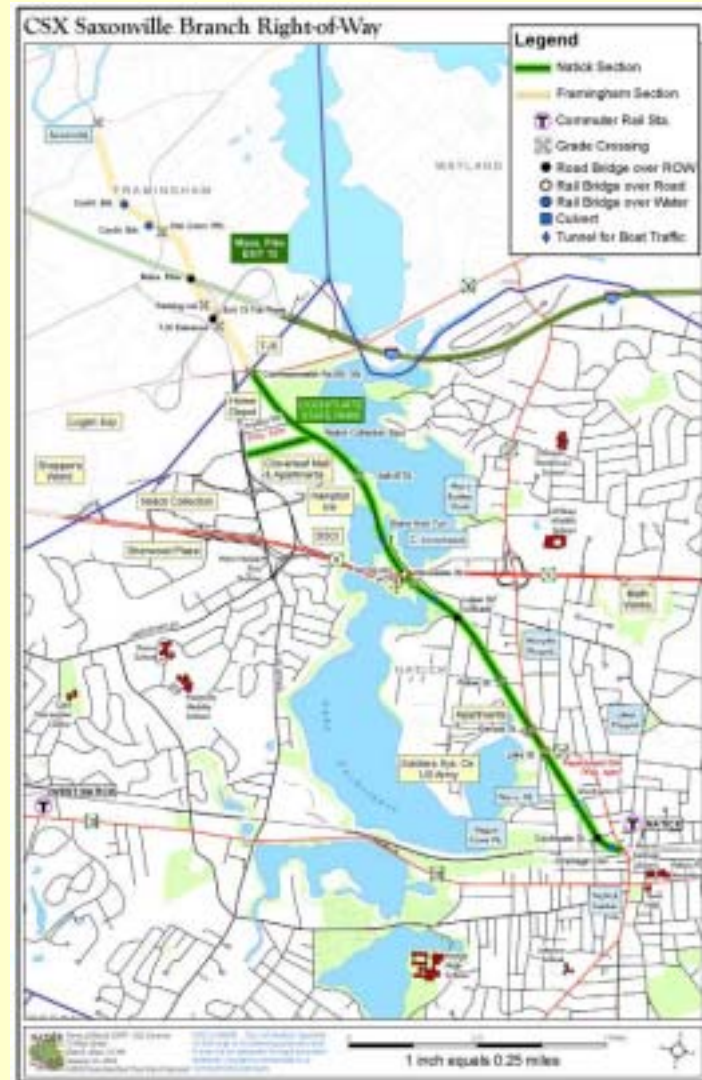


Cochituate Rail Trail Task Force May 28, 2008 Community Forum



- **Task Force background**
- **Activities and plans**
- **Costs and funding**
- **Looking forward**



CRT Task Force Background

- **Established September 2006, term extended indefinitely in October 2007**
- **15 members representing Town Administration, five Town boards, eight At-Large community members. Terms expire July 2008**
- **Reports, links, meeting minutes, maps, FAQs, newsletter and more at <http://natickma.gov/crt>**



CRT Task Force Charge

- 1. Recommend to the Selectmen whether to pursue acquisition of the CSX Right-of-Way**
- 2. Advise the Town on matters relating to the acquisition of the ROW**
- 3. Advise the Town on a process to establish a potential Rail Trail**
- 4. Continue outreach efforts to inform the community about the project and gain input from abutters and residents**

CRT Task Force is advisory

Task Force Activities and Updates

- Acquisition advice
- Security
- Community Outreach/Input
- Design
- Mass Transit
- State TIP and DCR
- Review Costs and Funding
- Work with Framingham



Acquisition

- **Task Force recommended negotiations with CSX in November 2006 for entire ROW with adjoining spurs**
- **CSX provided \$14.5M appraisal in July 2007**
 - CSX and potential buyers are typically far apart
- **Town is seeking qualified appraiser – expect results by September 2008**
- **Town is in contact with other communities and state agencies negotiating with CSX**
- **Town can now tax the property**

Security

- Rails and ties removed by CSX, Summer 2007
- ROW is private property
- Town installed gates and barriers
- CSX doing culvert and bridge repairs



