



DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2008

AT

Acton Town Hall, Room 204

Acton, MASSACHUSETTS

7:00 PM

FOR THE PROPOSED

BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL, PHASE 2A
Project File No. 604532

IN THE TOWNS OF ACTON/CARLISLE/WESTFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

LUISA PAIEWONSKY
COMMISSIONER

FRANK A. TRAMONTOZZI, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING
Project File No. 604532

A Design Public Hearing will be held by MassHighway to discuss the proposed Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT), Phase 2A project, in the Towns of Acton, Carlisle and Westford, Massachusetts.

WHERE: Acton Town Hall, Room 204
472 Main Street
Acton, MA 01720

WHEN: Wednesday, October 29, 2008 @ 7:00 PM

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed BFRT Phase 2A project. All views and comments made at the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project will extend from the end of the BFRT Phase 1 (Westford-Lowell Phase) and continue south through Westford, Carlisle and Acton for a total length of approximately 4.88 miles. The construction will include: a new variable width (ranges from 10 to 12 feet) paved asphalt multi-use rail trail with 2-foot stabilized shoulders, an adjacent 6 foot stone dust trail (provided where feasible), trail pavement markings and signing, passively actuated flashing beacons at trail/roadway crossings, new roadway pavement markings and signing at trail crossings, construction of a pre-fabricated pedestrian bridge structure over Route 2A/119, rehabilitating six existing railroad bridges along the trail, constructing culverts, earthwork, landscaping and other items incidental to the construction of the rail trail.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The *towns* are responsible for acquiring all needed 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 will be made 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

FRANK A. TRAMONTOZZI, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER

Boston, Massachusetts



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION
MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

BERNARD COHEN
SECRETARY

LUISA PAIEWONSKY
COMMISSIONER

Dear Concerned Citizen:

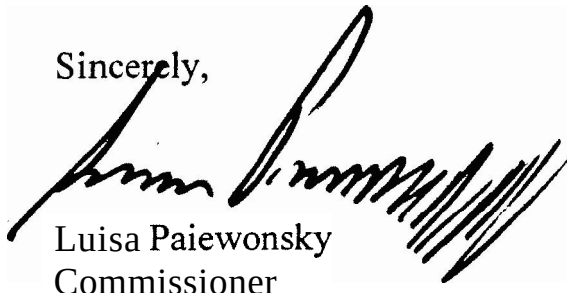
The Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) is committed to building and maintaining a transportation infrastructure that is both safe and efficient for all who use our roadways, bridges, bicycle facilities and pedestrian paths, while maintaining the integrity of the environment.

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 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 and 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.

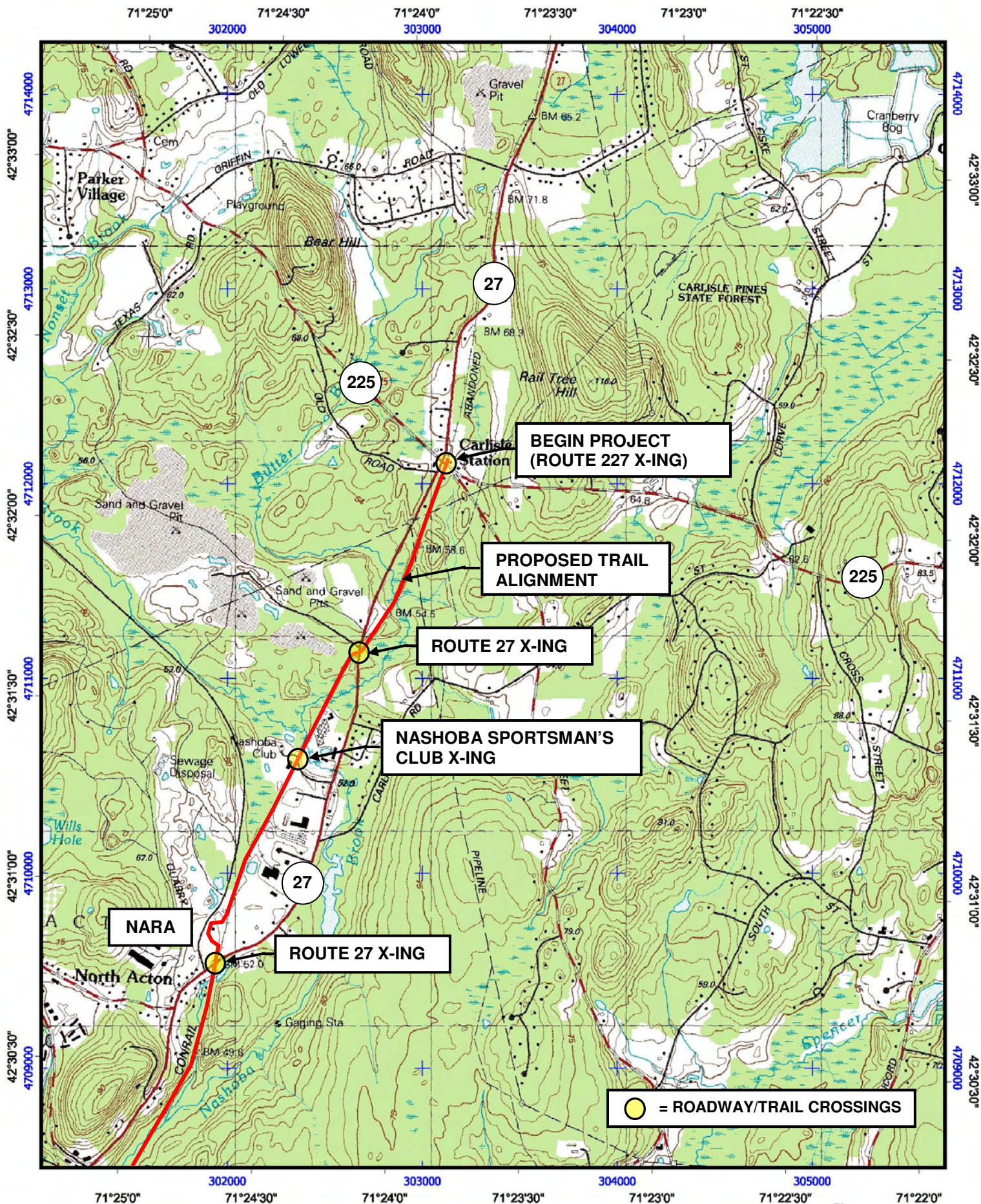
A Right of Entry is a document that is signed by the owner. It allows the Contractor to perform certain types of work on the owner's land. The work is usually minor in nature and frequently consists of loaming/seeding behind sidewalks, new driveway apron work, grading/sloping, and wetland protection,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

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

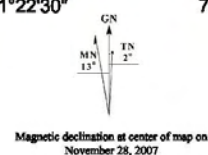
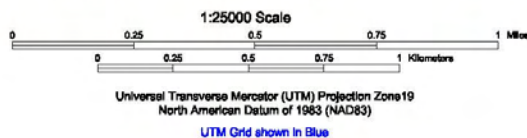
In the event that donations are not considered, or completed, every effort will be made to ensure that an equitable value is awarded. Municipal and/or outside appraisers will complete an appraisal. Consideration is given to the type of rights needed, whether in fee, permanent or temporary easements. 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.



**BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL
PHASE 2A
LOCUS MAP**



Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2A Acton/Carlisle/Westford, MA

Project Location

Phase 2A is an extension of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) Phase 1 that is currently under construction in Lowell, Chelmsford and Westford. Phase 2A begins in Westford at the Phase 1 terminus just north of Route 225. Phase 2A follows former Penn Central/Old Colony Railroad Right-of-Way and has a length of approximately 0.13 miles in Westford before crossing into Carlisle where it has a length of approximately 0.16 miles. The trail then enters Acton and crosses Route 27 and the driveway to the Nashoba Sportsman's Club before reaching the North Acton Recreational Area (NARA). A connection to the NARA parking lot is proposed. Heading southerly from NARA, the trail crosses Main Street (Route 27), Great Road (Route 2A/119), Brook Street, Concord Road and Wetherbee Street before terminating behind the Acton Indoor Sports property. The total length of the trail in Acton is approximately 4.58 miles. The total length of the project is approximately 4.88 miles.

Purpose

The purpose the BFRT Phase 2A Project is to provide an off-road transportation corridor within the Towns of Acton, Carlisle and Westford with linkages to Phase 1 of the BFRT currently under construction in the Towns of Lowell, Chelmsford and Westford, the future Phase 2B in Concord and Sudbury and the future Phase 3 in Sudbury and Framingham. When complete, the BFRT will be approximately 25 miles long and will run from Lowell to Framingham. It will allow bicyclists and pedestrians to conveniently access a wide variety of recreation and conservation areas, historical sites, businesses and eventually all eight communities involved in the twenty five mile project. The complete trail will access three commuter rail stations that are part of three different commuter rail lines (Lowell, Fitchburg and Worcester).

The trail will primarily be an off road path separated from vehicular traffic designed to accommodate a variety of non-motorized uses such as bicycling, walking, skating, cross-country skiing and equestrian use.

Existing Conditions

The trail will follow former Penn Central/Old Colony Railroad Right-of-Way that is currently owned by the Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works (EOTPW). Railroad tracks and ties are currently located along the right of way and will be removed as part of the trail project. The right of way is generally overgrown with vegetation and not actively used.

