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1. Overview

The Cochituate Rail Trail Task Force was established by the Natick Board of Selectmen on September 25, 2006 with three primary goals:

- a. Recommend whether to pursue acquisition of the CSX Right-of-Way (ROW)
- b. Advise the town on matters relating to the acquisition of the ROW
- c. Advise the town on a process to establish a potential Rail Trail

The Selectmen explicitly requested the Task Force to conduct outreach to the abutters of the proposed rail trail, and to identify and document their concerns in order to assist the Board with its decisions on the project. In its Preliminary Report to the Board of Selectmen, dated November 16, 2006, the Task Force proposed that abutters' concerns and recommendations be incorporated as early as possible into the project evaluation. The specific elements of planned work regarding abutters were *Outreach, Education, Follow Through* and *Communication*.

Starting in December 2006/January 2007, the Task Force conducted outreach to abutters to learn their concerns first hand, and has assembled its findings into this report. Education, Follow Through and Communication are addressed in this report, but will continue throughout the project.

Summary

- In general, there appears to be support for a multi-use recreational and transportation trail along the CSX right-of-way, with the majority of surveyed residential and commercial abutters indicating frequent or occasional usage.
- There are also residential abutters and at least one business owner who are opposed to development of a rail trail.

- Among both supporters and opponents, there are specific concerns that must be taken into account as the project is designed and developed, including but not limited to safety, privacy, capacity, operating conditions and costs.
- The level of interest and concern warrant a continued process of outreach and inclusion to ensure that the process moves forward with ample notification and opportunities for community input.

Disclaimers

- While the Task Force made a concerted effort to reach all residential and commercial abutters of the proposed rail trail, there are certain to be residents and businesses whom we were not successful in contacting, and/or abutters whose opposition or support for this project is contingent on specific issues, or abutters who will want an additional opportunity to express a view on this topic.
- Subsequent to the outreach and research that formed the basis for this report, and after the report was first provided to the Selectmen on June 14, 2007, the Selectmen and Task Force discussed a mass transit option for the Right-of-Way. This alternative was not presented to abutters during the outreach phase, although some respondents to the employee survey cited mass transit as a desirable option. Should the Town further explore a mass transit use of the ROW, subsequent abutter outreach will be a necessary early step in this process.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this research were as follows

- a. Identify abutter concerns and issues
- b. Produce an objective and timely report to assist the decision making process

The proposed use of this information is to guide Town boards and committees as this project develops and potentially moves forward, and to ensure that abutters know that their concerns have been documented and will be incorporated into the process. The information obtained through the development of this report is of significant value in deciding whether and how to proceed, and/or in planning and designing the project.

3. Process

The process outline was as follows:

- a. Quantify and identify abutters to the right-of-way
- b. Develop a questionnaire and interview process for residential and commercial abutters
- c. Mail a questionnaire to residential abutters to assess interest, awareness, support, potential usage and specific concerns
- d. Conduct meetings and informational sessions to explain the rail trail background and proposal, and collect information from abutters
- e. Outreach to commercial abutters to identify their concerns
- f. Field a web or paper survey to identify concerns and likely usage by employees
- g. Create a report to represent the information collected through this process

The Task Force researched abutter outreach for rail trail projects in the nearby communities of Framingham and in Sudbury. We modeled our efforts on those projects that featured early and focused abutter outreach, and where an objective presentation of facts was accompanied by an invitation to comment and participate. The Task Force voted to establish an Abutter Subcommittee, including members Karla Sangrey, Peter Henry, John Moran and Fred Witte (who upon his appointment as Town Comptroller subsequently resigned from the Task Force, on advice of Town Counsel). Other members of the Task Force also provided extensive assistance, as did members of the Town Administration and the GIS division of the Public Works department.

A. Quantify and identify abutters.

In order to quantify abutters, the task force utilized the Town's GIS and assessor databases to generate maps and create listings of all of the land parcels in the vicinity of the ROW. The lists of parcels were sorted by distance from the ROW. The following findings were made:

Parcels within 1/4-mile:	1280
Parcels within 1/8-mile:	613
Parcels within 300-feet:	344
Direct abutters:	123

In the interest of focusing on true abutters, we used the list of 123 parcels, then consolidated by ownership, and assigned them to either residential or business classes depending on information from the assessors database. An attempt to reach out to the more extensive list of indirect abutters was considered, but deferred until broader community outreach is underway. The Task Force chose to do the best job possible with residents and businesses who would be most affected by a rail trail.

B. Develop a questionnaire and interview process

The Task Force created questionnaires appropriate to likely residential and commercial concerns, along with an outline for commercial abutter interviews. The residential questionnaire was provided to the Selectmen as a draft, and to several Natick residents with expertise in primary research and survey design. It is provided in this report as Appendix A.

C. Mail a questionnaire to residential abutters

Using the assessor database, we mailed 63 questionnaires to residential abutters, accompanied by a cover letter from the Town Administrator and the Chair of the Board of Selectmen, and received 32 responses. The letter and questionnaire are provided as Appendix A. The questionnaire also included an invitation to an abutter outreach meeting on January 31, 2007. Follow up phone calls were then made to all residential abutters for whom phone numbers were listed, to encourage them to participate in the survey and the informational meeting. Responses to the Questionnaire are summarized in section 4 (Residential Findings), and verbatim comments from the residential abutter survey are provided as Appendix C.

D. Conduct meetings and informational sessions

An initial meeting on January 31, 2007 included about 50 participants, of which about half were abutters. This meeting included a large group presentation/Q&A period, and smaller breakout sessions to elicit comments and concerns from all individuals present. Abutters who expressed an

interest in information meetings, but who could not attend the January 31 event, were invited to two subsequent sessions (February 22 and March 1), in which three additional abutters participated. The comments and concerns from the January 31 residential abutter meeting are summarized in Appendix B.

E. Outreach to commercial abutters

Using a combination of assessor data and on-site research, members of the Task Force called and met with commercial abutters to determine how best to identify their concerns, and whether and how there was a sufficient pool of employees to warrant an employee survey. The interview guide for commercial abutters is provided as Appendix D.

F. Field a web or paper survey to identify concerns and likely usage by employees

Web or paper surveys, as requested, were provided to companies to administer to their on site employees. This information provided a convenient means to reach hundreds of employees along the proposed rail trail. The questionnaire and results are provided as Appendix E. The results of the employee surveys are summarized in Section 5 (Commercial Findings). The Verbatim Comments from participating employee surveys are provided as Appendix F.

G. Create a report to represent the information collected through this process

As noted, this report is provided as a Draft in order to provide a window for additional abutter comments, as well as to incorporate changes requested by the Board of Selectmen. Additional abutter comments are intended to be incorporated as an additional Appendix, or within the report.

4. Residential Findings

The research suggests majority support for the trail, but a number of residents who are strongly opposed; among both supporters and opponents there were specific concerns about safety, privacy and other issues.

- Most homeowners are somewhat familiar with rail trails and about two-thirds stated that they have used a rail trail before.
- The majority of respondents supported the conversion of the ROW into a multiuse path for “recreation, non-motorized transportation.”
- There was strong support for the variety of potential trail uses suggested. The two suggested uses with the most negative responses were inline skating and dog walking.
- About 2/3 stated that they expect to use the trail at least weekly, or more frequently. The majority stated that they favored the project, but there were also a number who said they were opposed or strongly opposed.
- Both survey respondents who defined themselves as supporters and those opposed indicated that they were “very concerned” about a variety of issues related to the trail. The three issues of highest concern were safety, litter and privacy. These sentiments are supported by the verbatim comments that some respondents provided and are reproduced in the appendix.
- No neighbors indicated an interest in hosting a neighborhood meeting trail, but most indicated they might attend one, and a few abutters did attend meetings on or after January 31, 2007.

Survey results are provided in the following table. Verbatim comments are provided as Appendix C.

