

BELMONT COMMUNITY PATH: POTENTIAL ABUTTERS' FORUM

Beech Street Senior Center --- January 22, 2014

Oral Comments as Transcribed by CPAC Secretary Kevin Sullivan

Responses From CPAC Dated March 26, 2014

NAME	ADDRESS	ABUTTER? (Y/N)	ORAL COMMENT	RESPONSE
Karen Gut	Channing Rd	Y	Would like off-road bike path. Does not feel like you have to “save the neighborhood.” Studies show path will increase real estate value and will not increase crime. Not worried about privacy. Attended biking events – residents want the path to be off-road; a community should do the most it can to support an off-road path.	Thank you for your comment. Studies we have read also show this trend for real-estate values. CPAC is aware of the value of off-road path options.
Tom Lockett		Y	Paths are pleasant; path could be a great benefit if it is off-road.	Thank you for your comments. CPAC is aware of the value of off-road path options.
Christy Lawrence	Waverley area	Y	Wants to connect Waverley area to Belmont center – wants a safe way to bike to Belmont Center with her kids. Would like to go from Waverley to High School area.	Connecting Waverley to Belmont Center is a high priority of CPAC. Also connecting to the High School is a high priority.
Charles Becker		Y	Bike path benefits the cars. Should think longer term how to connect across Belmont. One way to do that is to block off regular roads for bikes.	Thank you for the suggestions. Connecting across Belmont is a chief priority. We are also looking at the “network of trails” concept for Belmont, and thinking how to connect into a

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				Community Path from other areas of Town. The off-road routes can reduce congestion by also taking automobiles off the roadways.
Austin Bennett	Grant Ave	N	Totally against path through Grant Ave. Is interested in maintenance and lighting. Who will pay for that? Says that his neighborhood is against the path. Design features might not be funded. <i>Andy Rojas: Any path would have to be funded.</i>	Grant Ave. is not currently being considered as a path option. The Selectmen would not green-light this project until funding were available for all design elements that the Town has deemed necessary.
Matt Hanlon			Believes strongly in off-road option. Was nearly hit by car at Belmont/Lexington St. – was injured in a bike accident with a car. Uses Alewife connector pathway from Brighton Street – says it is beautiful. The cycle track is safer than on-road.	Thank you for the comments. The CPAC is aware of the high value of off-road paths. Cycle tracks are also under consideration. However, in general they do not work well in cases where there are many driveways, intersections, and adjacent on-street parking.
Jan Kruse	Grant Avenue	Y	If the path were to run down the street, would part of the road be dedicated to the path? (<i>Jeff Roth: We are not considering that route right now.</i>) Is in favor of an off-road pathway. It is dangerous to ride along a busy street. Wants to ensure it is safe to use. Wants it to be available to people like her, who like to ride bikes, but are not regular/experienced bike riders.	We are not currently considering a route along Grant Ave. From the research and community engagement that CPAC has done, the CPAC is aware of the high value of off-road paths.

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Andrew Schwartz			Would like to see on-road improvements, especially in the Channing Road area. Alexander Avenue and Dean Street – have no stop signs. Would like to see on-road bicycle safety improvements no matter what gets built.	Thank you for the suggestions. We will take these into consideration. We are looking at areas that connect into a Community Path, and what on-road safety improvements could be possible, especially in areas that connect the Town to a future Community Path. However, it may not currently be possible for CPAC to address all on-road improvements.
Sharon Bridburg	Royal Road	Y	Is in favor of off-road path. Worried about pedestrian tunnel. Would like to see a safer walking/bicycling route to the High School. As a mother, the current method is very unsafe for students biking or walking. Very much in favor of an off-road path for the whole community.	Thank you for the suggestions. A safe route to the High School is a high priority for CPAC, and that is why we applied for CPA funding to study the railroad underpass concept near the High School. Even though the CPA funding was declined, we are including an underpass as a critical access point that would be strongly recommended for any route parallel to the Fitchburg Line and near the High School.
Russell Leino		Y	Supports the path. Rides bike every day to Alewife from Winn Brook – has to go down Brighton Street. It is an unsafe street for cycling. Feels like he is putting his life at risk every day. Wears fluorescent material, follows rules of the road; off-road is only safe option. Understands the abutters have concerns, but there are real safety concerns of doing nothing. It is terrifying to ride down Brighton Street.	Thank you for the suggestions. From the research and community engagement that CPAC has done, the CPAC is aware of the high value of off-road paths.

