



DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2009

AT

BRIDGE STREET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
2 PARSONS STREET
NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

7:00 PM

FOR THE PROPOSED

MANHAN RAIL TRAIL

PROJECT FILE NO. 604207
BRIDGE NOS. E-05-027, E-05-028, N-19-001
IN THE CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

LUISA PAIEWONSKY
COMMISSIONER

FRANK A. TRAMONTOZZI, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER

MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT



NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING
Project File No. 604207

A Design Public Hearing will be held by the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) to discuss the proposed MANHAN RAIL TRAIL IN NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

WHERE: Bridge Street Elementary School
2 Parsons Street
Northampton, MA 01060

WHEN: Monday, April 27, 2009 @ 7:00PM

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed trail project. All views and comments made at the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The work under this federal and state funded project consists of constructing a multi-purpose trail along approximately 2.66 miles of former rail line from the Manhan Trail just north of Ferry Street in Easthampton to the intersection of Grove Street/Earle Street in Northampton.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The Town of Easthampton and City of Northampton are responsible for acquiring all necessary rights in private or public lands. MassHighway's policy concerning land acquisitions will be discussed at this hearing.

Written views received by MassHighway subsequent to the date of this notice and up to five (5) days prior to the date of the hearing shall be displayed for public inspection and copying at the time and date listed above. Plans will be on display one-half hour before the hearing begins, with an engineer in attendance to answer questions regarding this project. A project handout is available on the MassHighway website listed below.

Written statements and other exhibits in place of, or in addition to, oral statements made at the Public Hearing regarding the proposed undertaking are to be submitted to Frank A. Tramontozzi, P.E., Chief Engineer, Massachusetts Highway Department, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116. Such submissions will also be accepted at the hearing. Mailed statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public hearing transcript must be postmarked within ten (10) business days of this Public Hearing.

The community has declared that this facility is accessible to all in compliance with the ADA/Title II. However, persons in need of ADA/Title II accommodations should contact Angela Rudikoff by phone at (617) 973-7005 or email angela.rudikoff@eot.state.ma.us. Requests must be made at least 10 days prior to the date of the public hearing.

In case of inclement weather, hearing cancellation announcements will be posted on the MassHighway website <http://www.mass.gov/mhd>.

LUISA PAIEWONSKY
COMMISSIONER

Boston, Massachusetts

FRANK A. TRAMONTOZZI, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER



**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION
MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

EOT

DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

JAMES A. ALOISI JR.
SECRETARY

LUISA PAIEWONSKY
COMMISSIONER

Dear Concerned Citizen:

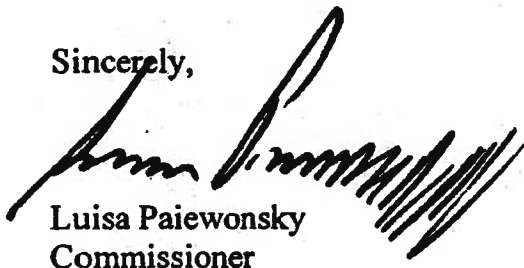
The Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) is committed to building and maintaining a transportation infrastructure that is both safe and efficient for all who use our roadways, bridges, bicycle facilities and pedestrian paths, while maintaining the integrity of the environment.

As part of the design process for this project, we are conducting this public hearing to explain the proposed improvements, listen to your comments and answer any questions you may have. At the conclusion of the hearing, MassHighway will review all of your comments and, where feasible, incorporate them into the design of the project.

Unfortunately, new construction often creates inconveniences for the public. MassHighway places a great deal of emphasis on minimizing the temporary disruptive effects of construction.

MassHighway encourages input from local communities and values your opinions. Please be assured that we will undertake no project without addressing the concerns of the community.

Sincerely,



Luisa Paiewonsky
Commissioner

WHAT IS A PUBLIC HEARING?

WHY A PUBLIC HEARING?

To provide an assured method whereby the Commonwealth of Massachusetts can furnish to the public information concerning the State's highway construction proposals, and to afford every interested resident of the area an opportunity to be heard on any proposed Federal-Aid project. At the same time, the hearings afford the Commonwealth an additional opportunity to receive information from local sources which would be of value to the State in making its final decisions to what design should be advanced for development.

WHY NOT A VOTE ON HIGHWAY PLANS?

The hearings are not intended to be a popular referendum for the purpose of determining the nature of a proposed improvement by a majority of those present. They do not relieve the duly constituted officials of a State highway department of the necessity for making decisions in State highway matters for which they are charged with full responsibility.

