

DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2008

AT

ACTON TOWN HALL, ROOM 204
ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS

7:00 P.M.

FOR THE PROPOSED

BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL, PHASE 2A
PROJECT FILE NO. 604532

IN THE TOWNS OF ACTON/CARLISLE/WESTFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

Lawrence Cash, Project Manager,
MassHighway Department
Daniel Gentile of Way Bureau,
MassHighway Department
Ann Sullivan, District 3 Representative,
MassHighway Department
Christer Ericsson,
Greenman - Pedersen, Inc.
Becky Williamson,
Greenman - Pedersen, Inc.

Arlington Reporting Company
(339)674-9100

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1 from Greenman - Pedersen representing the Town's
2 design consultant for this project. And, to my far
3 right is Greg Tarbox of Arlington Typing and Mailing
4 from Arlington, Mass., who will be making a verbatim
5 transcript of tonight's hearing.

6 We will commence the formal part of the
7 hearing by having Ann Sullivan read the public hearing
8 notice.

9 ANN SULLIVAN: "The Commonwealth of
10 Massachusetts, Massachusetts Highway Department,
11 Notice of a Public Hearing. Project File Number
12 604532

13 A Design Public Hearing will be held by
14 MassHighway to discuss the proposed Bruce Freeman Rail
15 Trail (BFRT), Phase 2A project, in the Towns of Acton,
16 Carlisle, and Westford, Massachusetts.

17 WHERE: Acton Town Hall

18 Room 204

19 472 Main Street

20 Acton, MA 01720

21 WHEN: Wednesday, October 29, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

22 PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to
23 provide the public with the opportunity
24 to become fully acquainted with the

1 proposed BFRT Phase 2A project. All
2 views and comments made at the hearing
3 will be reviewed and considered to the
4 maximum extent possible.

5 PROPOSAL: The proposed project will extend from
6 the end of the BFRT Phase 1 (Westford-
7 Lowell Phase) and continue south
8 through Westford, Carlisle, and Acton
9 for a total length of approximately
10 4.88 miles. The construction will
11 include: a new variable width (ranges
12 from 10 to 12 feet) paved asphalt
13 multi-use rail trail with 2-foot
14 stabilized shoulders, an adjacent 6-
15 foot stone dust trail (provided where
16 feasible), trail pavement markings and
17 signing, passively actuated flashing
18 beacons at trail/roadway crossings, new
19 roadway pavement markings and signing
20 at trail crossings, construction of a
21 prefabricated pedestrian bridge
22 structure over Route 2A/119,
23 rehabilitating six existing railroad
24 bridges along the trail, constructing

1 culverts, earthwork, landscaping, and
2 other items incidental to the
3 construction of the rail trail.

4 A secure right-of-way is necessary for
5 this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or
6 temporary easements may be required. The towns are
7 responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private
8 or public lands. MassHighway's policy concerning land
9 acquisitions will be discussed at this hearing.

10 Written views received by MassHighway
11 subsequent to the date of this notice and up to five
12 (5) days prior to the date of the hearing shall be
13 displayed for public inspection and copying at the
14 time and date listed above. Plans will be on display
15 one-half hour before the hearing begins, with an
16 engineer in attendance to answer questions regarding
17 this project. A project handout will be made
18 available on the MassHighway website listed below.

19 Written statements and other exhibits
20 in place of, or in addition to, oral statements made
21 at the Public Hearing regarding the proposed
22 undertaking are to be submitted to Frank A.
23 Tramontozzi, P.E., Chief Engineer, Massachusetts
24 Highway Department, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116.

1 Such submissions will also be accepted at the hearing.
2 Mailed statements and exhibits intended for inclusion
3 in the public hearing transcript must be postmarked
4 within ten (10) business days of this Public Hearing.

5 The community has declared that this
6 facility is accessible to all in compliance with the
7 ADA/Title II. However, persons in need of ADA/Title
8 II accommodations should contact Angela Rudikoff by
9 phone at (617) 973-7005, or email
10 angela.rudikoff@eot.state.ma.us. Requests must be
11 made at least 10 days prior to the date of the public
12 hearing.

13 In case of inclement weather, hearing
14 cancellation announcements will be posted on the
15 MassHighway website, <http://www.mass.gov/mhd>.
16 Luisa Paiewonsky, Frank Tramontozzi, P.E.,
17 Commissioner Chief Engineer
18 Boston, Massachusetts."

19 MODERATOR CASH: Okay. Thank you, Ann.
20 This notice appeared in the *Beacon*
21 *Acton Edition* on October 16th and 23rd, along with the
22 *Westford Eagle* on October 23rd, and the *Carlisle*
23 *Mosquito* on October 24th.

24 Page four of the handout explains the

1 purpose of the hearing, which gives an opportunity to
2 make a formal presentation of the proposed project;
3 and, at the same time, it allows us to record your
4 input regarding the project.

5 Construction funding for this project
6 is currently identified as federal aid funding with
7 the Federal Highway Administration funding 80 percent
8 of the total construction cost. MassHighway funds the
9 remaining 20 percent.

10 This project must be programmed in the
11 statewide Transportation Improvement Program in the
12 appropriate federal fiscal year in order for
13 MassHighway to solicit bids for eventual construction.

14 The total estimated participating cost
15 of this phase of the project is \$7,685,000. This does
16 not include any right of way acquisition costs.

17 The design is expected to be completed
18 in the year 2010. Construction is expected to be
19 completed within two construction seasons.

20 At this time, I would like to ask Dan
21 Gentile to explain the right-of-way procedure.

22 DANIEL GENTILE: Thank you, Larry.

23 Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

24 When the Commonwealth, acting through

1 its Massachusetts Highway Department, indicated it
2 would accept this \$7.7 million project, your
3 municipality accepted certain responsibilities. One
4 of those responsibilities is to acquire all the
5 necessary rights in private and public lands for the
6 design, construction, and implementation of this
7 project.

8 My function is to review and recommend
9 procedures that your municipality will utilize in
10 acquiring these rights. The procedures used must
11 comply with both federal and state regulations.

12 The current design plans indicate that
13 five permanent easements, and six temporary easements
14 and a lease will be required. Your municipality may
15 acquire the needed rights through a combination of
16 donations, eminent domain, deed grants, permits, or
17 right of entries.

18 Frequently, local municipalities will
19 appeal for donations. The donation procedures
20 minimize the acquisition costs for your community.
21 Donations and right of entries are not required and
22 property owners are entitled to an appraisal and just
23 compensation.

24 This project cannot be advertised until

1 the new proposed right of way is secured and the Right
2 of Way Bureau issues a Right-of-Way Certificate.

3 Affected property owners' rights are
4 protected under our Massachusetts General Laws,
5 primarily Chapter 79. And because this project is
6 receiving federal funds, the property owners' rights
7 are further defined under Title III of the Real
8 Property Acts of 1970 as amended.

9 I will be happy to answer any general
10 questions concerning right-of-way activities during
11 the open forum, and I will be available after the
12 hearing for any specific questions you may have.

13 Thank you for your time.

14 MODERATOR CASH: Thank you, Dan.

15 Now, I'd like to ask Christer Ericsson
16 from Greenman - Pedersen to describe the project in
17 detail for you. I'd ask that you hold your questions
18 until the hearing is open to the public.

19 CHRISTER ERICSSON: Thank you, Larry.

20 My name is Christer Ericsson with the
21 firm of Greenman - Pedersen in Stoneham, Mass. And we
22 are the design consultant for the towns of Acton,
23 Carlisle, and Westford.

24 And, what we've displayed here for your

1 viewing -- and I hope everyone had a chance to kind of
2 come up here and look at this a little bit beforehand
3 -- are a couple of the depictions of the plans. The
4 full set of the 25 design plans are on that table down
5 there. And we'll stay at the end of the hearing if
6 there's any kind of specific issues you want to look
7 at. It's 137 pages of plans. And we decided not to
8 put it around the room here. So we have these color
9 depictions here. And, if everybody has the handout,
10 there's also on a USGS map there, it kind of shows the
11 alignment, and I'll kind of quickly go through. I
12 know that a lot of you are already familiar maybe with
13 where the project is, but for the benefit of those
14 that are not. And I'm standing in front of boards
15 here.

16 As mentioned earlier, the project on
17 the northern terminus begins where the existing Phase
18 1 of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, which is under
19 construction now, which goes from Lowell to Westford,
20 is scheduled to end. And that is just north of the
21 225 signalized intersection in Westford. And the
22 trail picks up from that. What we're going to do is
23 we're going to add a pedestrian signal or pedestrian
24 indications within the existing signalized

1 intersection of 27 and 225 that exists today. So
2 there will be a Phase 2 to allow right of way for
3 anyone using the trail to cross 225.

4 From this section, the trail goes
5 through that remaining piece of Westford and in
6 through a small section of Carlisle.

7 Then when we enter into Acton, we have
8 a small off-street parking area with a little spur
9 connected to it that's going to provide some access
10 for some parking of vehicles to gain access to the
11 trail.

12 I'll just mention along this alignment,
13 which Ann mentioned earlier is about 4.9 miles, there
14 are eight roadway crossings and six existing bridge
15 crossings.

16 I talked about the 225. The second
17 crossing is the intersection we call the north
18 intersection of 227. Further on down at the end of
19 this table on one of the plans there's a traffic sheet
20 which shows a typical crossing. This one happens to
21 be Brook Street. But all the crossings, with one
22 exception which I'll get to, but all the crossings are
23 going to use a -- what we call a Cross Alert system,
24 which is going to detect activity on the trail and

1 it's going to flash a warning beacon for motorists,
2 kind of alert the sensitivity that they're approaching
3 something different. So it's not a steady blink like
4 you see on some locations with a beacon. It's
5 actually a passive one that detects motion on the
6 trail.

7 As we travel south along the corridor,
8 the next one is the Nashoba Sportsman's Club. There's
9 a crossing there as well. It's not as heavily used,
10 obviously, as Route 27, but it's a crossing
11 nonetheless.

12 As I travel to the second plan here --
13 and, again, you can follow through on your handout --
14 we get to the area of Rex Lumber and the North Acton
15 Recreation Area. And we've been working with the
16 owners of Rex Lumber to define and work out a plan
17 that basically the right of way now currently bisects
18 the Rex property. It comes right through it, right
19 through their drying sheds. And we worked out an
20 alignment that basically takes the trail and bends it
21 around on the outside of their property and through
22 one of the easements that Dan spoke about earlier.
23 The trail will then kind of go along the pond on the
24 back side, and on the back side of the drying sheds,

1 before it returns back to the EOT right of way. There
2 will be some connections there to the parking area at
3 the NARA for a little bit of cross connections.

4 Then we cross Route 27 again. We
5 travel south. And when you come up to the plans,
6 you'll see there's a darker line that's shown. Where
7 the gray line is shown for the plans, there's a darker
8 line that goes parallel with it. And that's an area
9 where we were able to establish an adjacent soft
10 trail. The trail is going to be either a 12- or a 10-
11 foot wide paved surface, asphalt paved surface. But,
12 in some areas, we were able to provide a 6-foot soft
13 trail adjacent to the trail. In all other areas
14 there's going to be a 2-foot stone dust graded
15 shoulder on top of the 12- or the 10-foot trail.

16 As I travel further south on the plan,
17 we get to the Route 2A and 119 crossing. And I'll
18 just kind of jump ahead a little bit to that. That
19 was something that we worked out with a lot of
20 different scenes to the Town early on in the process.
21 And it was decided with -- working through with
22 District 3 to use a grade separated crossing of that.

23 And what we have down in this small
24 photo here is a rendition of a similar type of

1 structure that was Photoshopped onto the section of
2 Route 2A and 119 in the approximate location so it
3 would give you a visual of what such a structure would
4 look like crossing over the roadway at that point.

5 Again, traveling further south, there's
6 another cross-connection into Gould's Plaza off of
7 Brook Street. And it's shown also on that plan that's
8 on the end where there's going to be some dedicated
9 off-trail parking that's going to be assigned for
10 trail users. And there's a small connection to the
11 trail from that.

12 Again, traveling south, you have the
13 little small trestle bridges that are out there. And
14 those are going to be rehabbed with a new deck and
15 railing system put on those.

16 And, continuing south, we get to the
17 area of Concord Road. There's a slight realignment of
18 the trail here to make sure that we pull that crossing
19 as far away from 2A and 119 as we can. Again, it's a
20 busy highway. We don't want to introduce conflicts of
21 anyone crossing close to the intersection so we've
22 actually pulled the alignment of the trail down or up
23 Concord Street away from the intersection itself.

24 And then the final road crossing is on

1 Wetherbee Street. And then we continue and we ended
2 the project right now at the Acton Indoor Sports.
3 Again, there will be some shared parking with the
4 owners of Acton Indoor Sports.