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			Expresses strong support for off-road path options.	
Art Kreiger			Is in favor of off-road paths. The level of stress and vigilance needed for on-road routes is much higher than for off-road routes. Wherever there is a busy road, it will be a different experience to be off-road, and you will get much more usage and benefit. Families don't use on-road by choice. Off-road, people use it by choice. He rides on the cycle track on Concord Ave – but few driveways and no crossroads. Says it has to be off-road, and it will be much better for everyone, including drivers. Process – lots of work; many years in the works. We are 3-5 years away. Advocates for less process from here on out.	Thank you for the suggestions. From the research and community engagement that CPAC has done, the CPAC is aware of the high value of off-road paths. We are trying to make a Community Path that families and kids and others will feel safe using. Cycle tracks in general do not work well in cases where there are many driveways, intersections, and adjacent on-street parking spaces. Concord Ave. in Cambridge does not suffer from these drawbacks.
Laura Vanderhart		Y	Supports off-road. Has lived as an abutter on path. Lived on Minuteman Bikeway – good for commuting. No concerns with noise or crime. Now they live on Beaver Brook park – they have bike and foot traffic – like to see people enjoy the path. Butler Elementary parents are excited to feel more connected to downtown Belmont and the High School. Butler Elementary	Thank you for your comments. We hope to be able to connect the Butler neighborhoods to the Community Path, and to Belmont Center and Waverley Square.

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			parents want to feel the Town is thinking about them. Votes for flattest and most off-road route.	
Ed Mallowney	4 Clark Lane	Y	One potential route goes through his front yard. Clark Lane is not a public road. It is privately owned area. They are in favor of an off-road bike path. He is willing to have it behind his property, but cannot have it in front of his house because the land is not a public road.	Thank you for your comment. We originally proposed having a lane-shared segment along Clark Lane, meaning the path would share the roadway and not restrict parking or motor-vehicle use. Since this is a quiet street, it is likely acceptable from a safety standpoint. However, based on this feedback, we are looking at other options as well over that short stretch. Since this Public Forum, the CPAC has discussed and presented additional options to route the path in this area that avoid use of private land on 4 Clark Lane.
Kathy Keohane		N	Was an abutter in Arlington on the Minuteman Bikeway. She was against it originally. One concern was crime – was concerned about privacy, trash, width. Happy to say, she was wrong on every count. Recognize that it is change, but it would stop kids from drinking on abandoned areas. Supports off-road path options.	Thank you for your comments. Would appreciate hearing further from you. Please contact CPAC if possible.
Alex Corbett	Channing Road	Y	The majority are not against the community path, but issues of their privacy should be paramount.	Thank you for your comments and suggestions. We respect privacy as a paramount consideration. CPAC has expended

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				significant effort on responding to concerns from potential abutters in order to come up with privacy screening options that will meet the needs of abutters. These options have been discussed with potential abutters, and we are open to other ideas as well.
Jarrold Goentzal	Waverley Square	Y	In favor of Beaver Brook path. DCR has been an active manager of patrolling that area. Two imperatives: privacy. He would like to have a path near him. But recognizes that privacy is a concern. The town has shown that the community can come together to find solutions. In strong favor of off-road routes – friend was riding through MIT campus on cycle track and involved in an accident, so cycle tracks do have safety issues. Off-road paths are the only options.	Privacy is a chief consideration, and something CPAC is working hard to provide solutions for. We welcome and are open to other new ideas for privacy screening as well. We realize cycle tracks have safety issues, and off-road paths are generally preferable from a safety standpoint.
Scott Rossi	Channing Road	Y	Main concern: how could it be built if it is in this section – or will it be up where MBTA owns? Creates a fishbowl for backyards. Crime is not a concern. Privacy: concerned about people being able to look in their backyards. How would we get across Belmont Center? As an abutter, could we vote on the potential for privacy screening. Will there be funding for	A path would likely be on the MBTA land, and not the sloped land next to peoples' yards. The privacy concerns could be addressed through any of the mitigation measures that CPAC has proposed. We are also open to other privacy screening ideas as well. Belmont Center would be traversed using the historical granite bridge across Leonard Street. The on-road Channing Road route is no longer under

