in progress that runs along the old railway which cut through the middle of the state
- Runs through the center of the town, which will provide Wayland bikers with easy East-West biking opportunities
- Connects with the Bay Circuit Trail and the East Coast Greenway all in Wayland on Route 20



Cow Commons



Photo courtesy of Brian Harris

- 72 acres of public land
- There is a proposed trail to connect the Town Center to Cow Commons
- Cow Commons features open grasslands for walking and wildlife observation
- Cow Commons contains a community garden with 342 individual plots for Wayland residents
- This is a popular birdwatching site, notably for the American Woodcock

Great Meadows



Photo courtesy of Brian Harris

- National Wildlife Refuge located on the Sudbury River
- Activities available to visitors include hunting, fishing, kayaking, and wildlife viewing
- 12 miles of wetlands conservation on the Sudbury and Concord Rivers stretching from Billerica to Wayland

Heard Pond



Photo courtesy of Brian Harris

- Ample public access for a hidden gem in Wayland
- Activities include walking, biking, canoeing, kayaking, and birdwatching
- Heard Pond is very close to the Town Center, but is still surrounded by large amounts of protected land

Heard Farm



Photo courtesy of Brian Harris

- 85 acre park located at the end of Heard Road near Route 20
- The park has acres of old orchards with apple and pear trees
- Heard Farm is a great place for walking, taking your dog, and enjoying the day

Sedge Meadow



Photo courtesy of Seth Curtin

- Large conservation area bordering the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, just North of Cow Commons
- The Bay Circuit Trail runs all the way through the meadow from Route 20
- The expansive area is accessible off of Moore Road

Brian Harris

Brian Harris is the Land Manager for the Wayland Conservation Department and an avid photographer with particular interest in local landscapes.

If you have interest in his work, he can be reached at bharris@wayland.ma.us.