

POTENTIAL ABUTTERS' FORUM: Beech Street Sr. Center - January 22, 2014		WRITTEN COMMENTS WITH RESPONSES (Responses Dated March 12, 2014)	
Name	E-mail	Comments	Response
Marybeth Toomey	marybethtoomey@hotmail.com	Please consider that Belmont is part of a regional effort to provide a community trail from Eastern Mass to Central Mass. We need to think about our role as good citizens supporting a trail, and joining our neighboring communities in creating a great resource for the region.	Yes, our objective is to provide Belmont access into the larger Mass Central Rail-Trail projects, as well as providing neighborhood connections within Town. This trail could also become part of the other regional networks, by accessing other segments of the Mass Central Rail-Trail.
Dmitry and Stella Kleinbock	nash.adres@gmail.com	We live at 60 Agassiz Ave, very much in favor of off-road path. Would be great to connect to Waverley area, to Belmont Center, to Belmont High School etc. Having a path which connects us to Waltham and the Minuteman Bikeway would be a real treasure.	Access to Waltham, access to the Minuteman Bikeway, and access to the Belmont facilities you mention is a primary motivation for this trail, and those factors have been used to rank and evaluate potential routes.
Scott Rossi	rossi385@gmail.com	I am concerned about privacy issues for abutters. Also funding for the project. I have concern for people crossing the tracks as well.	Privacy issues have been discussed in detail by CPAC, and CPAC has offered many privacy options to potential abutters. Funding could potentially come from State and Federal money earmarked for bicycle and walking trails. The concern about people crossing the tracks has been discussed, and any trail segments directly adjacent to the Fitchburg Line would include safety fencing to prevent trail users from crossing into the tracks (c.f., trail from Brighton Street in Belmont to Alewife Station).
Anne Mahon	annemahon@comcast.net	As the top real estate agent for Century 21 in New England I can assure you that the closer you live to a community path, the greater the value of your home. If this wasn't true, agents wouldn't consistently put the distance from a home to a path in home ad listings.	CPAC has reviewed studies that indicate this trend as well. Based on these reports, it is likely that property resale values will be enhanced for homes adjacent to and near trail segments. Generally these, as well as various other positive factors contributing to increased property values, outweigh the negative concerns about privacy, security, and crime that would reduce property values.
Pam Andrews	pandrews@bu.edu	Like the idea of running path through the middle of area across from my house with vegetation (like Holly?) between road and path.	Thank you for the suggestion. This and other types of vegetation are under consideration.
Michael Burke (40-42 Grant Ave)	MJB713@live.com	I am strongly against the bike path going on Grant Ave. Grant Ave is a heavily populated area of mostly 2 family homes. The road is very narrow without a bike path. The area already gets overcrowded during spring-fall with people from Belmont wheelworks. A bike lane and additional car traffic and parking would impact residents in a very negative way. I am for a bike path, but believe this is a poor route.	This route is no longer under consideration.
ANOYNYMOUS CHANNING ROAD RESIDENT		I think the bike path offers a great opportunity to reduce the traffic bottleneck under Belmont Center railroad bridge, and it should be built in such a way to maximize the reduction in this traffic bottleneck. This in itself would increase the \$ value of houses on Channing Road and elsewhere.	Thank you for sharing these thoughts. We have looked at traffic reduction as an evaluation criteria, and off-road routes ranked highest in this category.
Mike Phillips	Mike.Phillips@mpnet.us	The Belmont Center to Brighton Street section is the most important segment (connecting to Alewife and Cambridge). The rail-with-trail option is clearly the best option for safety and convenience. It will get much more use than on-street options.	Given that the route you mention provides direct access to the path from Brighton Street to Alewife, we also are aware of its value for both transportation and recreation. Because of this, CPAC has made extensive efforts to offer ways for mitigating concerns from neighbors regarding the Rail-With-Trail segment you mention.
Anne Donohue	adonohue@bu.edu	I teach at Boston University. My experience is that bikes and cars do not co-exist very well, especially with many intersections. One of my students was killed last fall, riding in the bike lane with a helmet. A large truck took a turn and did not see my student on the bike. I do not want the town of Belmont to bury another child when we have an option for off-road paths.	Safety for users is a critical evaluation piece for the routes we are analyzing. We are working to propose routes that provide the most off-road segments as possible.