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			screening? The on-Channing Road option seems ridiculous – how would you turn a dead-end street into a one-way street? Against the on-road Channing Road option.	consideration by CPAC, based on feedback from residents like yourself. Thank you for the feedback on that route.
Ann Tierney	Channing Road	Y	Worried about privacy. Can hear conversations when people are on the railroad line. Not worried about the train noise or worried about the bike noise. Is familiar with community paths – used the Minuteman path – what she liked about it was that it connected her to businesses; expected that Belmont Community Path would connect residents to community resources and businesses. Only path she supports is Concord Road. She was interested in cycle track.	Privacy is a paramount consideration, and CPAC has proposed a range of measures to address this concern. Many other successful approaches for privacy screening used on other trails have also been discussed, to provide reference points. Connecting residents to community resources is a key feature, and something that CPAC has evaluated significantly for all the routes under consideration. The cycle track concept is under consideration. There are user-safety concerns with that approach that may not lend itself well to Belmont's section of Concord Ave. Off-road routes are generally preferred and safer.
Duane Bronson	Concord Avenue	Y	Bought his house because of path on Concord Ave. He comes off of driveway everyday. Every other day, there are cars driving in the bike lane. He has biked on the cycle track in Cambridge – it works because there are no driveways along the south side. On the northside, it is not as safe. There is no shoveling of snow on that	Thank you for your comments. Walking/biking to school is an important consideration, and something that CPAC is looking into. Cars driving in the Concord Ave. bicycle lanes is a major safety issue, and something that CPAC has discussed and documented.

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			path. Rides bike everyday. To enhance the path would make his life easier. Off-road along tracks is a bigger win for the community – will bring them there safer and faster. Will give them that walk option they don't have right now. If there were a way to walk to school, kids would take that. Would have been a good idea to invite all parents and kids to the high school, because they should know. He sent the note to Dr. Kingston and apologized for that.	
Steve Marlin	Precinct 8	Y	<p>Safety of the live trail. No one has talked about the safety of riding along the train. The speed limit is 60 mph; not a freight train – a live rail with the MBTA. It is narrow at Channing Road and gets more narrow at Belmont Center. Concord Avenue is a strong option – it connects the post office, the athletic fields, the high school, etc.</p> <p><i>Amy DeDeo: a one-foot cement wall between the rail and the trail could significantly reduce the train noise.</i></p>	We have discussed this topic at length, and reviewed a number of Rail-With-Trail segments in various parts of Massachusetts and in other states. We have also reviewed an array of reports on this topic. CPAC has discussed a low wall beneath a safety barricade fence (between the rail and the trail) that could block a lot of noise. This is something that would benefit both the adjacent neighborhood and the trail users.

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David ??	Channing Road	Y	Used to take the train to work, but now walks along the path to Alewife. The Minuteman Bikeway is nice to Alewife; it would be nearly impossible to create the same environment behind Channing Road. The cross section map wasn't clear where there is a deep incline. Would it be challenging to put a wide enough path there? Supportive of an off-road option. If there were an off-road path, the on-road path would need to be addressed to make it safer. Why is the bike lane next to traffic instead of between parking and Concord Ave.	Thank you for your comments. We are not trying to recreate the Minuteman Bikeway, but only citing that as an example that has worked favorably. We are aware of the elevated rail embankment, which is why we have proposed fences of specific heights given the setback locations of house windows and potential siting of a trail along this route option. You can see such sketches in the documents on the CPAC webpage. The bicycle lanes are placed adjacent to the car lanes because bicycles are vehicles that move with the traffic, while the parked cars are stationary (i.e., the general principle of roadway design is that slower vehicles stay to the right). Cyclists are also more visible to drivers when placed adjacent to motor-vehicle lanes. If behind parked cars, then they won't be seen at intersections (hence the need to remove parking for visibility). Additionally, cyclists need to turn at intersections, so placing the bike lane behind parked cars makes turning unsafe and difficult. A bike lane designed like the one on Concord Ave. gives cyclists the option to take the travel lane and maneuver around doors, potholes, and other things that block the bicycle lane. The beauty of this approach to bicycle-lane design