5 I know the Friends term this Phase 2.
6 Working with MassHighway, we've termed this Phase 2A
7 as there's other sections down in what the Friends
8 refer as Phase 2. But this will essentially then
9 continue the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail then from Lowell
10 down to Acton Indoor Sports with the eventual hope
11 that it's going to continue someday all the way down
12 into Framingham for about a 25-mile long corridor.

13 The last couple of plans that I wanted
14 to just show you here, and I know I talk about it, is
15 just the typical sections of what the trail use is.
16 Like I said, most of it is a 12-foot paved trail with
17 2-foot graded shoulders. And then we blend back into
18 the existing.

19 And that's pretty much an overview of
20 the project. And, again, the full set of design plans
21 is at the table at the end.

22 MODERATOR CASH: Thank you, Christer.

23 The plans presented tonight are not
24 complete. The next step will be to review the

1 comments received this evening, then amend and
2 complete the plans for advertising and eventual
3 construction.

4 Before we open the hearing to you, I
5 will explain the hearing procedure. First, as stated
6 previously, the purpose of this hearing is to solicit
7 your input regarding this project. As the plans are
8 not yet complete, we may not be able to answer all of
9 your questions or respond to all of your comments at
10 this time.

11 Next, we ask that anyone who wishes to
12 have his or her comments entered into the official
13 hearing transcript, please stand up, identify yourself
14 by name and affiliation, whether you are an abutter, a
15 local official, or a concerned citizen. And spell
16 your last name if necessary. This is necessary in
17 order for us to obtain a full verbatim transcript as
18 required by law.

19 Also, the last sheet of the handout is
20 a mail-in sheet. If you have any questions or
21 comments which you would like to submit in writing,
22 please use this sheet for that purpose. You may leave
23 this sheet with me tonight or you may mail it to the
24 Department within ten days of this date and it will

1 become part of the official record.

2 Finally, it is normal procedure to ask
3 elected officials to offer their comments first. Are
4 there any federal, state, or local officials who would
5 like to speak at this time?

6 SELECTMAN ANDREW MAGEE: Yes, my name
7 is Andrew Magee. I'm on the Board of Selectmen in the
8 Town of Acton. And I just wanted to say sort of
9 generally that the Town is obviously very supportive
10 of this project, very anxious to see this project go
11 forward. We've had three unanimous votes at Town
12 Meeting for funding for the design studies.

13 I did have a question when you raised
14 the issue of the easements and where we stand with the
15 various easements. My understanding was with the
16 various individuals all along the right of way that we
17 are basically completed. Those negotiations are in
18 good shape. The overall easement agreement with EOT
19 or MassHighway, that I'm not clear as to where it is.
20 I was wondering if you could address that issue.

21 DANIEL GENTILE: As far as the Town
22 easements, I'm not aware of if they've been secured.
23 That's not our end of it. What ends up happening is
24 that those easements would be handed over to us for

1 review once they're secured and they make sure they
2 meet all state and federal guidelines.

3 The EOT lease that you're talking about
4 on the old corridor is being negotiated with EOT. And
5 there's some issues as far as ownership and stuff like
6 that, but it is being looked at. And I don't think
7 that's been secured yet.

8 SELECTMAN ANDREW MAGEE: Yeah. And
9 Roland tells me that we have verbal agreements with
10 the various easements that we need. I gather we need
11 to get those to you.

12 The EOT easement agreement, do you know
13 where that stands? We've been talking about this for
14 several years now. I'm just curious as to --

15 MODERATOR CASH: Well, we've had some
16 meetings internally. And they have to work up some
17 language to go into the agreement. So, you know, the
18 EOT attorneys are looking into that now and they're
19 trying to come up with a draft agreement.

20 SELECTMAN ANDREW MAGEE: Is there any
21 timeframe for that?

22 MODERATOR CASH: Well, ideally, what
23 they said, they want to see the design progress into
24 the final design stages, you know, to assure before

1 anything is signed off that we know that for sure that
2 everything is going to be complete and then, you know,
3 going to construction. So, they generally do not sign
4 those, you know, prior to the 100 percent stage.

5 SELECTMAN ANDREW MAGEE: Prior to the
6 100 percent. That was going to be my next question.
7 So we're looking at 100 percent design before we're
8 done with that easement agreement.