Sara Oaklander	saraoaklander@gmail.com	I would like to see each concern held by abutters - on by one - listed with an evidence-based response. I am utterly concerned that those concerns are fear-based and not evidence-based. Thank you.	Yes, we have responded to all the potential abutter concerns, as detailed in minutes of the many CPAC meetings. Several meetings have been specifically devoted to discussing many questions and concerns about the following topics: crime, emergency access, environmental contamination, drainage, privacy, security, property values, crime, lighting, noise, rail-with-trail safety, lighting, and hours of use. Most of these concerns have only been raised in the potential eastern Belmont segment north of the Fitchburg Line.

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Julia Blatt	juliablatt@hotmail.com	1) I am a bike commuter and strongly support the off-road option. 2) I think the off-road trails behind Channing Road would greatly improve safety for kids walking to BHS from the Winn Brook area in pct. 8. 3)What a wonderful thing to connect Waverley to Belmont Center - great for residences and businesses. 4) Thank you for all you work on this. I look forward to biking on this trail while I'm still young enough to bike (I hope).	Thank you for your support of the east Belmont off-road route along the former Mass Central Rail-Road and the routes connecting Waverley and Belmont Center.
June Roberts (60 Richardson Rd)	june.roberts@verizon.net	Off-road is safest; great for families with children and older folks. I use Minuteman Bikeway to get to Bedford and it is tribute to our State. Belmont should make a priority to connect to adjoining community off-road paths. America has an exercise crisis and the community should strongly support safe off-road paths. The new path to Alewife is wonderful. Off-road along tracks is important.	Thank you for your support of the off-road trail segments.
Donna Marie Gaspar	donnagaspar@yahoo.com	I completed the Belmont Community Path Questionnaire and I am in favor of extending the Fresh Pond path from Cambridge on Concord Ave into Belmont. I would use this off-road path - feeling safe and having access to town facilities and businesses.	We are not looking at any off-road path segments that would directly connect Concord Ave. to the paths around Fresh Pond. Those would be on-road or cycle-track route options (e.g., sidewalks, bicycle lanes, cycle tracks, etc.).
Jeffrey Bruno	jeffrey.bruno@aisz.hr	Please explain to me why we cannot have a path on the athletic fields; maybe next to the rail. Example: run between track and train tracks. Please explain. Thank you.	We have pursued this option. The school departments have expressed general concerns about giving up land for such a path route. The school departments indicated that future renovations may also limit use of the land for a Community Path.
Cecelia Michaelis		The off-road option is the best and safest option. Cycling on Concord Ave is very dangerous.	The off-road routes scored highest in our route-evaluation process. Concord Ave. has many intersections and driveways. How to make such a route safe is something that requires further study.
ANONYMOUS		I am a Channing Road resident. I consider it highly ironic that other residents of my street consider themselves "intimidated" to speak up and voice their opposition to this path. I personally feel intimidated to speak up and voice my support for this off-road path behind Channing Road, for fear of the opposition of my neighbors. Concerns of safety and privacy and house value can be addressed with a wall between the path and houses, and to shield homes from visual overlook and noise of trains.	Correct, there was no intent to intimidate anyone at this meeting. All abutters were given fair opportunity to speak openly, which was the objective of the meeting. The meeting was specifically organized for potential abutters, and in response to requests by potential abutters.
Erin McNeill (Alexander Ave)	emcn17@gmail.com	I bike often to Alewife. The off-road path would be beneficial to the neighborhood making Alewife more easily accessible. However it is crucial that any project include a rail crossing so that the Winn Brook neighborhood is not permanently cut off from the High School and the other side of Town. Cutting off access would actually increase traffic at the two other crossings, and would have a detrimental effect on the neighborhood.	Yes, a rail crossing near Alexander is considered a critical access point for any trail that would parallel the Fitchburg Line. A permanent safety barricade would likely be installed for such path options, making the ad-hoc at-grade crossing of the tracks no longer possible. Also, an underpass is being considered to improve this ongoing liability and safety hazard for High School students walking at-grade across the tracks to get to school.
