



OLD NORTH BRIDGE

TOWN OF CONCORD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S OFFICE
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April 29, 2009

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

Dear Representative Tsongas,

The Concord Board of Selectmen strongly support your request for High Priority Project (HPP) funding under the SAFETEA-LU program for Phase 2A (Acton, Westford, Carlisle) and 2C (Concord) of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT).

The BFRT is a very popular project supported by Town officials and by the residents of Concord. In particular the BFRT 2C portion through Concord has been overwhelmingly supported in Town Meeting votes, as has the 2A portion through the towns of Acton, Carlisle, and Westford been overwhelmingly supported, often unanimously.

Construction of just under seven miles of the trail is nearing completion on Phase 1 coming out of Lowell to Route 225 in Westford (through Chelmsford), with an opening anticipated in August 2009. 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.

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

To date, the Town of Concord has contributed approximately \$250,000.00 towards the initial engineering assessments and preliminary design of the projects, expending considerable time, money and manpower to move this project forward since 2004 when it accepted a gift of \$25,000 and sought additional grants to fund an Engineering and Environmental Assessment of the Trail. In 2006, The Town appropriated Community Preservation funds in the amount of \$160,000 for the 25% design and allocated an additional \$8,000 for that effort. Concord also voted additional Town funding in 2008 in the amount of \$50,000 to allow the BFRT Advisory Committee to continue its efforts to address environmental and community issues expressed during the 25% design development and has requested an additional \$125,000 from Community Preservation Funds, which will be voted this week at the 2009 Annual Town Meeting.

The 25% Design Plans for Phase 2C (Concord) were submitted to MassHighway on October 17, 2008 and are currently under review. MassHighway will be scheduling the public hearing in the very near future.

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

Sincerely,

Greg Howes, Chairman
Concord Board of Selectmen