Natick Cochituate Rail Trail Task Force – Abutter Report

9/25/2007

Town of Natick - CSX Right-of-Way Neighbor Survey
 Printed 6/12/2007 Updated 2/18/2007
 total surveys returned 32

1. Does your property directly abut the CSX Right-of-Way?

Yes No Not Sure

2. How familiar are you with rail trails?

Not at all somewhat very familiar

3. Have you ever used a rail trail?

Yes No Not Sure

4. What would you like to see happen on the CSX Right-of-Way?

<input type="text" value="25"/>	Multiuse path for recreation, non-motorized transportation
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Path limited to walking
<input type="text" value="5"/>	Nothing
<input type="text" value="0"/>	Residential or commercial use
<input type="text" value="2"/>	Other (same as bike trail in Lexington)

5. If a rail trail is built, how would you like to see it used?

	Yes	No	Don't Care
Running/Jogging	26	4	
Fitness Walking	26	4	
Cycling	25	3	2
Inline skating	16	11	2
Winter use (cross-country ski, snowshoe)	24	4	3
Strollers	20	6	4
Wheelchairs	21	5	5
Parkland	15	5	7
Non-motorized transportation (mall, park, center)	17	9	3
Nature observation	21	4	4
Dog Walking (if leash law enforced, then yes)	13	13	1
Other use (Don't want one; anything)	2	1	1

6. If a rail trail is built, how often would you or people in your household be likely to use it?

Never seldom monthly weekly daily

7. Overall, do you currently favor or oppose a rail trail?

strongly favor somewhat favor not sure somewhat oppose strongly oppose

8. How concerned are you or people in your household about these issues related to a rail trail?

	Not Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Very Concerned
Safety	3	11	18
Litter	3	11	18
Property values	8	9	15
Cost	5	17	10
Access/Parking	9	10	13
Lighting	6	13	13
Environmental	7	14	11
Privacy	3	11	18
Maintenance	5	14	13
Other	1	2	5

*constant police patrols
 high traffic, noise of people
 hangout for teens?
 enforcement of non-motorized transportation only.
 access to lake that is already very polluted.*

9. Are you available to attend a public meeting on Wed Jan 31 at 7pm at Morse Library?

yes no not sure

10. Would you host or attend a neighborhood meeting so we can hear from you and your neighbors?

yes, I can host yes, I can attend no

12. How many people live in your household?

1 2 3 4 5 or more

13. How many children under 18 live in your household?

0 1 2 3 4 or more

5. Commercial Findings

About half of the businesses that abut the ROW have participated in the development of this report. Response is generally favorable, with some specific concerns and feedback. Two major employers, the Natick Soldier Systems Center and Boston Scientific, have facilitated employee participation in a web-based survey. The employee surveys have provided information on the percentage of employees who may use the trail for commuting and/or recreation; the number of employees who would consider volunteering to help with trail maintenance, and the various areas of concern. Many employees also provided specific comments, which are reprinted verbatim as Appendix F. Finally, many employees also provided contact information in order to be kept informed about this project.

Business Owner Comments and Concerns

- Commercial property owner disappointed that Town spent money on Mechanic Street property when other property under their ownership, and along ROW, could have been rented to Town. Expressed concern with the environmental condition of the lots adjacent to the ROW. Expressed concern that the trail would further stress the parking at this business area where already many unauthorized nearby residents park. Expressed concern with existing stockpile of railroad ties near property. Believes tenant businesses are in fear of the project because they believe there will be safety concerns.
- Day Care center needs the trail for clients; will provide safe mode of travel to town common for accompanied children; trail should be open year round; trail must be clean and safe; parking is already an issue at the facility and should not be made worse; owner will consider future financial support
- Small Home Improvement company has heard a lot about it and favors the trail, will support it; is concerned about parking and unauthorized use of their dumpster
- Commercial and residential development owner is supportive, but is concerned about lack of parking and potential safety issues; wants lighting where and when needed; wants to ensure there is adequate security
- Commercial development owner has heard good things about rail trails and wants to support it as it is built; will promote it as an amenity to future tenants
- Commercial development owner supports it in concept, but is already burdened by trespassers coming from or through the State Park who litter and/or vandalize.

Employee Survey Response

Of the approximately 1300 employees at the Natick Labs (Soldier Systems Center), 599 (about 46%) participated in a web-based survey over a 2 week period in May, 2007. Of the approximately 1000 employees at Boston Scientific, 205 (about 20%) had participated as of June 12, 2007. The greater the percentage response, the more representative the survey results are of the total employee base; however, this report does not seek to portray the results of either survey as representative of all employees at either location.

The results were analyzed on the basis of both total employee respondents at both organizations, and employees who live in Natick.

The survey suggests a broad level of interest in, and potential usage of the facility. Natick residents who work at the two organizations were more favorably disposed towards a rail trail, more likely to use it for commuting and recreation, and were more likely to indicate that they would volunteer to maintain a trail.

Familiarity

- Among all respondents, 24% of Natick Labs respondents and 37% of BSCI respondents were Very Familiar with rail trails; 41% from both organizations were Somewhat Familiar
- Among Natick resident employees, 30% of Natick Labs respondents and 44% of BSCI respondents were Very Familiar with rail trails; 47% of Natick Labs respondents and 41% of BSCI respondents were Somewhat Familiar

Past usage

- Among all respondents, 48% of Natick Labs respondents and 67% of BSCI respondents have used a rail trail
- Among Natick resident employees, 51% of Natick Labs respondents and 64% of BSCI respondents have used a rail trail

Use of Right-of-Way

- Among all respondents, 84% of Natick Labs respondents and 91% of BSCI respondents would like to see a “multiuse path for recreation, non-motorized transportation, etc.”
- Among Natick resident employees, 88% of Natick Labs respondents and 90% of BSCI respondents would like to see a “multiuse path for recreation, non-motorized transportation, etc.”

Concerns

- Safety, litter, environmental, maintenance, access and lighting were the areas where respondents were most likely to indicate they were “very concerned”

Commuter usage

- Among all respondents, 16% of Natick Labs and 18% of Boston Scientific respondents indicated they would use a rail trail for frequent commuting; 24% of Natick Labs and 27% of Boston Scientific respondents indicated they would use a rail trail for occasional commuting
- Among Natick resident employees, 24% of Natick Labs and 41% of Boston Scientific respondents indicated they would use a rail trail for frequent commuting; 36% of Natick Labs and 41% of Boston Scientific respondents indicated they would use a rail trail for occasional commuting

Recreational usage

- Among all respondents, 39% of Natick Labs and 53% of Boston Scientific respondents indicated they would use a rail trail for frequent recreation or exercise; 46% of Natick Labs and 42% of BSCI respondents indicated they would use a rail trail for occasional recreation or exercise
- Among Natick resident employees, 55% of Natick Labs and 64% of Boston Scientific respondents indicated they would use a rail trail for frequent recreation or exercise; 38% of Natick Labs and 33% of Boston Scientific respondents indicated they would use a rail trail for occasional recreation or exercise

Types of Usage

All employees:

- 55% of Natick Labs and 68% of Boston Scientific respondents indicated they would bicycle;
- 72% of Natick Labs and 74% of Boston Scientific respondents indicated they would walk;
- 40% of Natick Labs and 49% of Boston Scientific respondents indicated they would run or jog

Natick resident employees:

- 69% of Natick Labs and 97% of Boston Scientific respondents indicated they would bicycle;
- 76% of Natick Labs and 81% of Boston Scientific respondents indicated they would walk;
- 52% of Natick Labs and 70% of Boston Scientific respondents indicated they would run or jog

Interest in volunteering

- Among all respondents, 30% of Natick Labs and 28% of Boston Scientific respondents indicated they would consider volunteering to help maintain the trail
- Among Natick resident employees, 42% of Natick Labs and 33% of Boston Scientific respondents indicated they would consider volunteering to help maintain the trail

6. Recommendations

The Task Force recommends that:

- a. Abutter issues and responses raised through the development of this report be addressed throughout the project's continued evaluation and decision making process
- b. That abutter concerns and questions be addressed through communication and outreach
- c. Abutters are invited to participate in the design process
- d. Abutters be invited to respond to this report and other documents related to the ROW
- e. Physical barriers to the ROW be installed as appropriate once rails and ties are removed, to reduce illegal dumping and the use of motorized off-road vehicles

7. Next Steps

The information contained within this report may be used in the following ways:

- Integrate the abutters' concerns into a conceptual design process to ensure that lighting, privacy, security, trail surface and other issues are addressed, and alternatives presented for discussion and decision;
- In summary form as an element of community outreach, to report the concerns and issues that have been raised;
- To assist in the development of a security plan, alone or in concert with a design process, along with input from the Town's Public Safety departments and in coordination with State agencies (e.g. Department of Conservation and Recreation);

- As input into development of a Maintenance Plan to ensure that stewardship is adequately addressed;
- As an element of applications for grants and other outside funding, to demonstrate the likely volume of usage for commuting and recreation.