Merrie Watters (105 Channing Road)	merriecat2@aol.com	I am for a community path in Belmont. I am against placing it along the MBTA Commuter Rail line abutting my home at 105 Channing Road. I believe Concord Ave is the best location for this path as it serves the needs of all citizens, not just the cyclists. I am also against the proposal of putting a path on Channing Road itself.	Thank you for your suggestion. We are looking at the Concord Ave. route option, and also how to make it safe for walkers and bicyclists of varying ages and abilities.
Arlene Taylor	ACTaylor54@gmail.com	A path running along Concord Ave or through the Clay Pit Pond area would be safer, less obtrusive, better looking, less expensive and provide a safe passage to students at the High School, and would connect to other areas of Town.	We are looking at this Concord Ave. option and using the Clay Pit Pond park. We have discussed the topics you mention. CPAC is considering this route specifically in response to concerns by the neighbors. However, safety, cost, and aesthetics are not necessarily better for this route, as compared to other routes. You can consult the CPAC minutes for discussion of many of these topics.
Bill Taylor	wilfred162@gmail.com	I would like to know the costs would be to construct, to maintain, to secure, and to purchase insurance, and who exactly will pay for it? Tax dollars?	The costs are not known at this time, since a design does not yet exist. An engineering feasibility study is the next step for a Community Path, and that would provide some cost estimates. Most of the costs of design and construction would come from external sources and not from the Town. Insurance generally falls under a town's general insurance policy, and lawsuits by users are uncommon. Maintenance costs would be covered by either the Town or the DCR.

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Bruce MacKinnon	mackinnbruce@gmail.com	Like I mentioned this forum was a bit intimidating. I am all for the path in Belmont, but based on how this has been presented and how we the Channing road residents have been targeted by the Belmont Citizens Forum and CPAC as anti-community path which we are not but i am against a path on a live rail doing 60mph - 15 plus times a day. Any barrier is not conducive to a walker, jogger, biker, or walking with a stroller - please take a walk on the rail to see what it looks, sounds, and feels like.	This Forum was designed to allow all abutters to speak, and this format was specifically requested by some of the Channing Road residents on CPAC. People could provide feedback both written and verbal, if speaking at the microphone did not suit them. We have responded to all comments. The CPAC has not targeted anyone as being anti-path. There are no route options being presented that are on a live rail. Any route options adjacent to the Fitchburg Line would be physically separated from the tracks by a safety barricade. The CPAC has walked the area behind Channing Road on multiple occasions and also organized bike rides on the new trail to Alewife which abuts the active Fitchburg Line. These events have all taken place while trains have gone by.
Tony Tobio (Underwood Street)		I would like to see the bike lane on Underwood Street moved to the other side of the road, and use the clay pit pond area as a connector out to Concord Ave. It would be a lot less expensive, and is safe.	Thank you for the suggestion to use the Clay Pit Pond area parallel to Underwood Street. That is currently under consideration.
Christy Lawrence	Christylawrence@yahoo.com	I am particularly interested in connecting the Waverley area with Belmont Center to travel safely with children to and from both areas. An off-road path is necessary for safety.	Yes, off-road trail segments are being considered in this area, and the connection from Waverley to Belmont Center is an important piece.
Jane MacKinnon	flavin_j@yahoo.com	Strongly against the bike path behind my house. I feel it is unsafe for my kids and I may lose my privacy. I just feel there are other options as to put the bike path.	Thank you for the suggestion. We are currently considering multiple route options. Safety has been discussed at length, and that is why CPAC has responded to the desire for various wall and fence options between the trail and homes.
Ann Tierney	amtierney@yahoo.com	The Belmont Community Path Questionnaire Survey promised that I would be connected to town facilities and businesses. Concord Road trail fulfills this promise. Question #5 refers to Fresh Pond Path as off-road on survey. 90% statistics are quoted frequently as being in favor of off-road path because of question #5 listing Fresh Pond as off-road.	The questionnaire was intended to gauge interest, and there were no promises in that questionnaire. All the routes under consideration would connect to some Town facilities and businesses. No routes can connect to all of them. The Fresh Pond paths refer to the off-road paths around the pond, not the cycle tracks on Concord Ave.