9 MODERATOR CASH: Correct.

10 SELECTMAN ANDREW MAGEE: And, in the
11 meantime, we need to get those other agreements to you
12 for review.

13 MODERATOR CASH: Okay.

14 SELECTMAN ANDREW MAGEE: That is my
15 understanding.

16 MODERATOR CASH: Yes. Well, you have
17 already submitted preliminary design plans, which show
18 us, you know, what the towns would be covering in
19 terms of permanent or temporary easements. That came
20 in with the 25 percent design plans. And those have
21 already been submitted. So, you know, it will be just
22 a matter of if any of that has to be fine tuned, you
23 know, along with the final design. And then you would
24 take care of that, you know, finish the negotiations

1 for that, and come up with a Right of Way Certificate

2 SELECTMAN ANDREW MAGEE: Okay.

3 MODERATOR CASH: You know, around the
4 same time, you know, as you approach the 100 percent
5 stage.

6 SELECTMAN ANDREW MAGEE: Okay. Good.
7 Again, thank you. And, thank you for all your work
8 and for helping move this along. As I say, we are
9 very, very interested. As you know, I think we have
10 almost complete unanimous agreement in town that we
11 want to see this go forward. And given that it's
12 already in construction right to the -- you know,
13 within a half mile of our border, we -- if anything
14 can be done to keep this process moving, it would be
15 greatly appreciated.

16 Thank you.

17 MODERATOR CASH: Okay. Thank you for
18 your comments.

19 Are there any other local elected
20 officials wishing to speak tonight?

21 Okay. This hearing is now open to the
22 public and we welcome your questions and comments at
23 this time.

24 MARK FORRESTER: I have a question.

1 MODERATOR CASH: Yes?

2 MARK FORRESTER: Mark Forrester,
3 concerned citizen and resident. That's F-O-R-R-E-S-T-
4 E-R.

5 The crossing at 2A, can you say maybe a
6 little more about how you get up to the new grade and
7 maybe some other -- if there are some other elevations
8 available. It would be interesting to see what you
9 think it's going to look like. And how true -- you
10 said this is similar -- how similar do you think that
11 will be to the real, the actual construction?

12 CHRISTER ERICSSON: Sure. Let me --
13 the approaches coming up the grade on that, what we've
14 designed, or what we've laid out so far, are
15 mechanically stabilized walls. So there will be an
16 abutment that basically comes up that brings on a
17 gradual grade running parallel with the trail. It
18 brings you up to grade at the trail.

19 MARK FORRESTER: So it's not going to
20 switch back?

21 CHRISTER ERICSSON: No, it's not a
22 switch back. There wasn't the right of way there to
23 do a switch back. So it's going to be gravel incline
24 up on that.

1 And, in the photo, if you get a chance
2 to look, you'll see there's some pictures of some
3 walls that we used to put into that Photoshop. I say
4 it's a rendering and it's a Photoshop. The bridge
5 itself that's actually a bridge that we designed and
6 installed up in Methuen for the Riverwalk that goes
7 over the falls. They come in a lot of different
8 styles, a lot of different colors, things like that
9 that would all be part of the final design process.
10 We would work out something that kind of fits in with
11 the character with the Town. But, in general, you
12 know, it gives you a good indication of what that
13 would look like. It's not going to be a -- what I'll
14 call a highway bridge, you know, Route 128 coming over
15 2A and 119. It's going to have a lot less mass, a lot
16 less scale to it.

17 MARK FORRESTER: And is there a
18 requirement for it to, you know, to put sort of -- I
19 don't know what you described it as -- a tall fence
20 that sort of goes over the top or -- is it that? Is
21 that a requirement? It doesn't show it there, but
22 what sort of rules do you have for that?

23 CHRISTER ERICSSON: Right. Well, those
24 fences are used a lot of times for snow plowing on

1 highways. And it's over interstate highways. The
2 question that's come up here, and we haven't gotten a
3 definitive answer, is whether, well, a suicide fence,
4 whether a suicide fence would be appropriate for this
5 bridge here. And that's something that would be
6 worked out in the final design.

7 The indication that I got was that it
8 does not require it. That's why we did not show it on
9 the photo. But that's something that would also kind
10 of come up in final design documents.

11 MARK FORRESTER: Yeah, that would
12 certainly change the character of the bridge.

13 CHRISTER ERICSSON: Yeah. But you
14 could also do something with that fence to make it not
15 be as visible.

16 So, the design plans are at the end of
17 the table. Those have all the cross-sections and
18 profiles to get a better idea if you want of what that
19 actually looks like. You can come up and look them
20 over. I hope that answers your question.