8. Appendix

- A. Residential abutter cover letter and questionnaire
- B. Summary of residential comments and concerns
- C. Verbatim comments from residential survey
- D. Sample commercial interview guide
- E. Employee web questionnaire and results
- F. Verbatim comments from employee survey

Appendix A: residential abutter questionnaire

[printed on town letterhead]

January 16, 2007

Dear Neighbor,

As you may have heard or read, the Town of Natick is considering the acquisition of the recently abandoned CSX Saxonville Branch Railroad Right-of-Way for conversion to a recreational path, or “Rail Trail.” The 2½ mile Natick section runs from Natick Center, past the Natick Labs, across Route 9, alongside Lake Cochituate and the State Park, and crosses Route 30 at the Framingham line. We are reaching out to residents and businesses that are next to or near the railroad tracks to get their input before the Town makes a decision on this project.

In September 2006, the Board of Selectmen established a volunteer Task Force to study this issue and make recommendations to the Town. Outreach to neighbors is an essential job of the Task Force. We would be grateful for your participation in the enclosed survey, and for your participation at one or more community meetings. The first meeting is scheduled for 7:00 PM on Wednesday, January 31 at the Morse Institute Library. If you would like to be notified about additional neighborhood meetings, please provide your contact information on the questionnaire.

To learn more about the work of the Task Force, and to get answers to frequently asked questions about rail trails, please visit the Task Force web page at <http://natickma.gov/crt>. Their November 2006 Preliminary Report is included, which includes a map of the Right-of-Way.

Also, for your information, Natick Town Meeting voted on December 19th to approve the expenditure of funds that were provided specifically for this project by the owners of the Natick Mall. This will enable the Town to identify potential environmental, legal and other issues with the CSX Right-of-Way so that the Town can better negotiate with the owner.

It is very important that we know your ideas and concerns as the Town considers its options for the right-of-way. Please complete and return the enclosed questionnaire, and please consider attending the January 31st meeting as well. If you have any questions, please contact the Selectmen at (508) 647-6410, write to us at 13 East Central Street in Natick, or email crt@natickma.org. We thank you for your assistance and participation.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Hughes
Chairman, Board of Selectmen

Phil Lemnios
Town Administrator

[questionnaire]

Thank you for participating in this survey of Natick residents who live near the CSX Saxonville Branch Right-of-Way. We hope to get your input as the Town determines the future of this property. This survey is being sent to households in close proximity to the CSX Right-of-Way. The information we get back will help the Town identify and address the issues that are important to you. **Participation is voluntary.**

Please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope, or mail it to CRT Survey, c/o Board of Selectmen, 13 East Central Street Natick MA 01760, by **January 27, 2007**. Thank you again!

1. Does your property directly abut the CSX Right-of-Way? *(please check one)*

- yes no not sure

2. How familiar are you with rail trails? *(please check one)*

- not at all somewhat very familiar

3. Have you ever used a rail trail? *(please check one)*

- yes no not sure

4. What would you like to see happen on the CSX Right-of-Way? *(please check one)*

- Multiuse path for recreation, non-motorized transportation, etc.
 Path limited to _____ use
 Nothing
 Residential or commercial use
 other, please specify _____

5. If a rail trail is built, how would you like to see it used? *(please check only one box for each use)*

Use	Yes	No	Don't Care
Running/Jogging	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fitness walking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inline skating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Winter use (cross-country ski, snowshoe)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strollers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wheelchairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parkland	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-motorized transportation (to Natick Center, State Park, Natick Mall, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nature observation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dog walking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other use: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. If a rail trail is built, how often would you or people in your household be likely to use it? *(please check one)*

- never seldom monthly weekly daily

7. Overall, do you currently favor or oppose a rail trail? *(please check one)*

- strongly favor somewhat favor not sure somewhat oppose strongly oppose

8. How concerned are you or people in your household about these issues related to a rail trail?

(Please check only one box for each issue)

Issue	Not concerned	Somewhat concerned	Very concerned
Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Litter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Property values	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access/parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Privacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Are you available to attend a public meeting on Wednesday, January 31 at 7:00 PM at the Morse Institute Library to share your ideas and concerns? *(please check one)*

- yes no not sure

10. Would you host or attend a neighborhood meeting so we can hear from you and your neighbors?

(please check all that apply; if you can host or attend, please complete question 11)

- yes, I can host yes, I can attend no

11. Optional: please provide your name, address, phone or email if you want to receive updates.

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

12. How many people live in your household? *(please check one)*

- 1 2 3 4 5 or more

13. How many children under age 18 live in your household? *(please check one)*

- 0 1 2 3 4 or more

14. Optional: any other comments you would like to share on this subject *(or use additional sheet)*

Thank you for your time! Please return questionnaire in the enclosed envelope (or mail to CRT Survey, c/o Board of Selectmen, 13 East Central Street, Natick MA 01760) by January 27, 2007.

Appendix B: Summary of residential comments and concerns (January 31, 2007 Abutter Meeting)**PRIVACY**

- How will access to trail be controlled (need to prevent access via private property)
- A balance should be made between allowing abutter access while providing adequate privacy

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- Concerns regarding lake water quality with increased access/usage
- Litter; adequate trash receptacles needed
- Will heavy usage of right-of-way and/or installation of fencing disrupt existing movement of wildlife?

SAFETY/SECURITY FOR NEIGHBORS

- Need to prevent parking on neighborhood roads (see design issues)
- Concerns regarding trail area being attractive for youth parties
- What will the police presence be?
- Should a hot line be considered to report problems?
- Design must look case-by-case at trail relationship to abutters – are they at grade, below grade?
How to provide adequate privacy and security?

SAFETY FOR TRAIL USERS

- Should call boxes be considered?
- What will police presence be?

DESIGN ISSUES

- Would the trail be lit? Pros and cons
- Need to provide adequate parking/good access in designated areas to prevent parking on, for instance, dead end roads
- The construction process needs to be respectful of neighbors (noise, duration, etc.)
- Concerns that the most southerly was not included in the abandonment; this segment is critical to complete the project objectives and to avoid trail users finding inappropriate shortcuts to get to Natick Center and T station.
- Need to prevent commuter parking at 11 Mechanic Street site
- Design issues to prevent access through private property – fencing, shrubbery, etc. as well as signage should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis
- Should there be a ramp at Loker Street bridge?
- Take into consideration impact on movement of wildlife
- Restrict to non-motorized usage
- Consider restricting use; e.g. no bikes, roller blades. Choice of surface may dictate usage
- Need to ensure adequate safety at road crossings (barriers?)
- Width should be adequate for double strollers to pass
- Accommodate people with disabilities
- Required dogs to be leashed? Enforcement of “scooper” laws?
- Curfew

BENEFITS PERCEIVED BY NEIGHBORS

- Positive experience in other communities
- Easy access to Natick Center and commuter rail
- Connectivity to other trails

MISCELLANEOUS

- Maintenance costs need to be taken into consideration
- Involve Natick Labs and other businesses in design issues, possible funding sources, etc.
- Will the cost of this project jeopardize other important community objectives, which may be essential vs. this being desirable (i.e. new high school)?
- Will trail usage result in increased traffic on Route 27?
- Problem exists with illegal dumping on right-of-way; maybe trail development and usage will stop this problem
- What is the anticipated effect on property values?
- Frequent use by public may diminish current use of right-of-way by loiterers, homeless.