WHAT DOES A PUBLIC HEARING ACCOMPLISH?

It is designed to ensure the opportunity for, or the availability of, a forum to provide factual information which is pertinent to the determination of the final alternative considered by the state to best serve the public interest, and on which improvement projects are proposed to be undertaken.

It is important that the people of the area express their views in regard to the proposal being presented, so that views can be properly recorded in the minutes of the meeting. These minutes will be carefully studied by the Highway Department and the Federal Highway Administration, and will be taken into consideration in the determination of the final design.

RIGHT OF WAY ISSUES

A secure right of way is necessary for this project. Temporary construction easements may be required. Your municipality is responsible for acquiring all necessary rights in private or public lands. If your property is affected, your rights are fully protected under law.

1. REASON FOR PROJECT

The completion of this project will serve local needs. The proposed enhancement will also be in the interest of others in the greater community, and provide for the public good.

2. WHO CONTACTS ME?

Representatives of the municipality have already contacted or will contact you. They will explain the procedures used in acquiring any necessary rights in land.

3. WHAT ABOUT DONATIONS? WHAT IS A RIGHT OF ENTRY?

Town officials will often seek donations, of parcels, where permanent rights are required. This procedure will minimize the acquisition cost for your community.

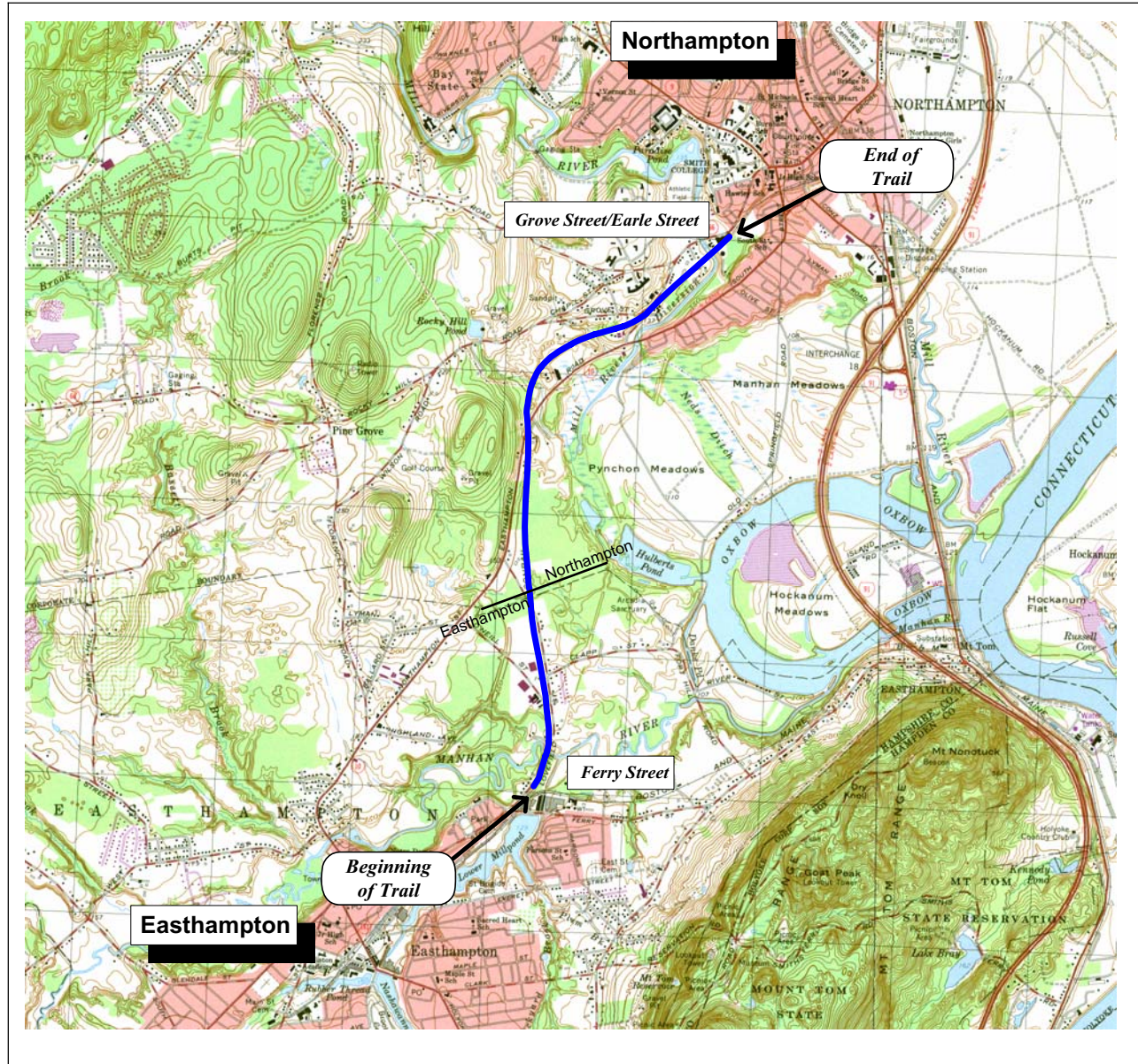
A Right of Entry is a document that is signed by the owner. It allows the Contractor to perform certain types of work on the owner's land. The work is usually minor in nature and frequently consists of loaming/seeding behind sidewalks, new driveway apron work, grading/sloping, and wetland protection, etc. The rights granted are temporary in nature.

