



EI-2425
CG

AB 55-670X

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

BUILDING

PLANNING

ZONING

CONSERVATION

Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA)
Surface Transportation Board
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Docket No. AB-55 (Sub. No.670X)

June 20, 2006

Dear Sirs:

On behalf of the Town of Natick, MA, in which the above cited right of way subject abandonment is located, I am contacting the Board in my official capacity as Community Development Director. I received the notice from CSX regarding this proposed abandonment within a correspondence dated June 7, 2006 which was copied to you.

I have a few comments which I trust will be of assistance as the Section (SEA) reviews the preliminary Environmental Report which was submitted by David Geraci at CSX. My comments regarding this document are as follows:

(1) Proposed Action and Alternatives – I am confirming that the town of Natick and the general public is greatly interested in the conversion of the Saxonville Branch as a rails to trails project. The Town has sought this conversion for many years and a future trail project would favorably expand the existing trail system within our community and region.

(3)(i) Land Use – Consistent with (1) above, I am confirming that the town of Natick and the general public is greatly interested in the conversion of the Saxonville Branch as a rails to trails project. Further, the Town within its official *Open Space Plan*, adopted by the Town in 2002, recommended acquisition of the Saxonville Branch for trail purposes. This abandonment would be consistent with this local land use planning undertaken by the Community.

(3)(iv) The Right of way is suitable for alternative public use as a rail trail and potentially other public purpose projects, either transportation or open space in nature.

(8) (ii) Biological Resources- A portion of the Saxonville Branch is within the general boundaries of the Cochituate State Park, owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and maintained as a State Park by the Massachusetts Division of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Further, Cochituate Lake is immediately bordering the ROW in a

sizeable section of the ROW. This proximity makes the future trail use that much more viable and desired.

(10) I am aware of no adverse actions which would be created by this abandonment that might cause the need for mitigation.

Attachment 1 – At the southeasterly end of the ROW as depicted on Attachment 1, a section of the ROW exists which is not shown to be within the area of abandonment yet this omission may have a detrimental affect on other future uses of the to-be-abandoned ROW. Who is, or will be the owner of this remaining section of Saxonville ROW? Also, why is this section not to be abandoned as part of the larger abandonment?

In closing, thank you very much for your consideration of our local comments. I trust they will be helpful as part of your deliberations. Please feel free to contact me at (508)647-7450 at your convenience should you need further clarification or local input.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Reffett". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Patrick Reffett
Community Development Director

Cc: Phil Lemnios, Town Administrator
Mike Gleba, MA EOT
David Geraci, CSX