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				is that the bicyclist does not have to ride in the bike lane if it's not safe (and it is legal to do so). The alternative proposed provides no way for a cyclist to maneuver around such obstructions, which is why that design is not commonly used. Based on the CPAC's research, the rail embankment in eastern Belmont along the former Mass Central Rail-Road is wide enough for a 12-foot pathway and for privacy and safety fences/buffers.
Pam Andrews	Royal Road	Y	In favor of a bike path in the middle of the Royal Road woods area – it is a beautiful wooded area – you could expand the community path to be wider there. Is in favor of maintaining the green aspect of that area. Biking on Concord Ave is too scary. How can we connect the bike path and pedestrian path at Belmont Center to make it safer for people getting off the bus there?	Thank you for your comments. CPAC is looking at how to connect these path options to Belmont Center, and also how to connect through Belmont Center.
Michael Cicalese	Channing Road	Y	He bikes and also swims. Sympathetic to off-road lanes. Why out of the 15 proposed paths, there has only been one focus – on the route behind Channing Road? There are only design paths to Belmont Center. All he sees is a summary of one path. If you are going to display a design of one	Thank you for sharing your comments. The CPAC has in fact looked in more detail at other at all of the potential route areas in Town. The briefing did not have time to present all of that research. We decided to discuss the Mass Central Rail-Road corridor example in the eastern part of Belmont based

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			path, you need to display a design of the other paths.	on the strong interest in that area. In part, because neighbors of that particular route are the ones who specifically requested this meeting, and helped to organize it. CPAC has done more detailed investigations of all of the potential route segments in Town. The numerous visual stations at the Public Forum that the CPAC created showed a lot of this detail. For example, in addition to this route you mention, the Belmont Housing Authority area and the Waverley Square area were both shown in much more detail on large posters displayed at the Public Forum. Please note that this is still preliminary analysis, and any detailed design work would involve a future engineering feasibility study as mentioned.
Tricia Crowley	Channing Road	Y	Not anti-path or anti-community. They have concerns that should not be swept under the rug. Big concern is drainage. Their backyards are clay – the water run-off to that area has not been addressed in any studies. An off-road path would be great – but if it means that everyone on Channing Road has to change their backyards, please take that into consideration.	The CPAC is taking all concerns seriously, and we have invested considerable time and efforts into responding to every concern and issue raised. You can consult the CPAC minutes for other topics. We are not asking anyone to change their backyards. We will continue to take these comments into consideration.
Merrie Watters	Channing Road	Y	Lived at house since 1965. All	Thank you for your comments and

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			communities grow. Wants to implore that she have given up enough for this community. Worried about privacy, safety, run-off, direct corridor from Belmont to Cambridge – what about concerns of crime? Believes in the process. Wants to consider Concord Ave option. It will cost less – need to think about money. One consideration is a cycle track on Channing Road. The concept of closing Channing Road, making it one-way, and no parking is absurd. Concord Ave. represents a true community path.	suggestions. We are considering the Concord Ave. option and whether a cycle track could be designed in a safe enough manner there given the adjacent parking and the intersections and driveways. We are no longer considering the cycle track option on a one-way Channing Road concept, based on feedback from neighbors like yourself. Please note that this option was explored by CPAC because residents on Channing Road specifically requested it and asked for us to consider it.
Bruce MacKinnon	Channing Road	Y	Against trail adjacent to the rail line. This meeting was posted as an abutters meeting, and he feels it is intimidating. The path shouldn't go behind their houses because it would be close to the live rail; if you are riding a bike, walking, pushing a carriage- and when crossing the street at Brighton Ave – there are lots of concerns. He is against the trail.	The rail-with-trail concept has been discussed in depth, and is already in existence directly east of Brighton Street in Belmont. A trail could be adjacent to a rail, and separated by a safe distance and also by a safety barricade to prevent trail users from unsafely crossing onto the tracks. The crossing of Brighton Street is a concern, and that is why we have considered an underpass there to avoid the busy roadway crossing for residents.
Caroline Noone	Channing Road	Y	In favor of Concord Ave. Likes the idea of the cycle track.	Thank you for your suggestion. We are considering that option.
Donna Dimatoplous	Channing Road	Y	Opposed to trail behind her home. Worried about crime, trash dumping. Worried about	The CPAC is not proposing any routes that would use people's back yards along Channing