21 PETER GROVER: Hi. My name is Peter
22 Grover. I'm a volunteer on the Historical Commission.
23 I have a couple of things.

24 One, I just caught was the suicide

1 fence I think would be not in character. And we'd
2 prefer something less. If you don't think it's
3 necessary, we'd much prefer it look like that.

4 And, just a few things. Is the 12-foot
5 width a standard and how does that compare with the
6 Bedford to Cambridge Rail Trail that I've personally
7 been on? And the reason I'm asking is I think the
8 wider things get, the less -- it becomes more like a
9 highway and less of a trail. I just would prefer
10 something narrower.

11 MODERATOR CASH: Well, yeah. Certainly
12 anything wider than 12 feet, you know, you could see
13 increased speeds, too, you know, on bicycles.

14 PETER GROVER: Mm hum.

15 MODERATOR CASH: But the 12, I mean I'm
16 not aware of any that are like in the design pipeline
17 right now that are wider than that. So, I -- you
18 know, the 12 feet would be the max, or even 10, you
19 know, with the two -- two-foot like soft stone dust
20 type shoulders.

21 PETER GROVER: And you can make it over
22 the existing trestles with that width do you think?

23 CHRISTER ERICSSON: The width of this
24 structure -- the width of this structure is a minimum

1 of ten. And I -- the minimum design width for a rail
2 trail is ten feet. And we've designed a lot of
3 trails.

4 PETER GROVER: Mm hum.

5 CHRISTER ERICSSON: And we have found
6 that in a lot of the communities where we've built a
7 10-foot trail, once it was open a lot of the feedback
8 that we got was it felt a little too narrow.

9 PETER GROVER: Okay.

10 CHRISTER ERICSSON: Especially when you
11 have cyclists kind of passing each other. So the 12
12 feet is kind of the standard on I think almost all the
13 trails in this lately, so --

14 PETER GROVER: Okay. It sounds like
15 you've got experience with that.

16 CHRISTER ERICSSON: Yeah.

17 PETER GROVER: So I was curious.

18 The other thing was the parking lots.
19 Are those typically closed at dusk do you know? Is
20 that in your purview at all?

21 CHRISTER ERICSSON: Well, the trails
22 generally are designed as we call it a dawn to dusk
23 facility.

24 PETER GROVER: Okay.

1 CHRISTER ERICSSON: That, you know,
2 it's not lit. There's no provisions right now to gate
3 off the parking area. The only exclusive parking area
4 is the one that's right at the Carlisle-Acton town
5 line. The other ones are going to be shared parking
6 either with NARA, with Gould Plaza, with the shops,
7 Acton Indoor Sports. And, you know, Roland is still
8 working with other owners along the corridor to kind
9 of dedicate some parking that could be signed for
10 trail use parking. So, obviously, those wouldn't be
11 deeded off or anything like that.

12 PETER GROVER: Yeah. I think it would
13 be nice to be able to use it at night, people who
14 might work nights, or who work long hours.

15 CHRISTER ERICSSON: Yeah, I -- maybe
16 Roland can add something. I don't think the intent is
17 to prohibit night use, it's just not designed -- it's
18 not designed for anything but dawn to dusk
19 necessarily.

20 PETER GROVER: Mm hum.

21 CHRISTER ERICSSON: And that's
22 generally the use and that's what most communities
23 want to see.

24 PETER GROVER: The last question I had

1 was future connections. I think a few months ago we
2 may have commented on one near the Morrison Farm or
3 thinking of adding a pathway to the north edge of that
4 and then put -- cross the trail. I was wondering what
5 the process would be if we wanted to connect. Is that
6 anything that could pose an issue?

7 CHRISTER ERICSSON: Well, no, it
8 wouldn't pose an issue. The design that we have here
9 is the design that's being supported by MassHighway
10 right now. And when the project was developed, there
11 was other spurs, two other connections, that were
12 submitted to MassHighway. Obviously, these spurs add
13 cost.

14 PETER GROVER: Mm hum.

15 CHRISTER ERICSSON: And, at the time of
16 the approval, the project was approved from what you
17 see basically in the highlighted green right of way up
18 on the plan right there and those spurs are not
19 included in the MassHighway process.

20 We have talked with the communities as
21 far as future trail possibilities. There's a
22 connection to Veteran's Ball Field, for instance, was
23 one of them. And we looked at a couple of different
24 options of how to get that, whether you go on street,

1 up Route 2A and 119 up to the signal at Route 27, or
2 whether you come through some boardwalk connection
3 through the marsh. And, the Morrison Farm is another
4 great example that we looked at to include provisions
5 to allow for those future connections.