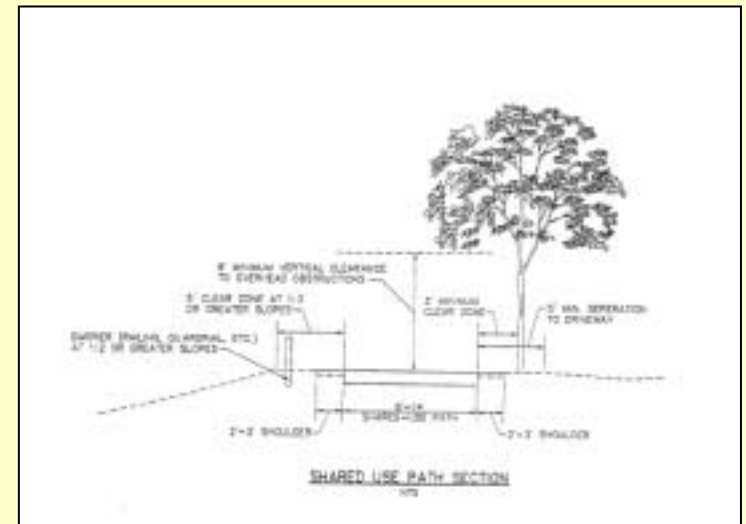
Community Outreach and Input

- **Initial residential and business abutter outreach conducted by Task Force in 2007**
 - Abutter report accepted by BOS in July 2007
- **This forum is one of many opportunities for input**
- **All CRT decisions made through a public process**



Conceptual Design Process

- Address key issues raised by abutters and others
 - Surface
 - Lighting
 - Security and privacy
 - Access and parking
 - Street crossings
- Leverage potential funding
- Estimate construction costs
- Develop maintenance plan



Mass Transit Option

- **Task Force explored technical feasibility of future dual-use of the ROW to include both motorized transit (e.g. electric minibus) and a multi-use trail.**
- **Based on ROW dimensional limitations and abutter concerns, Task Force recommended only non-motorized uses for the foreseeable future.**



Transportation Improvement Plan

- Town has identified CRT as a project to be included in the state process for potential future funding
- An application for the Natick and Framingham CRT projects have been submitted to the State
- Other rail trails have been funded through the TIP
- Long-term funding option



Dep't of Conservation and Recreation

- DCR has many active and pending rail trail projects
- ROW passes through DCR's Cochituate State Park
- Task Force is working with state and regional DCR officials to address interests of the State Park



Costs and Funding

- **Acquisition**
 - CSX negotiations
 - Environmental issues
- **Design**
 - Conceptual/Preliminary
- **Construction**
 - Subject to design
- **Maintenance**
 - Private and public
- **Mall mitigation funds**
- **Conservation funds**
- **State funding**
- **Private donations**
- **No plan to request taxpayer funds.**

Mall Mitigation Funding

- **Separate from other Mall mitigation (traffic, open space, affordable housing, public safety)**
 - **Required by Mass Highway**
 - **Up to \$500,000 for Natick CRT design/construction; funds held in escrow for 5 years**
 - **After 5 years, unexpended funds may be used for any open space acquisition that relates to bicycle, pedestrian or transit related improvements.**
 - **After 7 years, unexpended funds revert to General Growth**
- **Additional mitigation funds for Speen, Rt. 30 crossings**

Appropriations to date

- **December 2006 Special TM: \$107,250**
 - \$8,500 for title work
 - \$3,000 for gates (can be redeployed later)
 - TBD for appraisal, environmental, legal
- **Spring 2007 Town Meeting: \$30,000**
 - TBD for conceptual design
- **Funds expended under direction of the BOS**

Framingham Status

- **CRT committee established 2001**
- **Rails and ties long gone**
- **Local business and volunteer support with regular clean-up days**
- **ROW owned by Mass Turnpike Authority and MBTA**
- **Plan to open a small section in 2008**
- **RFP for final design headed for procurement**



Next Steps

- **New Task Force members**
- **Complete appraisal and negotiate with CSX**
 - work with other communities and State EOT
 - environmental testing part of negotiation process
- **Continued community input/communication**
- **State and regional coordination**
- **Prepare conceptual design RFP**