Appendix C: Verbatim comments from residential survey

1. We don't want this to be an easier access to underage drinking, parties, and drug dealing, etc.
2. As you can see [from survey responses] I am strongly opposed to the rail trail. The trail would be directly behind my home and I (we) are very concerned that this trail will interrupt our privacy, view of the lake and well being!
3. It is going to be a beautiful recreation pass along lake and parks. Can't wait until this dream comes true. Thanks to all enthusiasts!
4. If the spur to the Natick Mall is opened, there absolutely cannot be an on grade crossing over Speen Street.
5. We're concerned that the rail trail may not have access to Natick Center and T station (pg 3 of the report). This seems like a critical part of the trail.
6. One of our concerns is the destruction of the natural settings and disruption of wildlife. We have had the privilege of seeing deer, wild turkey and many other animals that travel to and from the lake area. There has been numerous sightings of a coyote traveling the ROW. Fencing would potentially prevent them from traveling freely.

A few more of our concerns are:

- Why does it say on page 7 section D of the report {possible multi use, light rail, mass transit, shuttle} if it is going to be non-motorized? We are extremely concerned about this turning into some type of transportation at some point in time if paved.
- The noise coming from the CRT while we are trying to sit and relax in our backyard, particularly on the weekends.
- Our own access to the ROW. If it was decided there was going to be a fence, we would want to still be able to get to the ROW from our yard.
- The dangers of being connected to the Mall allows residents to travel to it, but allows anyone at anytime to venture down it to our neighborhood. A possible connection to Cochituate State Park due to the many visitors coming in and being brought in by bus from other areas. This opens up a lot of opportunity to people who would not necessarily come to our rail trail and to be on it. This makes us worry about our children's safety since the trail has open access at the road crossings in our neighborhood.
- As I noted on the questionnaire, we are concerned about the natural settings and wildlife being disturbed in our general area. There will no doubt be many work trucks traveling in and out, then many people traveling in and out.

We are a family that enjoys outdoors, nature, bicycling, and walks. One of the reasons why we bought this home was the quiet dead end street, private yard, and quaint town, that was 13 years ago. It seems now we are being expected to sacrifice our quiet setting we chose to other towns, commuters and the 350 or so condo residents that will be living right next to (or connected to) the trail. This is much different than what I expected when I first heard of the trail many years ago.

In the report it notes that the primary source for maintenance, other than the municipal budget, will **likely** be fundraising efforts conducted by a Friends group. What if there is no fundraising? Will our tax money ultimately be going towards this? Bringing up the subject of the possible 1,025 or so condo units within the next 5 years and **our property** taxes not being enough revenue to provide services for more people.

7. Not like lighting near us.
8. The clean up of the railroad blight, and how it is cleaned up.
9. Our biggest concerns are safety – both for those using the trail and for those abutting the trail – and access/parking. It is critical that users access the trail only at designated public access points and not through residents' private property and that neighborhoods do not become parking lots for users' cars.
10. Having the rail trail essentially opens up my backyard to a host of strangers. I am a retired person who lives alone. Increasing the traffic in my very quiet neighborhood puts my safety at risk.

Appendix D: commercial interview guide**CRT Task Force**

Commercial abutter outreach process

3/1/07 draft

- Identify companies
 - Identify owner or key contact person
 - Own or Rent
 - Number of employees
 - Type of business
 - Determine interest in participating in meeting/presentation/interview
 - Preferred format:
 - In person
 - Phone
 - Web survey
 - Town goals:
 - Inform abutters
 - Identify concerns
 - Assess support and interest
 - Design to address concerns
 - Accurately convey findings to town boards
 - Keep abutters informed about process
 - Assign volunteer
 - Schedule meeting
 - Collect information
 - Assemble and report findings
-

Hello,

My name is _____ and I am a volunteer for the Town of Natick. My committee is working on a potential rail trail project along the railroad right-of-way that is near your business. We are contacting businesses such as yours to get some information and input from you and your employees. This information will be used to help the town decide whether to proceed with this project, and to give you the opportunity to participate with planning if the project goes forward.

I have a few questions to ask you now, if you have a few minutes:

1. Approximately how many different businesses are located at this location?
2. Approximately how many employees work at this location?
3. If we were to survey your employees to determine their interest in using a rail trail, would it be better to have a meeting lasting less than one hour, a paper survey or an internet survey?
4. [if a meeting] The meeting can be at your business during working hours, or at a town building such as the library or town hall during evening hours. Which would be preferable?

Key survey questions

- Type of business
- Number of employees
- Awareness of rail trails
- Interest in using a rail trail
- Purpose of using it: commute, recreation, shopping/errands
- Frequency of use
- Concerns/issues
- Overall support
- Other comments
- Add to contact list?

Appendix E: Employee web questionnaire and results (All employees)

Natick Labs Survey Summary

Question 1

How familiar are you with rail trails?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very familiar	24.04%	144
Somewhat familiar	41.24%	247
Not familiar	34.72%	208
<i>answered question</i>		599
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Question 2

Have you ever used a rail trail?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	47.98%	285
No	37.88%	225
Not sure	14.14%	84
<i>answered question</i>		594
<i>skipped question</i>		5

Question 3

What would you like to see happen on the CSX Right-of-Way?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Multiuse path for recreation, non-motorized transportation, etc.	83.55%	457
Residential or commercial use	4.75%	26
Nothing	7.13%	39
Other (please specify)	4.57%	25
<i>answered question</i>		547
<i>skipped question</i>		52

Question 4

How concerned are you about these issues related to a rail trail?				
answer options	Not concerned	Some concern	Very concerned	Response Count
Safety	118	190	212	520
Litter	74	245	201	520
Cost	167	220	133	520
Access/parking	148	244	128	520
Lighting	156	220	144	520
Environmental	136	194	190	520
Privacy	227	216	77	520
Maintenance	69	283	168	520
<i>answered question</i>				520
<i>skipped question</i>				79

Question 5

Are there other issues not listed above about which you have a concern? If so, please briefly describe:	
answer options	Response Count
	69
<i>answered question</i>	69
<i>skipped question</i>	530

Question 6

If a rail trail was built, how often would you be likely to use it for commuting to and from work?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Frequently	16.44%	85
Occasionally	24.18%	125
Seldom or never	59.38%	307
<i>answered question</i>		517
<i>skipped question</i>		82

Question 7

If a rail trail was built, how often would you be likely to use it for recreation or exercise?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Frequently	39.15%	202
Occasionally	45.93%	237
Seldom or never	14.92%	77
<i>answered question</i>		516
<i>skipped question</i>		83

Question 8

How would you use the rail trail?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Bicycle	55.11%	275
Walk	72.34%	361
Run/jog	40.48%	202
Other (please specify)	9.42%	47
<i>answered question</i>		499
<i>skipped question</i>		100

Question 9

Would you consider volunteering to help maintain the rail trail?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	29.63%	152
No	30.02%	154
Not sure	39.18%	201
Other (please specify)	1.17%	6
<i>answered question</i>		513
<i>skipped question</i>		86

Other (please specify)
Depends on how useful it was for commuting. I ride my bike from Franklin
Would try but cannot commit due to other commitments
rail trail near where I live
Occasional help in clean up
Possibly - light maintenance like picking up litter, etc.
if i have time

Question 10

What community do you live in?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Natick	25.39%	130
Framingham	7.42%	38
Wellesley	0.78%	4
Wayland	0.78%	4
Newton	1.37%	7
Other (please specify)	64.26%	329
<i>answered question</i>		512
<i>skipped question</i>		87

Boston Scientific Survey Summary

Question 1

How familiar are you with rail trails?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very familiar	37.07%	76
Somewhat familiar	41.46%	85
Not familiar	21.46%	44
<i>answered question</i>		205
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Question 2

Have you ever used a rail trail?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	67.32%	138
No	24.39%	50
Not sure	8.29%	17
<i>answered question</i>		205
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Question 3

What would you like to see happen on the CSX Right-of-Way?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Multiuse path for recreation, non-motorized transportation, etc.	90.82%	178
Residential or commercial use	5.10%	10
Nothing	3.57%	7
Other (please specify)	0.51%	1
<i>answered question</i>		196
<i>skipped question</i>		9

Question 4

How concerned are you about these issues related to a rail trail?				
answer options	Not concerned	Some concern	Very concerned	Response Count
Safety	61	59	72	192
Litter	41	97	54	192
Cost	80	98	14	192
Access/parking	70	81	41	192
Lighting	64	75	53	192
Environmental	56	76	60	192
Privacy	118	66	8	192
Maintenance	33	103	56	192
<i>answered question</i>				192
<i>skipped question</i>				13

Question 5

Are there other issues not listed above about which you have a concern? If so, please briefly describe:	
answer options	Response Count
	17
<i>answered question</i>	17
<i>skipped question</i>	188

Question 6

If a rail trail was built, how often would you be likely to use it for commuting to and from work?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Frequently	17.71%	34
Occasionally	26.56%	51
Seldom or never	55.73%	107
<i>answered question</i>		192
<i>skipped question</i>		13

Question 7

If a rail trail was built, how often would you be likely to use it for recreation or exercise?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Frequently	53.40%	102
Occasionally	41.88%	80
Seldom or never	4.71%	9
<i>answered question</i>		191
<i>skipped question</i>		14

Question 8

How would you use the rail trail?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Bicycle	67.91%	127
Walk	73.80%	138
Run/jog	49.20%	92
Other (please specify)	8.02%	15
<i>answered question</i>		187
<i>skipped question</i>		18

Question 9

Would you consider volunteering to help maintain the rail trail?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	28.27%	54
No	30.37%	58
Not sure	40.84%	78
Other (please specify)	0.52%	1
<i>answered question</i>		191
<i>skipped question</i>		14

Question 10

What community do you live in?		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Natick	20.63%	39
Framingham	12.17%	23
Wellesley	2.12%	4
Wayland	0.00%	0
Newton	2.12%	4
Other (please specify)	62.96%	119
<i>answered question</i>		189
<i>skipped question</i>		16

Appendix F: Verbatim comments from employee survey

[Natick Soldier Systems Center] Question 4. Are there other issues not listed above about which you have a concern? If so, please briefly describe.

1. On the environmental issue, anything that will reduce carbon pollution (global warming) and biking or walking is one way, gets my vote.
2. "Build it and they will come." I have been on rail trails still under construction and the use is already high!!! Rail trails are wonderful.
3. A non-paved surface is preferred -- less impact on the joints
4. Access to facilities that provide food/refreshments near the rail trail, road crossing safety, benches
5. Allocation of resources to support the trail with community policing - personnel or electronic surveillance such as CCTV.
6. As long as the old railroad tracks are removed, it will be a great improvement for the intersection of Kansas St. and RT 27.
7. Clear markings for directions.
8. Connections/links to network of such trails. It would be nice if the trails let you get to and from places.
9. Continued maintenance to ensure safety for all.
10. Dog accessible.
11. Ease of use. When the trail crosses intersections appropriate measures need to be installed to ensure right of way with conflicting traffic. This is a shortfall of many rail-trails. Ensure that "rules for use" are posted- who has right of way while on the path etc.
12. Handicapped accessibility
13. Have the presenters ridden the entire length of the Cape Cod Rail Trail and compared the original width and surface with the newer extended width and surface? It's important to prevent the tree roots from damaging the pavement as time goes by.
14. How long would any changes take and what would be the burden of those living/working nearby during construction (if any)?
15. How will the rail trail be maintained; who will pay for its upkeep??
16. I do not know the facts.
17. I guess under the safety category would be making sure motorized vehicles (ATV, small motorcycles and scooters, snowmobiles, etc.) do not use these trails. I know these vehicles already do run (illegally I hope) through the school properties in Natick, seemingly without notice of local authorities.
18. I have a multi-use, including ATV, rail trail crossing/dividing my property in another state. Trespass and noise are primary concerns. In Utah (City Creek canyon) the conflict between bikes and hikers has led to designating certain days as more bike or walker oriented. On local (MA) trails dogs (leash laws), and dog waste, are a concern. For popular trails, parking is often

inadequate. Access to toilets and drinking water should be addressed along the route and/or trail heads.

19. I have some concerns about the use of the trail for criminal activities, as it represents an additional surface transportation mode for criminal traffic.
20. I haven't lived in the area that long so I'm just learning about these things.
21. I just wanted to clarify about how I am "Very Concerned" about Safety. My primary concern is for the safety of rail-trail users at intersections, particularly where the rail closely parallels Rt 27 at its intersection with Lake St and Washington Ave. I regularly walk, run, and bicycle past this intersection, and it is already potentially dangerous even without the additional pedestrian volume that the rail-trail would bring. The combination of the bend in Rt. 27, cars turning right from southbound Rt 27 and left from northbound Rt 27, and merging traffic from Lake St and Washington Ave all contribute to some very complicated traffic dynamics. I am still highly supportive of a rail-trail project, but want to be sure that pedestrian safety is addressed.
22. I think it is important that rail trails connect to each other and to various destinations to facilitate commuting and errands by non-motorized means.
23. I worry about the potential for crime from youth loitering...will the police patrol the trail?
24. If this is a reality. When will it happen?
25. If you explained what this is first, I might be able to answer you.
26. Impact on vehicular traffic when path crosses roads (such as at the Kansas St intersection)
27. Is it going to raise my taxes?
28. Linking with other rail trails.
29. Long term transportation needs and the nation's dependence on fossil fuels will push people towards mass transit. This is a unique line that could potentially serve thousands of people every day, ...or be converted in a short-sighted move to a walking path for a couple dozen.
30. more access to traffic-free places to bike, especially around Natick and Framingham which are notoriously traffic-bound
31. My husband and I are full time employees at the US Army Natick Soldier Center. We live in Holliston and drive separately to work every day. If this rail trail became available for biking we would both ride to work by bicycle on nearly every fair weather day! These trails and connecting roadways with adequate shoulders are essential for the economical growth and environmental survival of this region.
32. My only concerns are that there aren't enough rail trails and they aren't practical for commuting because of walkers/dogs/families/no fast lane. But a couple of feet of asphalt on the side of the road is a better solution for that anyway.
33. Non-motorized use of the trail - bike, pedestrians, dogs (if people pick up after their dogs), safety in that people should feel they won't be attacked & the environment is handled in a conscientious manner.
34. Pets allowed or not?

35. Plan details on how the issues will be addressed. Implementation of the Safety plan is as important or more important than the Safety issue. If implementation is poor, there is no benefit from addressing it.
36. Please include to have it paved for use with roller blades, and have a dividing line to teach kids to stay to the right.
37. Policing. Will the trail be monitored by law enforcement?
38. Putting in a trail will cost the city up front, and a continued cost every year. For the amount you would spend making a trail, spend the same to repair the roads or make repairs to building falling down. Another option would be to use that money to purchase/renovate old building for reuse for industry or residence.
39. Rail trails are the best use of old rail beds they promoter non fossil fuel use of transportation.
40. REST SITES - benches for the elderly or mothers with small children so they safely sit and rest with out impeding the flow of joggers and cyclists.
41. Security of those who use the trail
42. Security. With the rail trail so close to the labs, it could be another access to the area.
43. Should be no lighting that might affect nearby homes. Day use only.
44. Some bike riders are in a hurry, and are not considerate to pedestrians or people on slow walks.
45. Some rail trails are paved and others are not. It is important that this path is a paved path to provide the greatest usability to the community. Paved paths provide the best experience to the greatest number and type of users.
46. The costs vs. the number of LOCAL people using it needs to be recognized prior to any decision being made. No responsibility or additional tax dollars should be put on local residents for something most would not use.
47. The rail head has not yet been set. If this rail trail means infringing upon the rights of our citizens, then I will remain extremely concerned with the success of a venture that will, for the sake of others "recreation convenience", take away rights of others.
48. The trail would cross public streets, at least one (Kansas St.) with significant rush hour traffic. How would trail users be controlled? Pedestrians in MA are as bad as, or worse than, MA drivers are supposed to be. How would they be prevented from further exacerbating traffic problems?
49. There are not, since I wish this rail property to continue to be maintained by the railroad.
50. This survey should have contained an initial purpose and explained what the rail trail is...
51. We should give priory to rail trails and alternative ways of travel (walking, biking). Right now we give priority to the "auto trail" that has each of the above problems as well but to a much greater degree!
52. When will it finally happen!!
53. While I believe that safety for pedestrians and bicycles will increase, because they are away from roads, I do believe that rail trails should be very wide so that people traveling at very different speeds -- pedestrians, joggers, roller-bladers, bicycles -- will be safe from each other.