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			criminals. Basically in her backyard. She would suggest to construct the path along the main road, or use ample conservation land. No one should have invasion of privacy. Not opposed to a community path. Wants people to understand her concerns. In favor of options that are on road or use public conservation land.	Road. A trail would be separated safely from both peoples' homes and the rail to preserve privacy. CPAC has suggested a number of privacy and security screening options to address these concerns. We are also open to other screening options. We appreciate your concerns.
Clement Myers	School Street	Y	Says there is no conservation land along the proposed route. Is interested in off-road path. The 74/75 buses will become less attractive with increased traffic expected on our roads. In favor of using Mass-Central Rail-Road corridor. Predicts a catastrophic accident on Concord Ave. between a bike and a car. Other options: Narrow Concord Avenue, or use space on School property.	Thank you for the comments. We are looking at all of these options. Our hope it to improve safety for all walkers, cyclists, and for all other basic modes of transportation in Town, in order to benefit children, families, and others, and to avoid such an unfortunate incident.
Erin McNeill	Alexander Ave	Y	Is in favor of an off-road path. Would be a huge benefit to the entire community, but only if there is an underpass. <i>Mark Paolillo: Thinks underpass is a good idea. Jeff Roth – we applied for funding for CPA to do a feasibility of the underpass, and were not approved.</i>	Thank you for the suggestions. A safe pedestrian/bicycle route to the High School from Winn Brook is a high priority for CPAC, and that is why we applied for CPA funding to study this approach. Although the CPA funding was declined, we are including an underpass as a critical access point that would be strongly recommended for any route parallel to the Fitchburg Line and near the High School. Currently many children

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				unsafely cross the railroad tracks to get to school, and we would like to make walking to school less hazardous for these children and their families.
Edward Corsino	Channing Road	Y	Is against a path in his neighborhood. Thinks other options will provide better access to all parts of Belmont.	We are looking at different route options besides the one adjacent to your property.
Viva Fisher	Royal Road	Y	Is in favor of an off-road path and through Royal Road woods. Would hope landscaping would incorporate native plants (not poison ivy) – and it would be safer than currently is.	We are looking at a range of landscaping options that would include native plants, and considerations about avoiding the spread of poison ivy.
Andrew Wall	223 Channing Road	Y	Opposes path along the railway. Concerned about privacy and likes Concord Ave idea.	Thank you for your comments. We are working actively to address concerns about privacy, through a number of mitigation measures that CPAC has offered. The Concord Ave. route segment is under consideration as a potential route option, though since it is not off-road there are safety design considerations that would need to be addressed.
Grant Monahan	Snake Hill, President Belmont Citizens Forum	Y	Picks up a strong desire from people to have a community path that is an off-road solution. Would like to see that happen – create protections that answer the concerns of Channing Road families. The considerations for privacy can be addressed	Thank you for your comments. CPAC is aware of the value of off-road path options, and we have received significant feedback from the Belmont community about the importance of the off-road approaches.

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			in an appropriate plan of landscaping and fencing, plus also addressing concerns of run-off. Design professionals can create solutions for these concerns. Allow for balance between an off-road path for the community down through the years, but allow for concerns from Channing Road residents. Would ask that we create planning to make people better evaluate it – and then there could be a more constructive dialogue.	
Shannon ??	Channing Road	Y	Worried about crime. There was an attempted burglary behind their home. They live on a part of Channing Road that is very narrow - cannot imagine 2 bike lanes and a lane for bikers and joggers. Doesn't think that people would push strollers.	Thank you for your comments. The on-road Channing Road route option is no longer being considered. Burglary cases are hard to respond to currently if they are on the abandoned railroad right-of-way. A trail would provide direct access to such areas by the Police, not to mention trails tend to police themselves by the users. Such paths are also “linear parks” as opposed to “hang-out” locations. Due to the self-policing nature, they are not generally places where people will engage in criminal behavior, since they are likely to be caught or seen.
Katherine ??	Cross Street	Y	The idea of a future path is offending a majority of the community who has something to do with it. Winn-Brook has	Thank you for your comments. Crime is something we have studied extensively. The general trend with trails around this area is that

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			had an increase in crime recently. They are worried about crime increasing further, especially coming from the Cambridge-Rindge projects. It is a safe escape route for criminals from the projects to come into her neighborhood. Would never take a stroller down a path.	crime is is not a major factor after a trail is built. However, further research would be needed to exactly understand this issue you mention from the Cambridge-Rindge Towers near Fresh Pond. Such Cambridge residents already have open public access to Belmont via the roadways, so it is not clear whether adding a path access would encourage further crime, since criminals would be unlikely to find safe haven along a path. However, to address your concerns the CPAC has proposed fencing to be installed that would prevent trail users from accessing adjacent private land.
Claude Healy	Channing Road	Y	Would Alexander Ave be an exit? What about people who live near there? What about parking? Where will people park their cars. What about the funding? Couldn't we use the money for our schools?	Alexander Ave. could be an entrance onto the trail, or entrance to an underpass to the High School. The funding for trails is not the same money that can be used for schools. The allocation of money is separate, and trail funding generally does not come from local municipalities anyhow. Parking is an issue CPAC is aware of, and we are working on documenting it and addressing it. Further investigation through an engineering feasibility study would be needed to fully answer these questions.

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Jack ??	Winn-Brook		Would love to see access point to the High School. He hopes that access is improved by the time his 5-year-old is in high school. Rides bike downtown or to Alewife – familiar with cycle track and other bike paths as well as the Fitchburg cut-off path from Brighton Street to Alewife. A direct route is more preferable. Would like to consider ways to improve access from Winn-Brook to Alewife. Riding on Brighton Street is not safe.	Thank you for the suggestions. A safe route to the High School is a high priority for CPAC, and that is why we applied for CPA funding to study this option. Even though the CPA funding was declined, we are including an underpass as a critical access point that would be strongly recommended for any route parallel to the Fitchburg Line and near the High School.
Paul Roberts	Cross Street		Is supportive of an off-road path. People will buy homes here in Belmont because it is a safe, walkable, and bikeable community. It is very important for the Board of Selectmen to make this happen one way or the other.	Thank you for your suggestions. CPAC is aware of the value of the off-road path approaches.
(missed name)			Says to friends in Cambridge-Rindge Towers that they are welcome in Belmont! Is concerned about the bridge in Belmont Center – cannot see any path without using it.	The CPAC is aware that the bridge provides a unique way to traverse the busy intersections in Belmont Center. Various potential routes would utilize this bridge to safely cross Leonard Street. Other crossing approaches not using the bridge would be circuitous and less safe due to the traffic.
Kevin Shea	Channing Road	Y	Asks that the Board of Selectmen takes abutters concerns as the process moves forward.	The CPAC has strong representation by Channing Road residents, so the abutter concerns are heavily taken into consideration.

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				The CPAC has actively worked to address all concerns raised by potential abutters.
Cindy Taylor	Channing Road	Y	Channing Road residents aren't against a community path. Want to consider Clay Pit Pond – might not be able to have all off-road, so residents need to compromise.	CPAC has evaluated and considered use of the Clay Pit Pond paths for segments of the Community Path.
Mary Bradley	Palfrey Road		She owns a home on a trail in Seattle, Washington (rents in Belmont). Property value goes up because of proximity to a bike path. It's the most wonderful thing. She would be interested in buying a house on Channing Road if a trail were developed on the north side adjacent to the Fitchburg Line.	Thank you for your comments. Generally other communities show increased resale values for homes in close proximity to a shared-use path.
Phil Lawrence	Aggasiz Avenue / Pct. 4	Y	Walked the route through Beaver Brook. Would like to see a path go through there. North of tracks on Channing Road – we can address the abutters concerns – about drainage, improve the sound barriers, could make it an attractive alternative to Channing Road. Concord Ave has a number of faults. MBTA opposes at grade crossing at Brighton Street. Also – how would we cut through underpass at Concord? Opposes cycle tracks along Concord – creates blind spots and is unsafe. There will be problems with people getting	Thank you for your comments. The CPAC has worked hard to address many of these concerns raised by potential abutters. We are currently looking at the potential Concord Ave. route option, and are aware that there are many safety design considerations that would need to be further addressed to make cycle tracks a safe option there.

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			into and out of driveways. <i>Jeff R:</i> <i>Between Granite bridge, there are approximately 18 driveways on the school side.</i>	
Anne Mahon	Precinct 4		Lead real-estate agent for Century 21 Belmont – whenever she mentions a off-road bike paths, it increases the value of a home being sold.	Studies we have read also show this trend for real-estate values next to paths. CPAC is aware of the value of off-road path options.