Scope of Work

Phase 2A is designed as a ten to twelve foot wide hot mix asphalt paved pathway with 2 foot graded stone dust shoulders. A six foot soft surface trail has been included adjacent to the paved pathway where possible. In addition to the paved trail, some design features include timber rail fencing, retaining walls, drainage, curbing, wheelchair ramps, culverts, bank stabilization,

wetlands protection, screening, landscaping, benches, bike racks and other work. A dedicated trail user parking lot is proposed in Acton at an existing Town easement in the vicinity of 1019 Main Street. Trail user parking will also be provided at NARA, Gould's Plaza and Acton Indoor Sports. A prefabricated pedestrian bridge is proposed for the trail crossing at Great Road (Route 2A/119). Six (6) existing trestles along the trail that were formerly utilized by the railroad will be rehabilitated as part of the project. The project also will provide passively actuated flashing beacons at each of the roadway crossings to increase safety and driver awareness of the trail. The trail crossing of Route 225 in Westford will be incorporated into the signalized operations at the intersection of Route 225 and Route 27.

The construction of the trail at intersections may require some lane reductions or closures to facilitate the construction process. Driveway access will be provided at all times during construction. Pedestrian and vehicular access to abutting residences will be maintained. Abutters will be notified 24 hours in advance of any work to be performed adjacent to their driveway or property. The installation of the bridge structure over Great Road (Route 2A/119) may require a temporary roadway closure but would be scheduled during night construction.

Utilities

Existing utilities are limited along the EOTPW property. The relocation of utility poles may be necessary where the trail crosses roadways especially at Great Road (Route 2A/119).

Right of Way Impacts

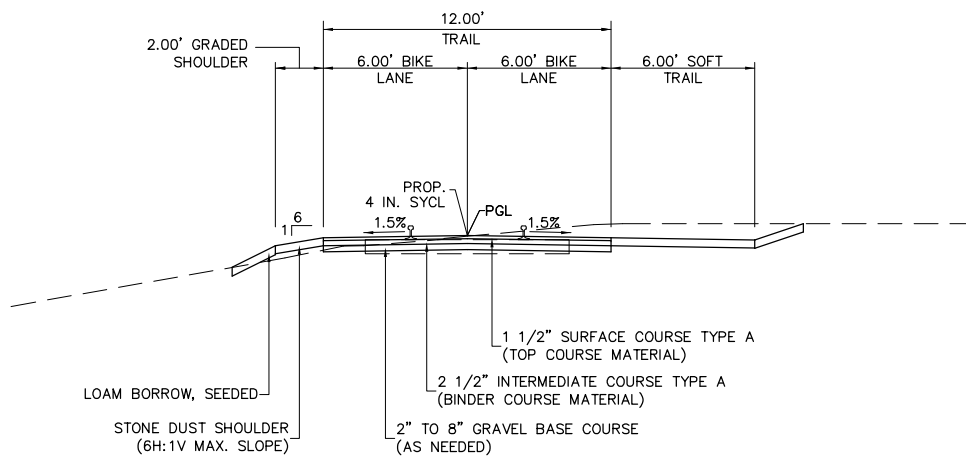
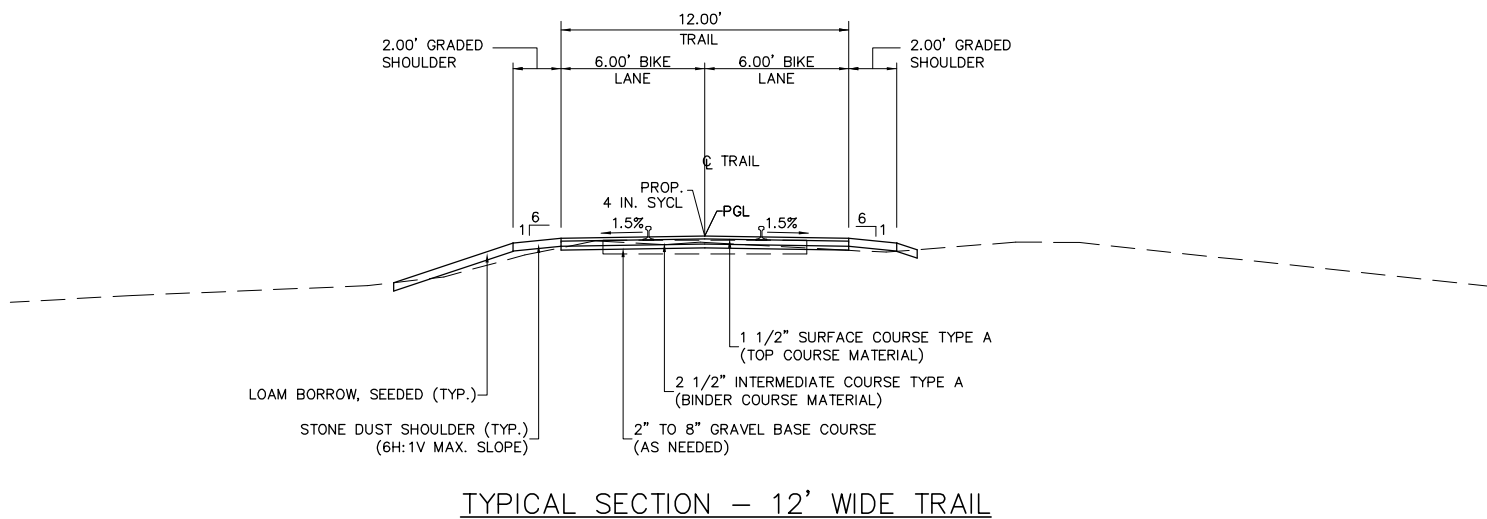
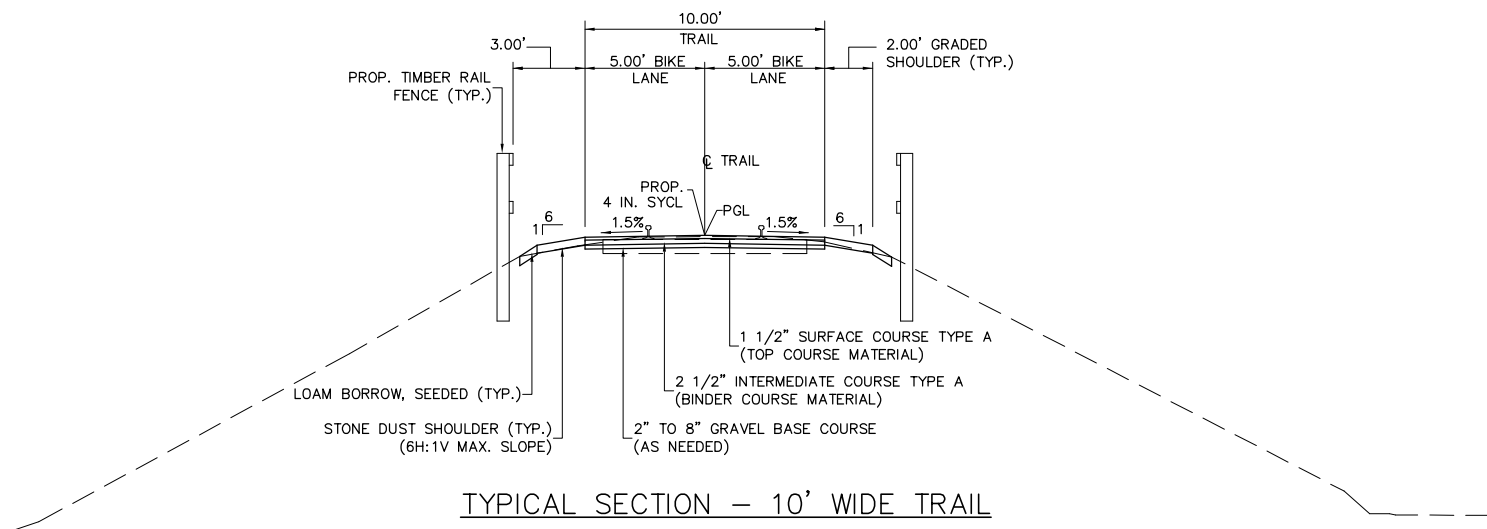
Temporary and permanent easements may be needed for work conducted outside the highway right-of-way on private property for construction. The Municipality is responsible for securing all needed rights for performing the related roadway work. MassHighway's policy regarding land acquisitions will be discussed at the hearing. The Towns will be entering into a lease agreement with EOTPW in order to construct and utilize the trail corridor.

Project Status

The Plans on display this evening are 25% (preliminary design stage) complete. Comments from this evening will be reviewed and addressed in the final design. The process will continue to the final Plans, Specifications, and Estimates and the award of a construction contract. Construction is anticipated to be complete within two construction seasons.

Project Costs

At this time, the estimated participating cost of construction is approximately \$7,700,000. Funding for the construction of this project will be by the Federal Highway Administration and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The project must be programmed for construction in the Transportation Improvement Program by the town and Regional Planning Agency within the appropriate fiscal year.



Name _____ Title _____
 Organization _____
 Address _____

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Please Place
Appropriate
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Frank A. Tramontozzi, P.E.
Chief Engineer
Massachusetts Highway Department
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116-3973

**RE: Public Hearing
BFRT – Phase 2A
Acton/Carlisle/Westford
Project File No. 604532**