4. WHAT IS A FAIR PRICE FOR THE ACQUIRED PARCELS?

In the event that donations are not considered, or completed, every effort will be made to ensure that an equitable value is awarded. Municipal and/or outside appraisers will complete an appraisal. Consideration is given to the type of rights needed, whether in fee, permanent or temporary easements. The appraisal will be the basis for arriving at a fair price (for damages that result).

5. MUST I ACCEPT THE MUNICIPALITY OFFER?

No, if the owner feels that the offer is not fair the owner may petition the courts. This action does not stop or delay the acquisition. The action must occur within 3 years. The owner(s) may be paid pro tanto (for the time being). The pro tanto payment will not prejudice the court's final decision.



**PROJECT LOCATION:
 MANHAN RAIL TRAIL
 City of Northampton
 Hampshire County**

Approximate Length = 4.29 km (2.66 miles)

MS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS, INC.
 P.O. Box 967
 Framingham, MA 01701
 508-620-2832
 508-620-6897 (fax)
 email: msinatick@earthlink.net
 web: www.mstransportationsystemsinc.com

I. INTRODUCTION

Project Location

The proposed project begins on the north side of Ferry Street in Easthampton, and runs in a northerly direction to the municipal parking lot at the New South Street bridge underpass.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to construct a bicycle trail utilize the abandoned railroad corridor for recreational purposes. It will provide a complete bicycle trail connection from Ferry Street in Easthampton to Grove Street/Earle Street in Northampton. The total length of the project is approximately 4.29 km (2.66 miles). The trail typically follows the existing (abandoned rail corridor, but does include some alignment changes necessary to avoid existing physical features, such as the Easthampton Sewerage Pump Station and to lessen impacts on wetlands and Mass Electric Co. transmission poles. The project was segregated into two separate construction contracts. A portion of the trail project was constructed under an earlier contract. The section included in this project will complete the link between the Manhan Trail in Easthampton and the Manhan Trail in Northampton.

II. PROPOSED DESIGN

The project will involve installing erosion control measures, clearing and grubbing, grading, constructing a 10 foot wide paved bicycle path, safety rail installation, culvert repair/replacement, bridge replacement, traffic signs, pavement markings, and other necessary appurtenances. There are at grade crossings at Lovefield Street in Easthampton and Grove Street in Northampton and two bridges that cross the Mill and Manhan Rivers.

Maintenance of Traffic During Construction

Since the majority of work will take place off of and away from existing roads, impacts to traffic will be minimal. At several locations where the trail will intersect existing roads, measures will be taken to minimize inconveniences and delays. All travel lanes will remain open to traffic during peak travel periods, and no lane closures will be allowed overnight. However, lane closures may be required during non peak travel periods.

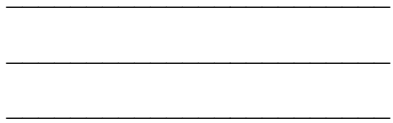
Project Schedule

Construction on this phase is expected to begin in the summer of 2009 and be completed during the summer of 2010.

Project Cost

The cost of construction for the entire project is currently estimated at \$3.8 million.

Please Fold and Staple



Please Place
Appropriate
Postage Here

Mr. Frank A. Tramontozzi, PE
Chief Engineer
Attn: Al Miller
Massachusetts Highway Department
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116-3973

RE: Public Hearing
Manhan Rail Trail
Easthampton and Northampton, Massachusetts
Key #604207