Chris Porter	cdptrans@gmail.com	I support an off-road trail as much as possible. If short segments of on-road connectors are needed, ok, but its not worth spending lot of money on on-road improvements that only get as a marginal benefit over existing conditions. Lets work to get the funding and do it right.	Thank you for your suggestion. Some routes are more eligible for external funding than others. This is something that would be evaluated as more information becomes available and through an engineering feasibility study.
Marco Elia	marcoit@hotmail.com	Concern over parking from other communities. Other towns can come use Belmont Parks and park wherever theres a spot, but we can't in Cambridge (Fresh Pond) where you need resident stickers.	Parking restrictions could be imposed if needed to address this concern. Belmont has public parking on all its public streets and lots. Other towns have their own parking policies that Belmont does not have authority over. Community Path users in Belmont would likely be primarily residents who would walk or bike to the path, therefore not requiring car parking near the trail.
Mimmo Elia (9 A Street)	mimmo.elia@gmail.com	Would a direct vote by all the potential abutters be a feasible step to take? A FORMAL VOTE. The section of track on the West side has much higher speed train traffic. (Should be looked at more carefully for safety and noise to the path)	Thank you for the suggestion. We will keep this in mind. The speed of trains on the tracks west of Belmont Center depends on whether the train is stopping in Waverley, in which case the speed is actually lower than elsewhere in Town.
Judith Ananian Sarno	judithas30@comcast.net	Please reconsider the south-side options behind school.	We have pursued this option. The school departments have expressed concerns about giving up land for such a path route, since these lands are already used for pre-existing purposes. The school departments also indicated that future renovations may limit use of the land for a Community Path or require a Community Path to be re-routed elsewhere.
Erica Elia (9 A Street)	elee986@gmail.com	Please add me to your email chain regarding future events. You need to look at the noise of being right next to the train when it travels at high speeds. I can't imagine people would enjoy walking, running with children at those sounds.	The train noise is a valid concern. The CPAC has discussed ways to mitigate this with a proper safety-barricade design that includes sound dampening. Compared to roadway noise, the train noise would actually be much less frequent and less of a concern. The noise could be addressed by proper design of a barricade.
Kathleen Cowing	mrs.cowing@gmail.com	I have grave concerns regarding the proposed location along the live rail. I do not oppose the path, but I strongly oppose the live rail location. The path is a massive violation of the privacy to abutters. It also provides a direct link to those with criminal intent directly into the Winn Brook neighborhood already suffering from car-break and other property crimes. Finally, a path along the live rail is not one that I, as a resident, could never utilize due to major safety concerns as well as noise in such proximity to commuter rail trains. It is far too loud and disturbing to ever consider walking with my daughter in her stroller.	Thank you for your comments. We have discussed all of these topics. You could review the CPAC minutes to study these previous discussions. Also, the CPAC is not proposing any trails on the live rail. We are only proposing routes adjacent to the rail, and those that would be separated from the tracks by a properly-designed safety barricade. Since no such barricades exist in many places in Belmont, this could be an opportunity to improve safety by adding such a safety fence.

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Debora Hoffman	deboraruthhoffman@gmail.com	I want to see an off-road path. If Channing Road is a barrier, would it be possible to run the off road path on the south side of the High School campus?	We have pursued these various options. The school departments have expressed general concerns about giving up land for such a path route. The school departments indicated that future renovations may also limit use of the land for a Community Path or require a Community Path to be re-routed elsewhere.
Louisa Lund (Snake Hill Rd)	louisa.lund@gmail.com	I have two concerns I'd like addressed if 2D is chosen : 1) privacy (would run by my back yard) 2) Safety at the crossing of Pleasant Street and end of Snake Hill -- perhaps a traffic light here? A better and safer way to cross Pleasant (on foot or bike) would a a benefit to Snake Hill residents (in my opinion -- I can't speak for the whole road.)	All of these privacy concerns have been addressed through fencing, walls, vegetation, landscaping, and other mitigation measures offered by CPAC. A traffic light at any crossing of Pleasant Street is a good suggestion and might be required. We will take into consideration how a crossing there could also benefit the Snake Hill neighborhood.