Regarding the privacy considerations, it is unfortunate that often rich people have great influence in preventing rail trails -- Weston is a good example. Maybe when rail trails are being built, money should be set aside to build fences alongside the properties of concerned abutters. While in my opinion, cost should be no object to improve lives in the community, if we had lower standards for rail trail construction, the chances of a community approving a rail trail might be improved. For instance, if the trail was just hard packed gravel with no lighting or traffic control. The Middlesex path along 135 is great. However, as a bicyclist, I have to say that tar is good!

54. Who is going to pay for it? We are 6 million short in our budget. You fools.
55. Will police patrol it? If not, it will most assuredly be used by dirt bikers who will tear it up and make it look like a gravel pit. It will become difficult to walk on, or ride a bike on, because the stones will be all dug up from the dirt bikes and ATVs. It will become very noisy, and people will be hurt -- both the dirt bikers and innocents who will be hit by them. The noise from the dirt bikes will make your teeth hurt. Do not underestimate the severity of this problem.
56. Yes, why not use this rail line to establish or encourage public transit by providing a commuter spur over to the mall?

[Natick Soldier Systems Center] Question 11 (Optional): if you have any comments, concerns or suggestions, please provide them below.

1. I have lived in this town for more than 20 years and have been waiting for this path to be built for almost all of that time. Let's get this thing done as soon as possible. This will be one of the best projects that Natick can under take to promote (1) physical activity for its citizens and (2) safe pedestrian and bicycle access to the town environment. This bike path will provide easy, direct pedestrian and bicycle access from the commuter rail station in Natick center to the commercial area that includes the Natick Mall. This is a chance for the town to take a relatively cheap and structurally easy step in altering the built-environment to promote physical activity.
2. Press on with effort....I suppose the new administration would desire to have it accommodate a 2007 Cadillac Deville Sedan
3. A lot of people at Natick Labs run/walk/bike at lunchtime and a rail trail would be much safer then being on the road. Also more people would commute to work if they didn't have to worry about being hit by a car. I know I would!
4. A main concern for these trails is safe opportunities for the public
5. A rail trail would be an excellent place to go for a run, walk or ride a bike. If you are looking for volunteers to help maintain it, please let me know.
6. A rail trail is a great way to keep kids off the streets and away from traffic when riding bikes or rollerblading. I have used the rail trail from Bedford to Cambridge more times than I can count...it is a great place to exercise in a safe environment.
7. Again, we only hear about the rail trail when the town needs our input. Otherwise, it's being kept somewhat of a secret. I believe that this is because of the controversy over the rail head. Let's have the "full" story. What's wrong with the property off of Washington Ave? I know about the environmental impact of the Mechanic St parcel, but, there needs to be a better town involvement with this entire decision.

8. As stated in early pages, it would have been nice to have info regarding the rail trail in the initial part of the survey. If information is unknown this survey isn't going to be effective.
9. Can't wait!
10. Comment: Since gas prices are now above \$3.00 and getting higher, the rail trail will give some people the option to ride their bike to work (if they live close enough). I really think this is a good thing.
11. Converting the old rail lines to non-motorized recreational and commuter paths is the best possible scenario. Using the Minuteman Trail as an example it will invigorate the communities and actually reduce litter and encourage better use out of existing trails and parks that adjoin the rail bed.
12. Depending upon needs, it should be developed.
13. Do it!
14. Do not convert this to a rail trail. People can use the existing sidewalks at no expense, and no loss of potential mass transit capability, to the community at large.
15. Every other rail trail I've seen built was met with resistance from abutters but has been a great recreational asset for the community.
16. Get an approved rope swing along the shores of Lake Cochituate and we'll run there every day in the summer! Keep the trestle over route 9.
17. Get her done!!! Talking about this for years, time for action.
18. Go for it!! Any perceived problems or issues are minor and can be handled. The benefits are HUGE.
19. Great idea for opening up community recreational areas. Help keep bikes/joggers/etc out of traffic ways, thus safer.
20. Having the tracks removed from the road and seeing the area cleaned up and maintained would be nice.
21. I am a Natick Labs employee - this is a good idea.
22. I am very much in favor of Natick completing this work. I am somewhat familiar with the rails to trails in CT and RI. Early concerns from neighboring residents regarding safety, privacy, etc. were unfounded. The neighborhoods are very appreciative of the trails.
23. I believe any benefits would out weigh any costs. Environmentally it makes sense especially with the cost of gasoline only to go higher. Providing this alternate means of transportation is like the old saying ... Healthy, wealthy and wise!
24. I do not live in Natick, I only work here. I would use the trail a few times a week for walking/exercise. My only concern would be if it was wide enough for walkers, skateboards and bikes at the same time.
25. I don't know if the plan involves taking up the present rail line, but I would rather see it left in place. Rail seems to be making a come back as both an economically efficient and environmentally sound means of transporting goods and people. Once removed it is very difficult

to re-establish rail lines in built up areas. I think there would be enough space for both a trail and a single rail line. Thank you.

26. I don't know what a rail trail is - so I don't know what my concerns are. Maybe you should define what a rail trail is in the beginning.
27. I frequently walk to Natick Center at lunch time and find that the current CSX line is now littered, unutilized, and a potentially hazardous area. Better utilization of this area would eliminate all of these issues and turn a town liability to a resource that would highlight the positive culture in the town.
28. I fully support the conversion. Have you contacted the Rails to Trails Conservancy (<http://www.railtrails.org/index.html>) for technical and legal advice? They are a great resource. Good luck!
29. I grew up about .9 mile away from an active train, when it's time had passed, the rails became a beautiful walking/bike path by the canal. The River could be seen on the other side. Trash receptacles blended in with the environment, wooden park benches for resting, historic plaques and wild flowers all around. I think it is a great way to keep the pass alive.
30. I grew up in Red Wing, MN which is the origination point of the "Cannon Valley Trail". From it's inception it was a focal point for tourism and recreation throughout the year. It has truly developed into a treasure for the community and region.
31. I had no knowledge of the project before this survey, and I have none now.
32. I have often used the Cape Rail Trail and the Shining Sea Bike Path -- they are great assets.
33. I have used other rail trails in Massachusetts and they provide a safe surface for recreational activities - it encourages people NOT to use the busy roads of the city. It is much safer for kids and families and is a good way to get the community involved in their local environment. I strongly support this system and think it is a good use for this land.
34. I have used rail/trails all over the country...they are great!!
35. I have used the following rail trails: Ashuwillticook, Nashua River, Norwottuck, East Bay Bicycle Path. It would be nice to have one nearby that I can use after work, before commuting home.
36. I live in an area with many rail trails and they are used quite extensively. They are an asset in any community as they provide another venue for people to exercise and maintain their health thus keeping costs on our overburdened health care system down.
37. I live near the ARRT in Marlborough, I use it frequently. Some locations are secluded by nature, and seem like the perfect places to get ambushed / mugged. Coordination with local law enforcement in advance of the project to add random, frequent bicycle patrols is critical to maintain the security...better than springing this on them at the end of the project.
38. I live quite near the Framingham one and would never go through the area unless I was w/a group of people. It is very segregated and times are very different now than even when this project was first talked about. Even lights wouldn't make me feel safer.
39. I lived in Arlington, VA for 6 years. Thousands of people used the trails going through urban, suburban, rural communities. It's great for the fitness of the people of the community. I would

enhance the quality of life and is well worth the investment. It has to be wide enough with divider line and appropriate speed limits posted.

