

April 28, 2009

The Honorable Congresswoman
Niki Tsongas
U.S. House of Representatives
1607 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Tsongas,

On behalf of the Acton Public School Committee and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee we strongly support your request for High Priority Project (HPP) funding for Phase 2A (Acton, Westford, Carlisle) and 2C (Concord) of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT).

The BFRT is an extremely popular project supported by Town and State elected officials, and by thousands of citizens in your district. In particular the Phase 2A and 2C towns (Acton, Carlisle, Concord and Westford) have overwhelmingly supported the BFRT in Town Meeting votes, more times than not, unanimously.

The BFRT is designed for non-motorized uses such as cycling, jogging, walking, and skiing. Other uses such as rollerblading and equestrian use may also be possible. The BFRT offers many benefits for the children and their families in Acton and near-by towns: trails help kids be fit, have fun, and prevent childhood obesity; trails serve as close-by mobile classrooms, safe places for kids to explore nature and learn about their own neighborhoods. Studies have also shown that trails like BFRT improve air quality, reduce crime, mitigate summer heat, increase property values, spur tourism revenue, prompt economic growth, and increase worker productivity and job satisfaction.

Phase 1 of the BFRT, which is just less than seven miles connecting the communities of Chelmsford and Westford, is currently under construction. Phases 2A and 2C of the BFRT would incorporate an additional eight miles of trail spanning two regional planning agencies, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG), two MassHighway Districts, District 3 and District 4, and four towns.

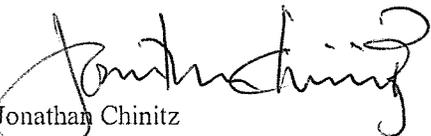
To date, the Towns of Acton, Carlisle, Westford and Concord have contributed approximately \$522,500 towards the initial engineering assessments and preliminary design of the projects. The Design Public Hearing was held for Phase 2A on October 29, 2008 and the 25% Design Plans were subsequently approved by MassHighway.

With historic underfunding of Transportation Enhancement projects like the BFRT, it is extremely valuable to have HPP funds allocated to the BFRT.

Thank you for your consideration and your support for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

Sincerely,


Xuan Kong
Acting Chair
Acton Public School Committee


Jonathan Chinitz
Chair
Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee