



Town of Belmont

Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee

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October 15, 2021

David Mohler
Chair, Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

Reference: Belmont Community Path

Dear Mr. Mohler,

As the Chair of the Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee since 2016, I am writing regarding the Belmont project under your consideration, the "Community Path." The Committee enthusiastically supports this project.

The Building Committee began its work in 2016; an MSBA project to address a deteriorating high school and a sharp student enrollment increase. Transportation circulation was evaluated early, analyzing existing vehicular, pedestrian, and cyclist movement patterns, looking for improvements within a constrained road system. Throughout the project, the Building Committee has worked cooperatively with the Town departments and project designer, Nitsch Engineering, while sustaining a rigorous school construction schedule. The Community Path and the Alexander Underpass has been anticipated enthusiastically for its safety and access improvements to the newly designed campus and connection points beyond.

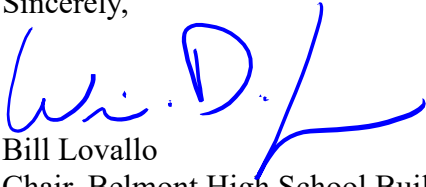
Early on, high school students in the school's Global Capstone course proposed ideas for increasing biking and walking to campus with incentive programs (walk/bike with contracts) and increased bike racks. Their surveys revealed families' desire for better bike lanes and support for bike culture, as well. The building committee's design team found about 30% of students bike or walk to campus (approximately 340) in 2018. That number is expected to increase, as the new campus will nearly double its student population, serving some 2200 students. We learned how supportive the community is of biking and walking.

Extensive talks with community members informed the Building Committee's work too, resulting in more pedestrian and bike improvements to the building project site. Student parking was also

reduced, and a short connector sidewalk/shared path access route was created on the east end of campus. And, with the approved path route located on the north side of the commuter rail, as voted by the Select Board part way through our timeline, we were afforded greater flexibility in the site development of the school project.

The Belmont community greatly appreciates the MPO consideration of this significant transit benefit to the high school project and to the broader community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Lovallo", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bill Lovallo
Chair, Belmont High School Building Committee

cc: Matt Genova, TIP Manager

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

October 27, 2021

Paul Cobuzzi
125 Channing Rd.
Belmont, Ma 02478

Mr. Matt Genova

Dear Sir,

I am the current owner of 30 years of the property located at 125 Channing Rd, Belmont, Ma 02478. I have lived in this area for most of my life (all but 3 years). I grew up in the house next door. My home sits adjacent to the MBTA Fitchburg rail line.

I know just how dangerous this track area is. It is not a "park" as the Belmont Citizens Forum would have you believe. As I have said before, if people travel in this area and there is a collision between a train and a pedestrian or bike, there are no injured, they are most likely to die.

I believe MassDot state documents indicate that lights are required for a multi-user path such as the Belmont Community Path. However, I believe no lights are mentioned in the 25% design except for maybe the Alexander Avenue section and/or the pedestrian tunnel. Be aware that lights are very expensive and will inflate the cost of this project.

Also, be aware that the engineering firm, according to them, has not yet received the results of the soil test borings. So when the 25% design is submitted, please make sure that these numbers are included.

Like I said, I have lived here for 72 years. The soil in this area, below grade, is clay. It is slick and sticky when wet but hard like cement when dry. There should have been at least two sets of borings drilled at different times of the year. The only set was taken during what should have been the dry season, but this year the water table was unusually high. I wonder about their results. I do not see the wisdom of disturbing the footing of a 100 ton train traveling at 70 mph.

Recently the town built a new high school south of the RR on the same type of soil(clay). Now they are building a new middle school next to it and driving what must be at least 40 ft long by 12 or 15 inch piles into the ground for footings. That should tell you what type of soil they are dealing with. I believe it is the same engineering company as for the BCP. Check it out.

The soil on the RR berm is comprised of slag and/or coal ash. The residue of coal when it is burned, lead, cadmium etc. is poisonous. Please do not let them disturb that berm. We have had enough dust and noise and vibration from the RR and high school and middle school constructions from the last 3 years and the next 3 years without adding poison dust from a pedestrian tunnel. If that area is found to be poisonous, the dollar cost for this clean up project will sky rocket.

Thank you thank you for time,
Paul Cobuzzi

Belmont (#609204): Community Path, Belmont Component of the MCRT (Phase 1)

January 21, 2022

Jamey Tesler, Chair
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116-3968

Dear Chairperson Tesler and Members of the Boston Region MPO:

On behalf of the Belmont Energy Committee, we write in strong support of Project #609204 (Community Path, Belmont Component of the Mass Central Rail Trail [Phase 1]). This project enjoys broad and deep support within the Town of Belmont, including among our elected leaders, professional Town staff, and the public at large, and we are confident that the community path will become a vital public resource – for recreation, transportation, and economic development – for the Town and our surrounding communities when it is constructed.

Reduction of vehicle emissions and the use of fossil fuels are vital to the success of Belmont's Climate Action Plan. The Community Path will help our town reach the goals of the Climate Action Plan in several ways. The Path will provide a safe alternative mode of transportation for many students in town who are currently driven or drive themselves to school, but will instead be able to walk or cycle. The centrally-located Path connects to the new Middle and High School campus, recreational fields, the municipal library and Belmont Center, a hub of retail, restaurant and small businesses. The Path will also provide easy access to multiple transit options, including the commuter rail, Alewife MBTA station and the 73, 74/75 and 78 bus routes. Further, the Path will create a linear park landscaped with native plantings and shade trees that will aid in improving air quality.

The Town's design consultant, Nitsch Engineering, submitted 25% design plans for the project to MassDOT in late October, 2021. We urge the Boston Region MPO to program this project for funding as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

James Booth, Co-chair
Marty Bitner, Co-chair
Belmont Energy Committee