40. I love rail trails. I went to UMass Amherst and really enjoyed the Norwotucket trail. If the trail was ever extended out to Worcester, it is probable that I would occasionally commute on it during the good weather. Otherwise, I like to jog at lunch and would use it for that purpose.
41. I still don't know what a rail trail is and what the plans are for the Natick rail trail. Thank you.
42. I think a rail trail for recreation would be awesome!!!!
43. I think a trail linking public to downtown and areas north of
44. Rte. 27 is excellent way to reduce car traffic to two areas were traffic is already too heavy and parking spaces too few.
45. I think it is a good idea because it gives joggers/walkers and bikers an alternative to walking on busy city streets where they may be at risk due to traffic and traffic increase to allow the joggers/walkers and bikers access to the streets and intersections.
46. I think it's a great idea!
47. I think it's a great idea and would give us Natick employees a reason to get out and exercise more at lunch time.
48. I think the idea of rail trails is great. But we also need bicycle paths throughout a town that allow bicyclists to get places without having to be so close to trucks, busses, and cars. When Route 16 was redone from Wellesley Square to South Natick, and no separate bike path was constructed, that was a great opportunity that was squandered.
49. I think the Rail Trail is a great idea. We have a similar trail in my area called the Blackstone Canal trail. Trails are a great way for recreational exercise and seeing a different side of the community. Good Luck
50. I think this is a great idea that would bring the community together and it would be very sad and reflect poorly on the surrounding area if the project did not go through.
51. I think this will be an excellent means of staying fit.
52. I work at the Army base and exercise daily at lunch.
53. I work in Natick and frequently bike to work. Having part or all of the trip on a rail trail would greatly increase the safety of this trip.
54. I work in Natick and would like a way to "get away" from the office during lunch that doesn't involve getting in the car and driving somewhere. A walking path on the old railroad would be very pleasant, especially not having to deal with roads and traffic.
55. I WOULD BE INTERESTED IN COMMUTING FROM FRAM. (SAXONVILLE) TO NATICK (SOLDIER SYSTEM CENTER), APPROX 5 MILES, 3 TIMES A WEEK, WEATHER PERMITTING.
56. I would think that the developers of the new Natick Mall should be a big part in this project as it could be a big selling factor.
57. I would use the trail if I wasn't moving. I thought the town of Natick could use something like this.

58. I would use the trail to commute via bike if there was some linkage eastward towards RTE 128
59. If it means having to use taxpayer moneys, then I am not for it at all.
60. I'm looking forward to the new trail.
61. I'm not sure if the plan is to create a paved or unpaved trail, but I can see potential advantages to an unpaved trail, like some of the paths in the Wellesley trails system. Smooth, paved surfaces seem to be preferable only for bicyclists and rollerbladers, yet many experienced cyclists still prefer riding on the roads to avoid pedestrian traffic. Paved surfaces can become slippery in the fall season due to falling leaves and sweeping or removing slippery leaves would be an additional expense. Unpaved rail-trails seem to maintain a more natural experience -- a corridor of green in an otherwise paved environment. Unpaved trails also seem to get more frequent use by walkers and joggers than wheeled travelers.
62. It is a GREAT idea, let's do it!
63. It should be wide enough to accommodate persons or bicycles going both ways.
64. It would be an excellent opportunity to exercise while at work and stay off crowded roadways
65. It would be great to have a rail trail added, so everyone can exercise and not be near traffic. Also, maybe all the rail trails will eventually link together.
66. It would be important to allow traffic in and out of Natick Soldier Center (at Kansas Street) during work peak entering and leaving times (during the week).
67. I've been waiting for the Rail Trail for a long time--am eagerly looking forward to seeing it happen!
68. I've used rail trails before in Lexington and on the Cape. The Cape one was not that busy, but in Lexington, the riders do have the responsibility to be sure they stop at intersections. I'm concerned about that enforcement around here because of all the traffic and the way I observe that people presently don't pay attention to bicyclists and walkers.
69. Keep up the good work
70. Linking the rail trail to other existing and future non-motorized vehicular corridors and creating more non-motorized access at such facilities as the Mall area should be a goal for the town to help reduce traffic of motorized vehicles to some level.
71. Love the rail trail idea. Have used several in state and they work! Was very disappointed when my town (Weston) failed to approve one.
72. More Bike Racks at the commuter station would increase usage on a future rail trail.
73. Must include dividing line to teach kids to stay to the right and must pave to include rollerbladers and wheelchairs.
74. Not familiar with the Rail Trail Project, so my input is of questionable value.
75. Paved is best, but even unpaved would be an acceptable use.
76. Personally I would definitely like to see a rail trail developed... I work in Natick, directly next to the rail line, and would much rather walk/bike on a trail than along Rte. 27.

77. Public safety - access points for police, fire and emergency services Hours of use, benches and picnic sites along route Pave or "soft" surface (gravel, bark)
78. Rail Trail is the only good idea the Town of Natick has had in 20 years.
79. Rail Trails are a great asset to a community and provide a clean, safe and varied environment for exercise and leisure.
80. Rail Trails are a wonderful opportunity to open up forms of family recreation.
81. Rail trails are always a toss-up, because we need an increase in availability and use of public transportation but it's doubtful if people would use this line to commute.
82. Rail trails are awesome and great for any community!
83. Rail Trails are excellent to provide walkers, joggers and bikers a safe place to exercise and to keep them off the highways which are already over crowded with vehicular traffic.
84. Rail trails are terrific - I will be working in Natick and I am looking at buying a home in the area (the area being within 15 miles or so of my office). Ideally I would prefer to bicycle back and forth rather than drive - the rail trail would certainly help make my commute safer and more enjoyable. Thanks!
85. Restriction of use such that only a certain "group" can use it. If this is to be truly a public use trail, then no unreasonable limits should be placed on the trail. Previous bias against motorcyclists and ATV riders must be addressed / removed.
86. Same as my comments previously. Right now roads are pedestrian and bicycle unfriendly and dangerous. I avoid riding a bike because of the current dangers in such travel. We have built everything around the automobile in a way that discourages other modes. It's time the whole state changed the focus... towns should take on the expense and upkeep like they do of roads.
87. Setup a donation website to raise funds.
88. Snowmobiles will also be a problem...
89. Sorry for the delayed response. Have only recently returned to Massachusetts.
90. Sounds like a good idea. Is CSX abandoning the rail?
91. The problem with many rail trails is they have one major parking lot with no obvious destination, so that end clogs with pedestrians, making cycling difficult for all. However the far end sees little traffic. Trails in Ayer and Northampton are like this. I would like to see the trail have many parking areas and destination connections, so that cycling to work or the store is practical, rather than the trail being a long park (too long for children to cycle and too boring and flat for adult cyclists). I also hope this project does not detract from Massachusetts efforts to design better roads for cycling. It is by far one of the worst states for cycling which could be remedied by a 24" shoulder on roads. My impression is that once a rail trail goes in, highway engineers become less accommodating to cyclists, even if the trail has no useful destination.
92. The proposed rail-trail would be a great asset to the town of Natick and to all people who live and/or work in the area. As it is now, the town has a shortage of recreational space. Some neighboring towns have many more trails and natural areas. This would be a relatively inexpensive way to greatly increase the town outdoor recreational resources and would encourage people to become more physically active, thereby benefiting their health.

93. The Town of Natick should seriously consider this opportunity to enhance the use of public transit by providing a convenient method of mass transport between the Natick Station and the mall. This would reduce traffic congestion, conserve energy, and thereby help to fight global warming.
94. This a great idea!
95. This country needs to utilize resources that allow people to exercise and commute w/o risking life and limb on the road. Rails to trails is an excellent method to do this. I occasionally ride to work from Franklin, but feel very unsafe on the road with commuters. If I had access to a series of bike trails or even decent road shoulders, I would be more likely to bike in the good weather. I run at least 3 x each week while at work and would love to run on a rail trail.
96. This is great. This could be a safe place to exercise.
97. This Rail Trail if built will be a great asset to Natick and Framingham
98. This would be a great addition to the area and much safer than running on busy streets.
99. This would be an excellent improvement for increasing safety. Currently, if one wishes to bicycle from Natick to Saxonville, the roads are VERY unfriendly to non-motorized modes of transport. Rt. 9, Rt. 30 and Speen are awful. Even 27 is bad in many spots. Since we are considering rail trails, I have always wanted to see tar paths alongside existing in-use right-of-ways. It seems that this could be made safe.
100. Too many people, too much construction. Leave a little bit of land alone.
101. Trail would be handy and pleasant for lunchtime walks.
102. Transforming the rail to a trail and connecting to other communities is an excellent idea. It would be a wonderful asset, used by many for recreation/exercise and would easily be accessible from my work place, the Natick RD & E Center. Go for it!!
103. Very excited about the emergence of new rail trails near the US Army Natick Soldier Center. It will have a significant impact on the workforce and the commuting issues near the lab.
104. We need this trail to exercise. We need it to be safe, without any predators. It greatly help the numerous physically and environmentally conscious citizens of the Town of Natick. Furthermore, it will be utilize for the Soldier Systems Center as part of their physical training.
105. Well, it would be nice to know the extent of the rail trail other than the tracks at the end of Kansas Street. But to be honest, that doesn't matter, build it!
106. What is a Rail Trail?
107. When would the trail be available?
108. While I do live in Rhode Island, I work in Natick and would consider using it to bike on for lunch.
109. With the seemingly unprohibited (housing) development of open land in eastern Massachusetts, I feel strongly that the local communities need to make a conscious effort to dedicate more open land for recreational use. This project would fit this need.
110. Would be great to link up these rail trails that are being built in various towns.

[Boston Scientific] Question 4. Are there other issues not listed above about which you have a concern? If so, please briefly describe.

1. Ability to promote the sharing of the trail by interested parties beyond Town of Natick- such as regional transport groups, groups promoting bike use, MBTA to incite bike riding to/from the commuter rail stations. Greater usage and more bike trips/fewer car trips is a public good to promote.
2. As long as you pave a “clean” surface and keep it well lit and clean, this is a great recreation opportunity for the community. In Wash DC, one runs from Bethesda, MD to the Georgetown area on M Street and is heavily used.
3. Dogs on leashes. Dog waste. Kids/drinking. Width of trail.
4. I would expect “maintenance” to include both occasional “big” maintenance, such as repaving, and frequent, regular monitoring to keep the trail swept clean of leaves, sticks, etc.
5. If it may affect the property tax I pay.
6. In my experience, upkeep is critical. Nothing speaks of a failed project like unsafe, cracked pathways that are a danger to the users, creating tripping hazards or worse. Funding routine maintenance and periodic renovations will be critical. Its proximity to Lake Cochituate would also indicate that flooding hazards are also a potential.
7. Is there potential to connect to other rail trails?
8. Make the path wide enough to accommodate bikes and pedestrians, rollerblades, etc. Many paths are too narrow and bikers cannot ride safely.
9. Pathways that are able to be used both by pedestrians and bikes without getting on top of each other, either wide enough for both, or with designated pathways separated.
10. Paving selection: dirt vs concrete vs asphalt (prefer asphalt!)
11. Pets.
12. Rail Trails are a fantastic and healthy way to bring families and members of the community together.
13. Snow removal in the winter.
14. The Rail Trail will be a wonderful addition to the town of Natick, providing a more serene option for those who do not want to use the crowded roads. It will be important to nicely maintain the trail so that it continuously provides the pleasant alternative to busy road travel.
15. There should be a connection to other dedicated or multi-use bike/walking trails (similar to the popular Minuteman RT terminus in Somerville, the Assabet River RT terminus in Hudson, and the Nashua River RT terminus in Nashua), i.e., in each case the rider/walker can safely connect to other trails, connections and/or extensions.
16. True control over what is and is not allowed, like music (loud). Also, courtesy rules like walk, bike on the right, allowing passing on the left.

[Boston Scientific] Question 11 (Optional): if you have any comments, concerns or suggestions, please provide them below.

1. Develop a long-term strategy for pre-funding the maintenance and upkeep now. If you come up empty, delay the project until you come up with an answer. It will be better to wait than to invest in a sure failure.
2. Given the density of the Natick-Framingham area in general, this rail trail would provide some much-needed open space and would be a great asset to the community as a place to “get away from it all” for a while.
3. Go for it. This is a great idea. More open space, more recreation opportunities, safe bike riding, fewer car trips, connections to commuter rail.
4. I am very familiar with rail trails as I have often used them in Ohio, Vermont and Mass. I especially like the new trail in Marlborough-Hudson-Stow - it has been very well done and if I still lived in Hudson, would have used it to commute by bicycle to Marlborough. There are many ways you can get the community involved with volunteering - I do much volunteer work at national parks, etc...
5. I am very interested in seeing the network of towns connected via the Rail Trail (even from Marlborough through to Natick and beyond).
6. I have used the Nashua River Rail trail and trails on Cape Cod. They are great for biking, walking or jogging. I have never seen any problems on these trails
7. I hope that this project goes through. It would be an excellent addition to the town of Natick!
8. I live near and use the rail trail running from Belchertown to Northampton. It is very well utilized by community families, and it is nice to have a clean, safe place to run/commute. They are a true benefit to the communities.
9. I lived several years by the minuteman trail in Arlington ... having the trail nearby was one of the best aspects of living there.
10. I love rail trails. I think they are an exceptional use of land; a fantastic “re-use” of land that has already been claimed for the public ... kinda, sort of.
11. I think it’s a great way to use these dead trails and it promotes fitness and community.
12. I think that rail trails are great for the community - especially since there are not a lot of places to walk, jog (other than on the street) in so many of our communities. I don't know if the bike path from Woods Hole to Falmouth is a rail trail or not, but when I'm in Falmouth I love using it for walking and jogging. Also, please make sure that you consider putting portable toilets along the rail trail. I can't remember if I read about this in the FAQs or not. The bike path has one at the midpoint and it's good to have it there.
13. I think that this is a great idea. I would love to be able to go for a run, walk, or bike ride after work. However, the busy area of Speen Street where I work prevents this. Access to the rail trail would be perfect.
14. I think these trails are wonderful. I hope you can make it happen.
15. I think this is an excellent project. Would the trail be maintained in the winter? I moved from Mpls, MN and the trails are cleared for winter use.

16. I work at Boston Scientific and was asked to complete this survey through work.
17. I would be happy to pay a small fee to use it in the warmer months, I'd still save on gas!
18. I would be interested to know if this would be a place where a dog can go off leash. I would use it quite frequently if I was able to take my dog there for off leash walks.
19. I would love to see the rail trail extended all the way to Ashland, MA. This would be FANTASTIC.
20. I would love to see the rail trail happen and would be happy to volunteer to assist the process!
21. If you build it, they will come!!!!
22. I'm thrilled to hear about this project. I've been in search of a running path and dislike running near traffic on my lunch break. I usually head away from Natick to run, bike or walk after work. A trail would keep me local some evenings, leaving me here to run errands in Natick or eat dinner with friends in Natick after trail use instead of returning to Boston/Charlestown for those activities. I'd be happy to volunteer for trail maintenance also.
23. It would be a great community-building effort, and helps people have a pleasant place to exercise during their work breaks. This is an intensive work area, plenty of people would use it.
24. I've been on rail trails in several states (MA, OR, VA, MD, DC) and think they are a wonderful addition to a community, and a terrific way to utilize an abandoned resource.
25. Milford put in a trail and it has been successful at providing a safe and accessible community use area, as well as improving the aesthetics of the area.
26. Natick needs more well-maintained trails for recreational purpose and reduces local traffic jam if possible.
27. Other established rail trails in MA bring a very desirable clientele through town, as well as generating significant business for nearby restaurants and stores. There are very few negatives, beyond the original capital costs. While the initial costs are substantial, it should be noted that the better the trail facilities (pavement, markings, railings, safer street crossings, etc.) the more family use/traffic (and therefore commerce) it will generate.
28. Please continue the rail trail - we need this at Boston Scientific. There may be a small group of employees here motivated to help expand the trail into our area of Natick.
29. Rail Trails are a fantastic and healthy way to bring families and members of the community together.
30. Recommend that Boston Scientific have a company-wide volunteering event to raise awareness about the trail and further promote its use.
31. Safety
32. Sounds like a great idea; have you considered selling bricks or similar to raise money to fund the project?
33. The rail trail will be an additional draw for the beautiful town of Natick. Presently, it is more known for the crowded car-filled roads of Route 9, Route 30, Mass Pike and other major arteries. This scenic Rail Trail will enhance the more-environmentally-friendly travel options and recreational alternatives for this beautiful town.

34. This is a great idea. Consider soliciting civic/volunteer groups, and local college volunteer groups, to assist construction and mitigate tax costs.
35. This will be a great addition to Natick and Framingham. I just purchased a house, and had “proximity to a rail trail” a benefit when looking at houses.
36. This would be awesome! I jog in the area a lot and the sidewalks aren't always maintained all that well.
37. Would like to know timeframe.