6 So, it's kind of -- I think we're
7 looking at this trail as we build this five-mile
8 section and on either end you continue down south,
9 like I said, down to Framingham eventually. But, you
10 know, in time, there's also those other connections
11 that is going to bring -- make this more of a viable
12 transportation corridor by providing access not just
13 to North Acton Recreation Area, but also Morrison
14 Farm, to the Veteran Fields, to other -- I think there
15 were some other uses, Roland, that you had kind of
16 brought up. But it's not part of this plan right now
17 and I didn't want to confuse it in the presentation as
18 such.

19 PETER GROVER: Would we have to go
20 through the State in the future if we wanted to or
21 could the Town tie into it on their own?

22 CHRISTER ERICSSON: It could be either
23 or.

24 PETER GROVER: Okay.

1 CHRISTER ERICSSON: You know, you could
2 go through the State process of applying for approval
3 through the district and programming it onto the
4 future TIP, or it could go through a Town process
5 which some of may the design criteria might be a
6 little bit relaxed if, for instance, you know, there
7 was some type of a crossing over something. There's
8 certain criteria that the Bridge Section is going to
9 hold us to for a bridge that they're standing behind,
10 you know, when it comes to some of the requirements.
11 So there's -- it's a little bit of give and take I
12 guess.

13 PETER GROVER: Okay. Sounds fair
14 enough. Thanks.

15 CHRISTER ERICSSON: Okay.

16 MODERATOR CASH: Okay. Okay. Thank
17 you.

18 You know, given the complexity of the
19 project and the number of towns that the project goes
20 through, it's important that we, you know, try to
21 establish the main line first and then see how that
22 goes and then I'm sure that there will be discussions
23 of how to branch off a bit.

24 Yes?

1 STUART JOHNSTONE: I'm Stuart
2 Johnstone. I'm with the Friends of Bruce Freeman Rail
3 Trail.

4 I heard mention of permanent easements
5 and temporary easements. And I hadn't really thought
6 of temporary easements on this project before. Could
7 you please tell us what a temporary easement involves
8 and why it's required?

9 CHRISTER ERICSSON: A temporary -- a
10 temporary easement is essentially, you know, something
11 in relation to grades, you know, where the contractor
12 would have to access somebody's property to maybe
13 regrade something. That property owner would still
14 own the property; it would just be a matter of getting
15 an entry to go on and perhaps, you know, setting
16 something at a different elevation, you know,
17 replanting whatever is necessary, or regrading, you
18 know, for that side slope for example, you know,
19 something like that. That would be an example.

20 Permanent generally means that you
21 could have like a drainage structure or something and
22 somebody needs access to the property later to go in
23 and maintain that structure. So, it's permanent
24 because somebody might have to come back at a later

1 date, so it's identified as permanent.

2 STUART JOHNSTONE: The same question as
3 well. Could you talk about the Rex Lumber area, just
4 fill in some details. A lot of us don't understand I
5 guess why -- this is a State-owned corridor and why
6 are we going around that property.

7 CHRISTER ERICSSON: The Rex Lumber
8 property, like I mentioned in my presentation, the
9 right of way bisects their operation. So, it's
10 literally right through their yard. And we looked at
11 it from two aspects. Basically one was a safety -- of
12 having the corridor going through their operation, of
13 having trucks that are going back and forth that we'd
14 have to provide crossings on that corridor. That was
15 one consideration.

16 And the other consideration was also
17 providing access to the North Acton Recreation Area,
18 which was I think one of the key components in being
19 able to sell or to promote this project of some of its
20 diversity as far as other uses along it.

21 So, working with the Town and with Rex
22 Lumber, we came up with this alignment that has a kind
23 of a tradeoff. And there's some property acquisitions
24 from Rex Lumber to use some of their property in the

1 back to go around the corridor. And I think it also
2 provides some nice vistas kind of coming through that
3 area rather than coming through the lumber yard,
4 looking over the pond and the ball fields. So, that
5 was basically the two reasons on Rex Lumber.

6 TOM MICHELMAN: Tom Michelman. I'm
7 with the Friends of Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

8 STENOGRAPHER: Spell your last name,
9 please.

10 TOM MICHELMAN: Michelman.

11 Another thing about Rex Lumber, because
12 it could impact about things, building to the south of
13 the trail, is that Rex had an agreement with the Town
14 of Acton for the Town to make all -- to make best
15 efforts to not have the trail go through Rex because
16 Rex had already given -- provided some access into the
17 NARA Park area. So, that pre-existing agreement was
18 important for at least initially definitely wanting to
19 go around Rex.

20 I think -- I think, personally, that
21 this alteration is excellent, that it provides --
22 there's no reason to try to run a company out of town
23 because you just want a rail trail, and that it
24 provides better access to NARA Park.

1 So, that's a -- that's a wonderful
2 alter -- it's not the only alteration I would find
3 acceptable myself, but going about it the right way.

4 I also wanted to say what a great job I
5 think GPI and MassHighway have done. This is a great
6 alignment. I really like the fact that it's a 12-foot
7 trail where we can have it. The parallel stone dust
8 path is also wonderful. And I'm, of course, very
9 excited about having it go forward. And, we look
10 forward to EOT finally engaging once these 25 percent
11 design plans are done, the lease agreements.

12 So, thank you very much.

13 MODERATOR CASH: Okay. Thanks, Tom.

14 TOM MICHELMAN: Oh, I also want to
15 thank all the Town officials who have made this
16 possible, the Town staff as well

17 MODERATOR CASH: Okay. Thank you.

18 Any other questions or comments? Yes?

19 EMILY TELLER: Emily Teller in
20 Westford. I'm a representative of the Friends Board.

21 Can you talk about where is 10 feet and
22 where is 12? Is that easy to do or is just really
23 complicated all the way along? And if it's too
24 complicated, it's okay. We could just look at the

1 design. But I was just curious. Is it like mostly 12
2 with a couple of 10 or --

3 CHRISTER ERICSSON: It's mostly 12.
4 It's mostly 12. And some of the areas where there's
5 the wetland impacts is the areas where we avoided the
6 soft side shoulder. And some areas where we had to
7 narrow it, I think up by Route 127 at one of the
8 crossings because we needed to come perpendicular. We
9 had to come a bit narrower on the trail as well. But
10 the majority of the trail was 12. And we can go
11 through the plans afterwards if you want me to kind of
12 show exactly the locations where it's ten and where
13 it's 12.

14 EMILY TELLER: And there's another
15 trestle up in North Acton, too, that you didn't
16 mention. But it's over that large swamp area before
17 you get to the Sportsman's Club. And I assume the two
18 trestles would be handled similarly?

19 CHRISTER ERICSSON: There's six
20 trestles in total.

21 EMILY TELLER: There's six trestles?

22 CHRISTER ERICSSON: Yeah. Most of them
23 are very small and there is one or two that are pretty
24 significant. Yeah.

1 EMILY TELLER: And, again, I'd also
2 like to thank both GPI and MassHighway and the Town
3 officials for doing everything possible to continue
4 this progress, which is really exciting, and great to
5 see proof of it.

6 Thanks.

7 MODERATOR CASH: Okay. Thank you for
8 your comments.

9 (No response.)

10 Would anyone like a slice of pizza?

11 (Laughter.)

12 TOM MICHELMAN: If you don't eat, my
13 treasurer is going to put me in real trouble. So,
14 please, eat.

15 MODERATOR CASH: Okay. Well, if there
16 are no formal questions remaining, certainly, you
17 know, we can stay around and help answer some of the
18 questions that you might have.

19 Okay. If there are no further
20 questions at this time, I'd like to just remind you
21 that the last sheet of the handout is a mail-in sheet.
22 If you have any other further questions or comments
23 which you would like to submit, please use this sheet
24 for that purpose. You may leave this sheet with me

1 tonight or mail it to the Department within ten days
2 of this date and it will become part of the official
3 record.

4 Before I close this hearing, I would
5 like to say that we will be here as long as you are
6 interested in looking at the plans. And we will try
7 to respond to questions that affect you personally
8 with this project.

9 Thank you very much for attending and
10 for providing us with the auditorium, the room this
11 evening, and the food.

12 I declare this hearing closed. The
13 time is 7:45.

14 (Whereupon, the proceedings were
15 concluded at 7:45 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Judith A. Luciano, do hereby certify that the foregoing record is a true and accurate transcription of the proceedings in the above-captioned matter to the best of my skill and ability.

Judith A. Luciano

**** ALL NAMES NOT PROVIDED WERE SPELLED PHONETICALLY TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY**