

## 8. CPA PROJECT APPLICATION FORM

[CPC Use Only: Date Received \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_ ]

May be copied. Please print clearly, answer all questions, use "N/A" if not applicable. Use additional paper as needed.

1. Applicant Name: Last Selectmen First N/A 2. Submission Date: 1 Aug '07
3. Applicant Address: St. 173 Main St. City/ State: Groton, MA ZIP: 01450
4. Ph. # (978) 448-1111 Email: jritter@townofgroton.org
5. CPA Purpose. Check all that apply:  
 Community Housing: \_\_\_\_\_ (Affordable Housing: \_\_\_\_\_ ) Historic Preservation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Open Space: \_\_\_\_\_ Recreation:
6. Town Committee or boards participating: Groton Board of Selectmen
7. Project Location/Address: West Groton near Crosswinds Drive and Townsend Road
8. Project Name: Squannacook River Rail Trail Environmental and Engineering Assessment
9. Additional Responsible Parties (If applicable):

Role (specify)	Name	Address	Ph. (w) (cell)	Email
Property/Site Owner	Mark Boyle	MBTA, 10 Park Plaza Boston, MA 02166	(w) 617 222-3255	mboyle@mbta.com
Project Manager	Bruce H. Easom	435 Martins Pond Road Groton, MA 01450	(w) 978 448-9190 (cell) 978 758-4370	beasom@concentric.net
Lead Architect	To be determined	To be determined	To be determined	To be determined
Project Contractor	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Project Consultants	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

10. As appropriate, indicate if proposal requires P&S agreement No Deed No  
 Option agreement Other-describe: N/A
11. a) Assessor info. (map/ block/lot id(s)): See Note 1 b) Tax classification type: 910
12. Permits required: Zoning: N/A Historic Preservation: N/A Other: N/A
13. Historic Commission Approval signoff (when required): N/A Date: N/A
14. Funding: a.) Requested from CPC: \$ 10,000 b.) Committed from other sources: \$ 0.00  
 c.) Annual anticipated total income: \$ 0.00 d.) Annual anticipated total expense: \$ 0.00  
 d.) Anticipated net income (loss): \$ 0.00 e.) Estimator name/company: See Note 2
15. Community Preservation Plan Objectives -use codes from Chap. 6.2 to indicate all that apply:  
Rec. 5 & Rec. 7
16. Project Timelines: Proposed Start Date: 9 Nov. '07 Projected Complete Date: 1 Apr. '08
17. Estimated Delivery Date of Completion Report to CPC: 1 Apr. '08

**8. CPA Project Application Form (Side two)**

18. Project description and explanation (attach additional sheets as needed): This project application is a request for \$10,000 to fund Groton's portion of a rail trail environmental and engineering assessment. The assessment will evaluate environmental, engineering and public safety issues associated with converting 0.9 miles of the abandoned Peterborough and Shirley railroad bed in West Groton into a rail trail linking West Groton to Townsend Center. Completion of the environmental and engineering assessment is an important next step in the process of requesting that MassHighway undertake this rail trail project. MassHighway rules require that this environmental and engineering assessment be accomplished with local funds. This CPA project will be carried out in parallel with a similar assessment of the 2.4 miles of railroad bed in Townsend between the Groton town line and Route 13 in Townsend Center. The Townsend environmental and engineering assessment is being funded by the Squannacook River Rail Trail Advocacy Committee that, on 11 May 2007, was awarded a \$20,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for that purpose. A copy of the letter from DCR is included with the attachments to this application. (Continued on Page 4)

19. Feasibility: The project is feasible. Environmental and engineering assessments are done routinely as part of rail trail development projects.

20. List of attachments: The List of Attachments is shown on Page 4.

21. Additional Information: N/A

22. Applicant Signature: See Note 3 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Co Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Co Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes from pages 1 and 2

1) Assessors info: (map/ block/lot id.(s)):

The environmental and engineering evaluation will be conducted on the following Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority rail bed properties.

All of Parcel 19 on Assessor's Map 203

All of Parcel 60 on Assessor's Map 202

Northern Portion of Parcel 3 on Assessor's Map 102

2) Estimator name/company:


Fay, Spofford & Thorndike, LLC

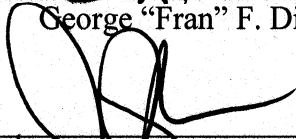
5 Burlington Woods

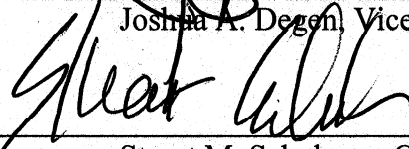
Burlington, MA 01803

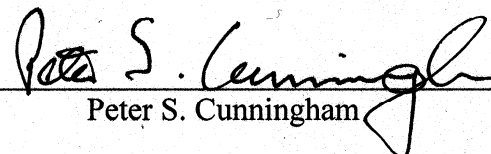
800 835-8666

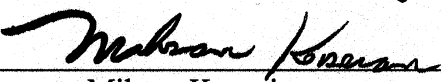
3) Applicant Signatures

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
George "Fran" F. Dillon Jr., Chair Date: 7/16/07

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joshua A. Degen, Vice Chair Date: 7/16/07

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Stuart M. Schulman, Clerk Date: 7/16/07

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Peter S. Cunningham Date: 7/16/07

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mihran Keoseian Date: 7/16/07

## List of Attachments

- 1) Grant Award Notification Letter from Massachusetts Department of Recreation and Conservation (DCR) to the Squannacook River Rail Trail Advocacy Committee. Page 9
- 2) Estimated cost of environmental and engineering assessment from Fay, Spofford & Thorndike, LLC Page 10
- 3) Cover letter from Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's Real Estate Office to Groton Board of Selectmen accompanying Draft Lease Agreement Page 11
- 4) Squannacook River Rail Trail Timeline, Railroad Epoch – 1846 to 1984 Page 12
- 5) Squannacook River Rail Trail Timeline, Rail Trail Epoch – 1990 to Present Page 13
- 6) CPA Project Time Line – 1 August 2007 to 1 April 2008 Page 15
- 7) Rail Trail Completion Timeline – April 2008 to May 2011 Page 16
- 8) CPA Project Management Plan Page 18
- 9) Recommended Language for Town Meeting Article Page 20
- 10) Map of Peterborough and Shirley Railroad Right-of-Way from Ayer, Massachusetts to Greenville, New Hampshire Page 21
- 11) Map of Proposed Squannacook River Rail Trail from Peter E. Bertozzi Wildlife Management Area to Townsend Center Page 22
- 12) Map of West Groton Section of Proposed Squannacook River Rail Trail Page 23
- 13) Map of Possible Trail Route Connecting Squannacook River Rail Trail at Peter E. Bertozzi Wildlife Management Area to Fitchs Bridge Page 24
- 14) Letter of Support from Nashua River Watershed Association Page 25
- 15) Letter of Support from Groton Trails Committee Page 26
- 16) Letter of Support from Groton Conservation Commission Page 27
- 17) Letter of Support from Groton Greenway Committee Page 28
- 18) Letter of Support from Stewardship Committee of the Squannacook and Petapawag Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Page 29

## **Background**

The Peterborough and Shirley Railroad was incorporated in 1846 with the original intention of creating a rail link between the rail center at Groton Junction (which is now part of Ayer, Massachusetts) and Peterborough, New Hampshire. Track laying began in 1847 and by 1850 the rails had passed through West Groton, Townsend and Mason NH. Concerned that the rival Nashua and Lowell Railroad would reach Peterborough, New Hampshire before the Peterborough and Shirley, the Peterborough and Shirley turned their tracks back south for a few miles, crossed the Souhegan river and ended at Mason Village, in what is now Greenville, New Hampshire.

The railroad opened 11 November 1850 with both freight and passenger service to Greenville. The railroad served the textile mills in Greenville and a granite quarry in Mason for over 120 years. Passenger service ended in 1933 and, with the decline of the mills, the last freight train left Greenville in May of 1972. The MBTA acquired the Massachusetts portion of the rail road right-of-way in 1976 and the rail line beyond Hollingsworth and Vose in West Groton was abandoned in 1979. Below Hollingsworth and Vose, the Guilford Transportation Company still considers the rail line to be active even though the last train to visit H&V was in about 1990.

In 2000 the State of New Hampshire acquired the portion of the right-of-way west of Mason, New Hampshire and built the 9 mile-long Mason-Greenville Rail Trail that runs from the Massachusetts border into Greenville. The steel bridge over the Souhegan River was removed in 1984 for scrap so the last mile of the bike path is along public roads.

In recent years a number of groups in Townsend have come together to investigate the creation of a Rail Trail to connect West Groton to the Mason-Greenville Rail Trail. The most recent group, the Squannacook River Rail Trail Advocacy Committee, formed in 2002 is headed by Bill Rideout and Steve Meehan both of Townsend. Committee membership also includes Al Futterman of the Nashua River Watershed Association, Bruce H. Easom of the Groton Trails Committee and Peter Cunningham of the Groton Board of Selectmen.

The early years of the current group was spent meeting with abutters, the Townsend Selectmen and holding public meetings to inform the public of the plans and to solicit input from interested people in both Groton and Townsend. In June of 2003 a public meeting was held in Townsend Town Hall to introduce the public to the idea of a rail trail and receive comments from the public. Attendees included members of Townsend's Board of Selectmen, members of Groton's Board of Selectmen, Representative Robert Hargraves and Irving Marshal, Townsend's Chief of Police. In May of 2006 a non-binding referendum was placed on the ballot in Townsend asking if voters supported converting the abandoned rail line into a rail trail. The voters voted overwhelmingly (1021 in favor and 259 opposed) to support the rail trail.

## **Environmental and Engineering Evaluation**

The purpose of the engineering evaluation study is to identify issues such as public safety, parking, grade crossing, culvert condition and repair, public facilities and environmental issues involved in converting the abandoned railroad bed (now owned by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority) into a rail trail for use by the public. An engineering evaluation will then help in the process of applying for state and federal funds to complete a detailed design and constructing the rail trail.

While the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) will allow the engineering company doing the environmental and engineering assessment to walk the railroad bed to look for possible environmental contamination, they will not allow any soil excavation until after the \$1.00, 85-year lease is signed by the towns of Groton and Townsend. According to the language in a draft of the lease agreement, once the lease is signed then the two towns become responsible for cleanup of any uncovered contaminated material. It is therefore very important to use visual inspections and a review of public records to discover any environmental problems before signing the lease.

Not only will the environmental and engineering evaluation be used to help protect the two towns from a big bill for soil remediation, it will be used to support the efforts of the two towns' Board of Selectmen to make their case to MassHighway and the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission. For the trail construction project to qualify for state and federal funds, it will have to be approved by the two agencies through a process that involves a number of submissions including a Project Justification Report. The environmental and engineering evaluation will be an essential part of that submission as it will be used to show the project can be accomplished with a reasonable amount of risk. A summary of the steps need to get the project approved is shown on Page 16.

To insure that the environmental and engineering assessment will be adequate for its intended purchase, the Request for Proposal being drafted by the Squannacook River Rail Trail Advocacy Committee will be reviewed by the Board of Selectmen and the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission before it is released for bidding. The Community Preservation Committee will be given an opportunity to comment before release as well as required by Section 4.2.8 of the Groton Community Preservation Plan 2007. The timeline for preparing, reviewing and issuing the RFP is shown on Page 15.

In addition to environmental issues, the environmental and engineering assessment will identify engineering issues that might make the project impractical to complete. Since the Groton portion of the rail line is relatively short (0.9 miles), has only two grade crossings (both of minor streets), and is built mostly on flat upland, show-stopping engineering issues are probably more likely to be identified in the Townsend section. Performing this assessment in parallel with Townsend is important because it keeps the activities of the two towns synchronized. Working in parallel reduced project delays caused when one town has to wait on the other.

## **Squannacook River Rail Trail and CPA Planning Objectives**

Completion of the first phase of the Squannacook River Rail Trail project would create a path for hikers, bikers, runners, skiers and equestrians to travel from West Groton to Townsend Center. As shown on the map on Page 22, it would provide a link between Peter E. Bertozzi Wildlife Management Area and the Squannacook River State Wildlife Management Area in East Townsend, the Historic District in Townsend Harbor, the Townsend State Forest and the commercial district in Townsend Center.

Traveling from Bertozzi toward Townsend Center, the Squannacook River State Wildlife Management Area abuts the south side of the right-of-way for three quarters of a mile starting near the Groton-Townsend line and ending near Townsend Harbor. The Squannacook River State Wildlife Management Area a 947-acre collection of scattered parcels of conservation land, with parts in Ayer, Groton, Shirley and Townsend and is controlled by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. At Townsend Harbor, the right-of-way enters the Townsend Harbor Historic District where the right-of-way is bounded on the south by Harbor Pond. After crossing Meeting House Road, the right-of-way is bounded on the south for nearly a mile by a section of the 3,229-acre Townsend State Forest, controlled by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

A completed Squannacook River Rail Trail will meet the following recreation objectives listed in Section 3.5.4.3 of the Plan.

Rec. 5 – To link current and future public land holdings with trails and additional holdings.

Rec. 7 – To provide public recreation lands and amenities that support Groton’s goal of bring people to the natural environment.

Additionally, the rail trail meets two important goals of the Five Year Action Plan outlined in the Groton Open Space and Recreation Plan 2005. Objective No. 9 states, “Explore special opportunities for recreational facilities” and lists two Actions, “Explore developing a river walk along the Nashua and Squannacook Rivers” and “Consider Fitch’s Bridge for a trail connection between W. Groton and Groton, working with abutting landowners to develop a trail system.”

Objective No. 13 states, “Work with neighboring towns to link adjacent open space and recreation areas”. Under the Actions is listed, “Consider old railroad bed lines to link with adjoining communities, i.e., the Hollis branch and the Peterborough & Shirley branches of the Fitchburg line.”

Finally, according to Section 3.5.3.2 on page 29 of the Groton Community Preservation Plan 2007, CPA funds may be used to “Convert existing structures such as a railroad bed to a recreational use such as walking, biking or inline skating trails”. A completed Squannacook River Rail Trail would help accomplish two of the goals of the Community Preservation Plan.

An environmental and engineering assessment is an important first-step in obtaining the state and federal funding needed to complete the project.

### **CPA Funds Requested**

The Groton Board of Selectmen is requesting \$10,000 to complete the environmental and engineering assessment. This is based on the ballpark estimate of \$8,000 received from Fay, Spofford and Thorndike, LLC in their letter dated 28 June 2007 shown on Page 10. The additional \$2,000 is to cover for the uncertainty in their ballpark estimate. If the bids come from the Request for Proposal somewhat higher than the \$10,000, the difference will be made up through private fundraising coordinated by the Project Manager, Bruce H. Easom. If the bids come back significantly higher than the Selectmen may choose to abandon the project as outlined in the Management Plan shown on Page 18.

### **Work Remaining after CPA Project Completion**

The Rails to Trails Conservancy estimates that it takes an average of 8 years, from conception to completion, to convert an abandoned railroad bed into a rail trail usable by the public. The execution of this CPA project will be just one of many parts in a long process. Given that the current effort started in October of 2002, it is reasonable to expect that the project is more likely in its middle phase rather than near its end. The projected time line of events required to complete the project, shown on Page 16, essentially confirms this expectation.

The next step after completing the environmental and engineering assessment will be to begin the process of getting the project reviewed and approved by MassHighway's Project Review Committee. This will require the Board of Selectmen in Groton and Townsend to submit letters requesting project support, a Project Justification Report and a Project Initiation Form in a time and manner all laid out in MassHighway's operating rules.

After the project is approved by the Project Review Committee funding will need to be arranged to begin the trail design process. The hope is that a portion of the four million dollars earmarked in 2005 for trail development in North Central Massachusetts by Congressmen John W. Olver will still be available in 2008.

After the environmental and engineering assessment, the first opportunity to get widespread feedback from the public is when the 25% Design has been completed. Here the public will see the proposed solutions to issues of parking, grade crossings, public facilities and public safety identified in the environmental and engineering evaluation.

The second important public review process comes when the design has been completed and the comments received during the 25% Design review have been incorporated. The next important step after that is when MassHighway bids out the job and looks at its budget to see when (or if) there will be money available to start construction. Once the funding is in place, MassHighway will award the job and supervise the trail construction. Given typical turn-around times at MassHighway, construction could start in 2010 and be completed in 2011.





May 11, 2007

Mr. Al Futterman  
Nashua River Watershed Assn.  
592 Main St.  
Groton, MA 01450

Dear Mr. Futterman:

Thank you for your application for **the Squannacook River Greenway Rail Trail** project under the 2006 Massachusetts Recreational Trails Program. A number of valuable proposals were submitted this year, and I am pleased to inform you that your project has been recommended by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and the Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Board to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation to receive a grant in the amount of \$20,000.

Total funding for the program and final grant awards are still pending. Once finalized, you will receive a copy of the contract and a Notice to Proceed from DCR. **You may then begin work on your project. Until then, please keep in mind that *any project costs incurred prior to receiving the official award and Notice to Proceed will not be eligible for grant reimbursement.***

Since some time has passed since you submitted your application, please take a look at your project scope and budget, including the minimum 20% match required, and make sure everything is still valid. **If any issues have arisen that will require significant changes to the project scope, budget or match portion of your project, please contact me immediately at 413-586-8706 ext. 20 or Paul.Jahnige@state.ma.us.**

Thank you for your patience, and please feel free to contact me with any questions. I am looking forward to learning more about your project.

Sincerely,



Paul Jahnige  
Director, Greenways and Trails Program



FAY, SPOFFORD &  
THORNDIKE  
5 Burlington Woods  
Burlington, MA 01803  
Toll Free: 800.835.8666  
T: 781.221.1000  
F: 781.229.1115  
www.fstinc.com

June 28, 2007

Mr. Bill Rideout  
**SQUANNAHOOK RIVER RAIL TRAIL COMMITTEE**  
(Fax 781-981-5766)

Subject: **Squannacook River Rail Trail**  
Groton & Townsend, Massachusetts  
Estimated Engineering/Feasibility Study Costs

Dear Mr. Rideout:

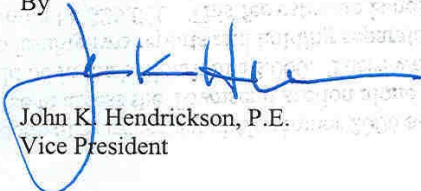
It is Fay, Spofford & Thorndike's (FST) understanding that the Squannacook River Rail Trail (SRRT) Committee is seeking information regarding the estimated costs for an engineering/feasibility study for the project corridor in both Groton and Townsend. We are aware that the Town of Groton is considering joining Townsend's SRRT effort by developing a 0.9-mile section of rail trail (i.e. shared use path) to connect to the Townsend border.

Based on the understanding of the draft SRRT Scope of Services dated November 2006 and our recently completed rail trail studies, we estimate that the fee to assess the Townsend section alone would be \$20,000. The cost to assess the Groton section alone would be in the ballpark of \$8,000. There would be an economy of scale to combining the sections as opposed to issuing two reports and holding separate informational meetings. Both sections studied together would be \$25,000. This fee estimate is not based on detailed tasks and related work efforts but rather is a ballpark estimate intended for programming purposes for Groton's Community Preservation Act (CPA) application.

As an introduction to our firm, FST is a multi-disciplinary consulting engineering and planning firm founded in 1914. FST has planned and designed more than 500 miles of trails in cities and towns throughout the Northeast. Example projects include the design of the 11-mile Nashua River Rail Trail and recent work on the redesign of the 22-mile Cape Cod Rail Trail. Our knowledge in traffic planning and design of roadways, bridges, and drainage systems has served our clients well, enabling us to successfully complete rail trail designs. In addition to design, FST has undertaken feasibility studies to address such features as alignment/route selection; civil, structural, hydraulic and other elements of engineering design; environmental permitting; grant applications; public involvement; and construction phase services.

If you have any questions on the above or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at 781-221-1133 or via email <jhendrickson@fstinc.com>.

Sincerely,  
FAY, SPOFFORD & THORNDIKE, LLC  
By



John K. Hendrickson, P.E.  
Vice President

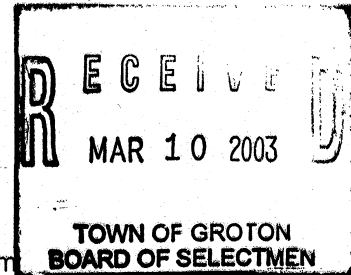
cc: Jennifer A. Shemowat, P.E., FST

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ENGINEERS - PLANNERS - SCIENTISTS  
*Trusted Partners for Design Solutions*

March 7, 2003

Mr. Dann Chamberlin  
Chair, Groton Board of Selectmen  
Town of Groton  
173 Main Street  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237



Re: MBTA Bike Path ("Alternative Transportation Corridor") Program

Dear Mr. Chamberlin:

In response to your letter to Mark Boyle, MBTA Director of Real Estate, we would like to thank the Board of Selectmen for their interest and support in constructing an Alternative Transportation Corridor ("ATC") along the MBTA Greenville Branch within the Town of Groton. We have worked through resolution of many unique difficulties involved with the program and now have developed a final form 85 year lease agreement. I enclose a specimen draft of the document for your review.

The 85 year ATC lease is structured to maintain the continuity of the right of way in the event that it might be required for future transit purposes. The lease is also structured to deal with the issues of encroachments and excess land along the right of way, which we will need to discuss further relative to establishing the ATC over the Greenville Branch.

Over the next several weeks we expect to work closely with you in order to resolve all outstanding issues and finalize the ATC lease agreement. To that end, it would be very helpful if you supplied us with a status report of the Town's development of the Greenville Branch ATC. Please forward to my attention copies of surveys or design plans that have been prepared for the corridor along with a list of any unique issues of which you may be aware such as encroachments onto the right-of-way. Of particular importance would be your identifying any MBTA land outside of the core ATC r-o-w (approximately 25 feet wide) that should not be considered for sale to abutters.

We look forward to working with you to expedite development of the ATC in your community, and thank you in advance for your cooperation. Please feel free to contact either Melissa Daversa or me at TRA (617- 482-2525) with any questions you may have.

Very truly yours,

TRANSIT REALTY ASSOCIATES, LLC

Philip R. Jean  
Manager of Sales and Leasing

cc: M. Boyle, Director of Real Estate, MBTA  
D. DiZoglio, Deputy General Manager, MBTA  
W.G. Constable, Principal, Transit Realty Associates

20 Winthrop Square Boston, Massachusetts 02110 Phone (617) 482-2525 Fax (617) 482-0210

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's Designated Representative for Real Estate.

*cc: BOS, A. Fulterman - NRWA*

### **Squannacook River Rail Trail Timeline, Railroad Epoch – 1846 to 1984**

- 1846 Peterborough and Shirley Railroad incorporated. The original plan is to build a rail line to connect the Fitchburg Railroad in Groton Junction (now Ayer) to Townsend, Massachusetts; and on to Mason, Wilton and Peterborough, New Hampshire
- 1847 Construction begins in Groton Junction toward the New Hampshire state line
- January 1848 Line from Groton Junction to West Townsend opens
- 1849 Peterborough and Shirley Railroad turns south to end in Mason Village (now Greenville, New Hampshire) due to fears that the Nashua and Lowell Railroad would reach Peterborough first.
- 1850 Rail line to Mason, NH opens and railroad reaches the Souhegan River
- 1851 Railroad bridge over Souhegan River completed and rail line reaches Mason Village
- 11 November 1850 Passenger and freight service to Greenville begin
- 1860 Peterborough and Shirley Railroad is purchased by the Fitchburg Railroad
- 1911 Fitchburg Railroad is purchased by the Boston and Maine Railroad to form the B&M.
- 8 July 1933 Last passenger train to Greenville
- May 1972 Last freight train to Greenville as B&M abandons the line north of West Townsend
- 1976 B&M sells the Massachusetts portion of the Peterborough and Shirley Railroad right-of-way to the MBTA
- 1979 B&M abandons rail line north of Hollingsworth and Vose in West Groton
- 1984 Rails are removed from railroad bed in New Hampshire and bridge over Souhegan River is dismantled.

## **Squannacook River Rail Trail Timeline, Rail Trail – 1990 to Present**

- Early 1990's Ken Gerken of Townsend, an abutter to the rail trail, forms an informal group to investigate the feasibility of a rail trail. A proposal is voted down at Town Meeting in Townsend. This occurs before the construction of the Nashua River Rail Trail in Ayer, Groton, Pepperell and Dunstable.
- July 2000 Nine miles of the railroad right-of-way are opened in New Hampshire as the Mason-Greenville Rail Trail.
- October 2002 Squannacook River Rail Trail Advocacy Committee formed in 2002 with Al Futterman of the Nashua River Watershed Association and Bob Hickox of Townsend.
- March 2003 Squannacook River Rail Trail Advocacy Committee circulates a petition to measure public interest in the proposed rail trail. 391 signatures obtained including 13 rail line abutters.
- 10 March 2003 Groton Board of Selectmen receive requested draft of lease agreement from Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority describing terms of 85-year right-of-way lease for rail trail construction.
- 12 June 2003 Pubic meeting held in Townsend Town Hall. Attendees included Townsend Selectmen, Groton Selectmen, Representative Robert Hargraves and Irving Marshal, Townsend's Chief of Police.
- May – June 2004 Daily turtle monitoring program by Natural Heritage from Crosswinds Drive to Townsend town line. None found. Natural Heritage discourages trail construction south of Peter E. Bertozzi Wildlife Management Area due to sensitive habitat.
- 29 July 2005 Congressman John W. Olver (D-1st District) announces that U.S. House of Representatives passed a \$286 billion authorizing bill to fund the nation's highways, bridges, mass transit systems and bicycle pathways through 2009. The bill includes an earmark totaling \$4,000,000 for four proposed rail trails in North Central Massachusetts including the Squannacook River Rail Trail
- 21 March 2006 Presentation to Townsend Board of Selectmen by Squannacook River Rail Trail Advocacy Committee. Townsend Selectmen vote to

put non-binding question on ballot.

- 10 May 2006 Non binding referendum on the Townsend Town Ballot for the support of the Squannacook River Rail Trail passes with 1,021 in favor and 259 opposed.
- 30 June 2006 Selectmen send Squannacook River Rail Trail Advocacy Committee a letter of support for the Engineering and Feasibility study. Townsend Selectmen request a copy of the draft lease agreement from the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.
- October 2006 \$20,000 grant request is submitted by the Squannacook River Rail Trail Advocacy Committee to the Massachusetts State Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) under their 2006 Massachusetts Recreational Trails Program.
- 10 November 2006 Paul Jahnige, Head of the Trails and Greenways Division of DCR, walks the rail bed from Townsend Center to the Peter E. Bertozzi Wildlife Management Area in Groton.
- 11 May 2007 \$20,000 DRC grant is awarded to the Squannacook River Rail Trail Advocacy Committee for funding Townsend's portion of the environmental and engineering assessment.
- 11 May 2007 Arthur Frost, Head of Mass Highway District 3, and Sarah Bradbury, Assistant Head of Mass Highway District 3, walk the rail bed from Townsend Center to Harbor Village.
- 11 May 2007 Draft of Request for Proposal (RFP) for "Squannacook River Rail Trail Environmental and Engineering Assessment" sent to Montachusett Regional Planning Authority for their review
- 1 August 2007 Groton Board of Selectmen submit CPA project application to Groton Community Preservation Committee to fund Groton's portion of the Squannacook River Rail Trail Environmental and Engineering Assessment

**CPA Project Time Line – 1 August 2007 to 1 April 2008**  
**(Assumes CPC Recommendation and Approval at Town Meeting)**

- 1 August 2007 Request for Proposal (RFP) document prepared and ready for review by Groton Board of Selectmen, Town Accountant, Groton Community Preservation Committee and Montachusett Regional Planning Commission. RFP will require quoting companies to have extensive rail trail engineering experience in Massachusetts. Companies will be required to provide three quotes as follows
- 1) Environmental and Engineering Assessment for Groton Only
  - 2) Environmental and Engineering Assessment for Townsend Only
  - 3) Environmental and Engineering Assessment for Townsend and Groton with price breakdown by town.
- The RFP will be written, and the RFP process will be conducted to comply with the state's municipal procurement laws.
- 13 August 2007 Request for Proposal released
- 24 September 2007 RFP submissions due
- 23 October 2007 Town of Groton Special Town Meeting – project approved by majority vote
- 6 November 2007 Approval obtained from Community Preservation Committee and Town Accountant to sign contract with selected engineering company.
- 9 November 2007 Sign contract with selected engineering company. CPA project begins.
- 15 November 2007 Work begins on Groton and Townsend Squannacook River Rail Trail Environmental and Engineering Assessment
- 1 April 2008 Squannacook River Rail Trail Environmental and Engineering Assessment completed. Nine copies of Groton and Townsend Squannacook River Rail Trail Environmental and Engineering Assessment delivered to CPC at monthly meeting. Invoice from the engineering company presented to CPC for signature and payment. Project final report submitted to CPC.

**Rail Trail Completion Timeline – April 2008 to May 2011**  
**(Assumes Project Proceeds to Completion Using Average Task Durations)**

- 1 April 2008 Groton and Townsend Selectmen send letter to MassHighway, and a copy to the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, requesting rail trail funding assistance. Letter includes copy of Squannacook River Rail Trail Environmental and Engineering Assessment.
  
- 1 June 2008 Groton and Townsend Selectmen prepare and submit a Project Justification Report to the MassHighway District Highway Director and to Montachusett Regional Planning Commission prepared at local expense.
  
- 1 September 2008 Proposed project is reviewed by the MassHighway Project Review Committee and towns are notified if project is approved.
  
- 1 September 2008 MassHighway Project Planning process begins
  
- 1 December 2008 Planning process ends and project initiation begins. Selectmen update and submit Project Initiation form to MassHighway
  
- 1 February 2008 Project Initiation Form is reviewed by Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, MassHighway District Office and MassHighway Project Review Committee.
  
- 1 April 2008 25% Design completed. Begin first public design review process
  
- 15 January 2009 Selectmen in Townsend and Groton make project Go/ No-Go decision based on 25% design and public input.
  
- 15 April 2009 Majority vote at Groton and Townsend Annual Town Meetings determine whether project proceeds or stops.
  
- 1 July 2009 100% Design completed. Begin second public design review period.
  
- 1 August 2009 Selectmen contact Montachusett Regional Planning Commission to have project placed on Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) list.
  
- 1 November 2009 Montachusett Regional Planning Commission places project on TIP list.



- 1 November 2009 Groton and Townsend negotiate and sign 85-year MBTA lease and pay the lease fee of \$1.00.
- 1 January 2010 Mass Highway sends job out for bid
- 1 March 2010 Mass Highway awards construction contract
- 1 May 2010 Mass Highway starts construction. The Squannacook River Rail Trail becomes an official “Active Project”
- 1 May 2011 Trail opens.

## CPA Project Management Plan

Bruce H. Easom will manage the project on behalf of the Board of Selectmen to insure the CPA Project Timeline, shown on Page 15, is met. Project management involves:

- 1) Preparing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the environmental and engineering assessment that meets the requirements of the Groton Board of Selectmen, the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission and the Community Preservation Committee as required in Section 4.2.8 on page 32 of the Groton Community Preservation Plan 2007. This step is essential in insuring the environmental and engineering assessment received will be adequate for the purpose of applying for follow-on Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding.
- 2) Releasing the RFP, receiving the proposals from responding engineering companies and selecting the winner in a way that conforms to the state's municipal procurement laws.
- 3) Helping prepare a Town of Groton purchase order for the Community Preservation Committee to the winning engineering firm as required in Section 4.2.8 on page 31 of the Groton Community Preservation Plan 2007.
- 4) Acting as the Town's primary contact person with the selected engineering company. This includes answering questions and monitoring the project progress against the performance timetable in the selected engineering proposal.
- 5) Acting as the contact person to the Community Preservation Committee and provide a monthly update on the progress of the project.
- 6) Preparing a project final report for the Community Preservation Committee. This report is a deliverable in addition to the environmental and engineering assessment.
- 7) Presenting copies of environmental and engineering assessment, project final report and the engineering company's invoice to the Community Preservation Committee. This includes answering any questions from the public or Community Preservation Committee members about the completed project.

Project cost overruns will be handled through the raising of additional private funds. The RFP will specify that the project will be a fixed price contract so cost overruns are extremely unlikely. If the responses to the RFP are significantly above the \$10,000 requested, and sufficient additional private funding cannot be found to make up the difference then no contract for the environmental and engineering assessment will be

awarded. In that event, the project will be terminated and the \$10,000 approved at Town Meeting will be returned to the FY08 Budget Reserve. A project final report will be prepared and presented to Community Preservation Committee describing why the project was abandoned.

## **Recommended Language for Town Meeting Article**

Section 4.2.5 on page 31 of the Groton Community Preservation Plan 2007 requests that project proponents include recommended language for the Town Meeting article as part of their application. Below is the recommended language.

ARTICLE: ? Squannacook River Rail Trail Environmental and Engineering Assessment

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44B, Section 5, to appropriate the amount of \$10,000 from FY08 Budget Reserve to fund the Community Preservation Application 2007-?? “Squannacook River Rail Trail Environmental and Engineering Assessment” or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE & BOARD OF  
SELECTMEN

Finance Committee: Recommendation – At Town Meeting

Community Preservation Committee: Recommendation – At Town Meeting

Summary: These funds will be used for an environmental and engineering assessment that will look at grade crossings, culverts, parking, environmental and public safety issues associated with converting 0.9 miles of abandoned railroad bed in West Groton to a rail trail that will connect West Groton to Townsend Center. The environmental and engineering study will be used to help the project qualify for MassHighway Transportation Improvement Project (TIP) funding.

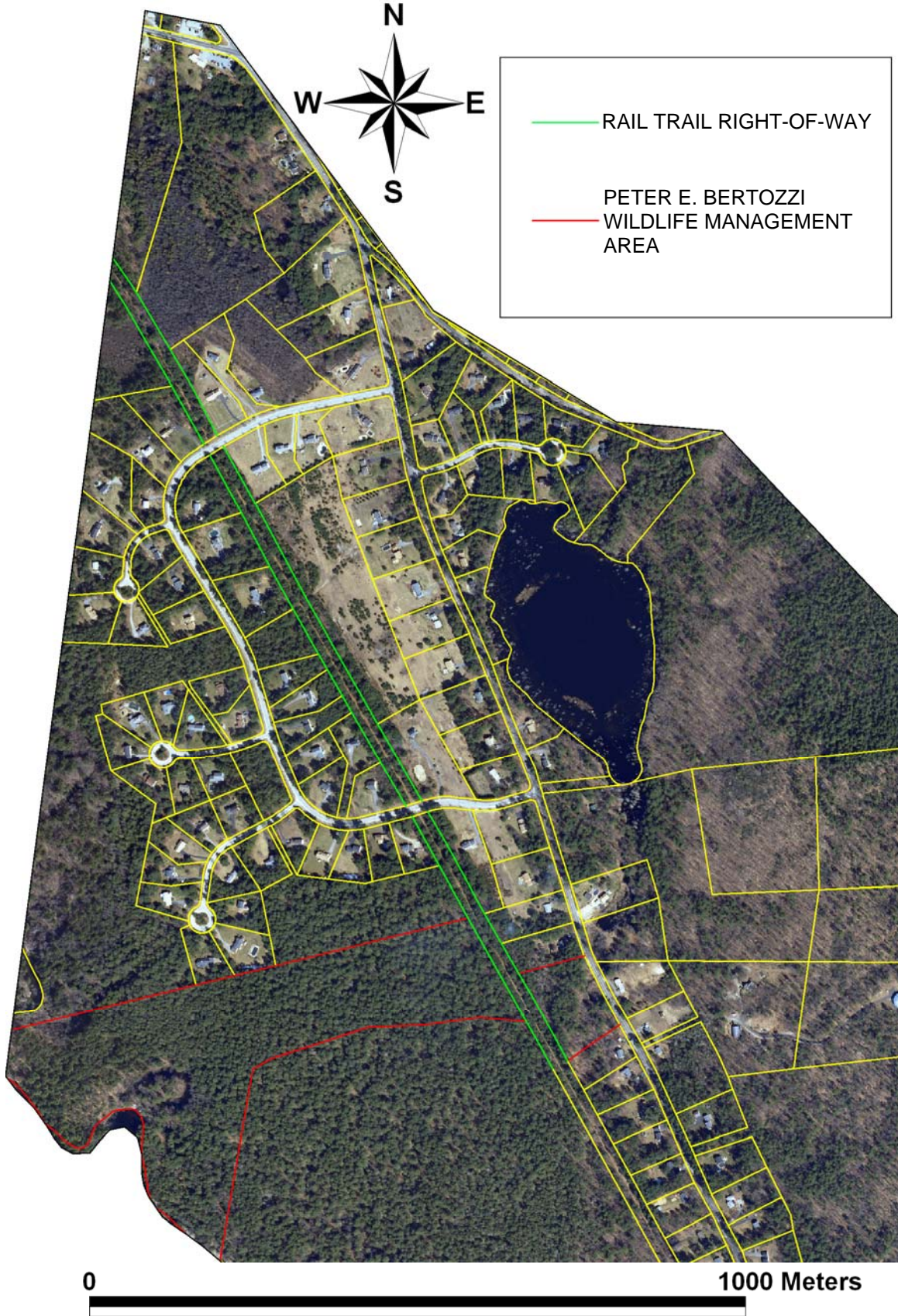
**Map of Peterborough and Shirley Railroad Right-of-Way from Ayer to Greenville**

---- Insert 11 x17 USGS Topo Map Here ----

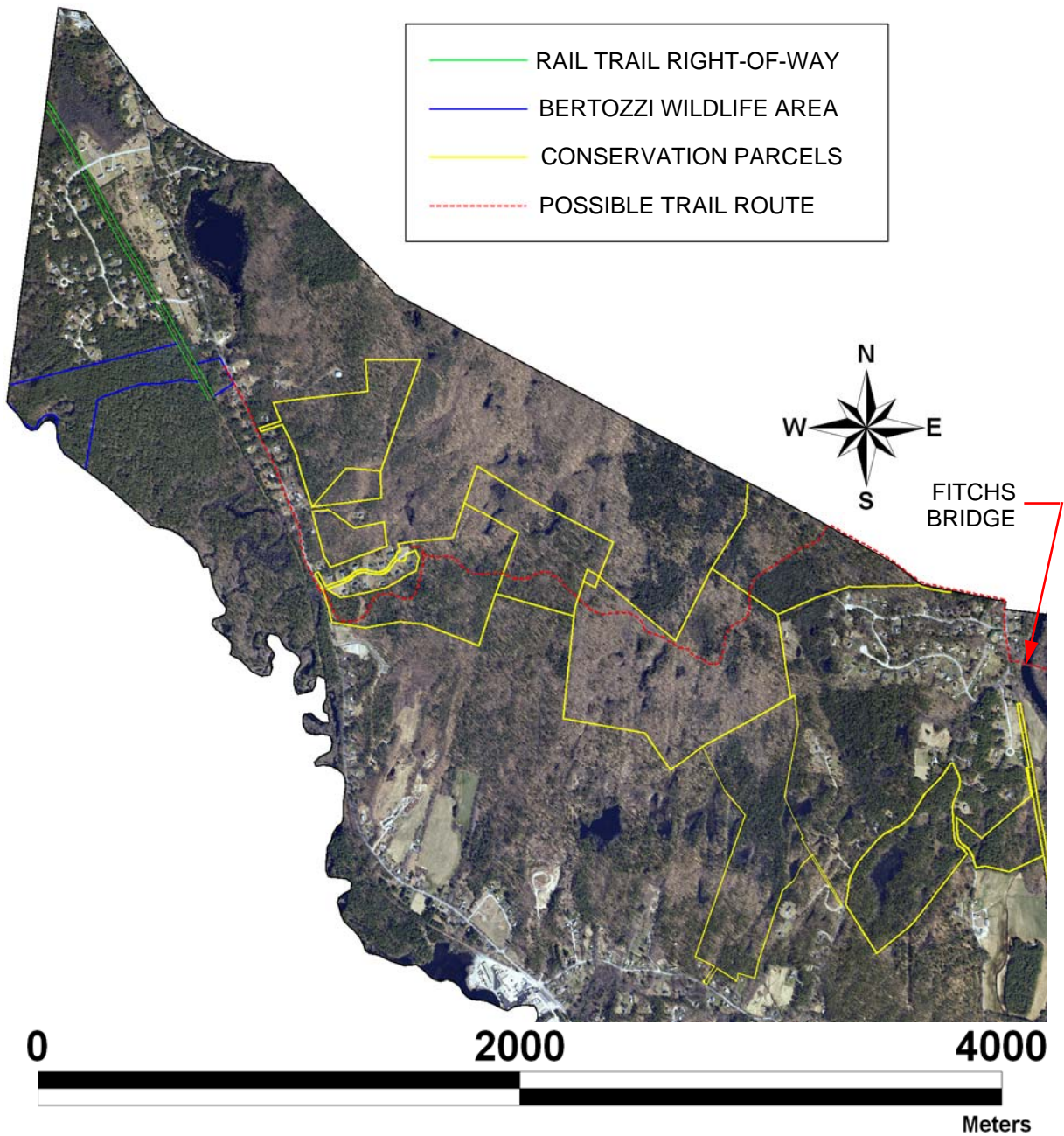
**Map of Proposed Squannacook River Rail Trail from Peter E. Bertozzi Wildlife  
Management Area to Townsend Center**

---- Insert 8½ x11 USGS Topo Map Here ----

# West Groton Section of Proposed Squannacook River Rail Trail



# Possible Trail Route Connecting Squannacook River Rail Trail at Peter E. Bertozzi Wildlife Management Area to Fitchs Bridge



ALL CONSERVATION PARCELS SHOWN ALLOW PUBLIC ACCESS AND ARE OWNED BY THE TOWN OF GROTON, GROTON CONSERVATION TRUST OR THE NEW ENGLAND FORESTRY FOUNDATION





# Nashua River Watershed Association

592 MAIN STREET, GROTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01450-1230  
TEL: 978/448-0299 FAX: 978/448-0941  
www.NashuaRiverWatershed.org

July 1, 2007

**President**

Edward McNierney  
Groton, MA

**Vice President**

Lucy Wallace  
Harvard, MA

**Treasurer**

Tim Althof  
Hampton, NH

**Secretary**

Marion Stoddart  
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Mark Eaton  
Lancaster, MA

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Connie Keeran Lapres  
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Judy Larter  
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William Luers  
Nashua, NH

Bob Pine  
Groton, MA

Mary Shasta  
Harvard, MA

Frank Streeter  
Lancaster, MA

Steve Webber  
Groton, MA

**Executive Director**

Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell

Groton Community Preservation Committee  
Town Hall  
173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

To Whom It May Concern:

The Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA) enthusiastically supports the CPA proposal to fund a preliminary engineering study on converting a segment of the abandoned "Peterborough and Shirley Railroad" bed in West Groton to a rail trail (the proposed "Squannacook River Rail Trail"). The segment is the 0.9 miles of track north of the Peter E. Bertozzi Wildlife Conservation Area to the Groton-Townsend town line near the Harbor Village Shopping Center in Townsend.

The Squannacook River Rail Trail Friends group is undertaking fundraising and commissioning of a preliminary engineering study for the Townsend segment of the proposed rail trail: 2.4 miles (of the 3.3 mile total) from the Groton-Townsend town line to just shy of Route 13 in Townsend Center. Thus, the two towns will likely merge their studies into one for the cost saving purpose of an economy of scale.

The NRWA has been working on this rail trail project for several years. The project cannot proceed any further until a preliminary engineering study has been conducted. It has been our belief that Groton has been most amenable to the rail trail idea since its inception. It is recent news that a preliminary engineering study for the Townsend segment is within sight and, consequently, this would be the time for the Groton CPC to authorize funds to complete the study on the eastern-most 0.9 mile. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us at 978-448-0299 or at [alfutterman@NashuaRiverWatershed.org](mailto:alfutterman@NashuaRiverWatershed.org).

Sincerely,

Al Futterman  
Land Programs and Outreach Director

Ed McNierney  
NRWA Board President





# TOWN OF GROTON

## Groton Trails Committee

173 Main Street  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237  
(978) 448-1111  
FAX: (978) 448-1115



Robert DeGroot, Chairman  
Community Preservation Committee  
173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

RE: Squannacook River Rail Trail Feasibility Study

Dear Mr. Chairman,

At their monthly meeting on Tuesday, June 23, 2007 the Groton Trails Committee voted unanimously in favor of supporting the Community Preservation Committee application for funding the amount of \$10,000 for an engineering and environmental feasibility study of 0.9 miles of the Groton portion of the former Peterborough and Shirley Railroad bed currently owned by MBTA.

At this time the town of Townsend is working on converting their portion of the same railroad bed to a rail trail. Upon completion of both sections, this would allow pedestrians, bikers, skiers, and other non-motorized trail users to travel from Townsend center along the Squannacook River toward West Groton. On the way they have the option to connect to the existing trail system known as Thrown Hill, which offers additional and extensive opportunities for outdoor recreation nearby. It allows traveling as far as Fitch's Bridge with a future possibility to connect to the Groton town center.

The Nashua River Rail trail has shown us that the moderate grade and smooth surface of a rail trail attracts dozens of recreationists each day. Hikers, bikers, skiers, and families with small children enjoy not having to watch out for cars while exercising. We are convinced that upon completion the Squannacook River rail trail would attract a similar number of people.

The engineering and environmental feasibility study is the first step in that direction. The Groton Trails Committee urges you to look favorably at this application for Community Preservation funding.

Sincerely yours,

Joachim Preiss, Chairman  
Groton Trails Committee



**TOWN OF GROTON**  
Groton Conservation Commission  
173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450-1237  
(978) 448-1106  
Fax: 978-448-1113  
e-mail: bganem@townofgroton.org

July 19, 2007

Robert DeGroot, Chairman  
Community Preservation Committee  
Town Hall - 173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

RE: Squannacook River Rail Trail Feasibility Study

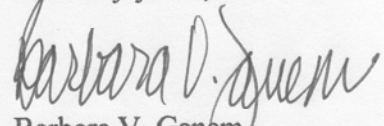
Dear Mr. DeGroot:

At a meeting on Tuesday, July 10, 2007, the Conservation Commission voted unanimously to support the Community Preservation Committee application for funding in the amount of \$10,000 to begin an engineering and environmental study of .9 miles of the former Peterborough & Shirley railroad bed in Groton currently owned by the M.B.T.A. Traveling through some of the most scenic forested and riparian landscape in W. Groton, this rail trail could provide many of the same recreational opportunities currently enjoyed on the Nashua River Rail Trail. Users of all ages take advantage of the rail trail – from runners, mothers with babies in backpacks or strollers, kindergartners practicing their biking skills in safety, people confined to wheelchairs, dog walkers, roller bladers, equestrians, bicyclists, to senior citizen exercise groups – a rail trail is a tremendous asset to a very broad spectrum of the community.

Experts have identified obesity as one of the most significant public health issues of our time. Readily accessible rail trails provide opportunities for exercise while also giving residents a chance to enjoy our region's natural resources and to meet and connect, enhancing the sense of community. Expanding Groton's trail network to link with adjoining towns, such as Townsend, will provide the public an alternative to getting in a car to seek distant recreational opportunities.

The phased planning outlined in the proposed feasibility study is comprehensive and thoughtful. The Commission urges you to look favorably upon this application for Community Preservation funding.

Sincerely yours,

  
Barbara V. Ganem  
Conservation Assistant

Groton Greenway Committee  
Groton Town Hall  
173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

Groton Community Preservation Committee  
Groton Town Hall  
173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

To Whom It May Concern:

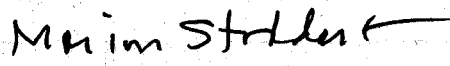
The Groton Greenway Committee supports the Community Preservation Act proposal to fund a preliminary engineering study to convert a portion of a former railroad bed between the Bertozzi Wildlife Management Area in West Groton and the Townsend town line into a recreational trail. A portion of the proposed study area abuts wetlands adjacent to the Squannacook River.


This project corresponds very closely with two of the Greenway Committee's interests for the Town. We seek to conserve space for water quality/quantity, wildlife habitat, farms, forests and recreation. We also are interested in protecting, sustaining, and connecting lands as corridors for wildlife habitat and as a trail linkage for recreational use. This project will provide an open space for recreation that lets users appreciate the land, including greenway portions, around them.

The Greenway Committee believes that this kind of project raises awareness about conservation and water resource areas and provides a net benefit to the community. We support this \$10,000 proposal for the Groton portion of a preliminary engineering study.

Sincerely,

Groton Greenway Committee

  
Marion Stoddart  
Co-Chair

  
David Manugian  
Co-Chair

**Stewardship Committee**  
**Squannassit and Petapawag Areas of Critical Environmental Concern**  
**592 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450-1230**  
**Tel: 978-448-0299**  
**www.squannassit.org**

July 16, 2007

Community Preservation Committee  
Town of Groton  
Town Hall  
173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

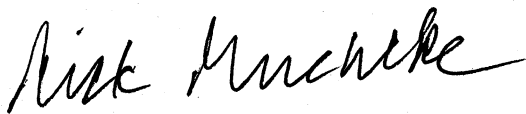
To Whom It May Concern:

The Stewardship Committee of the Squannassit and Petapawag Areas of Critical Environmental Concern strongly supports the proposal to fund a preliminary engineering study to convert a portion of the old "Peterborough and Shirley Railroad" line in West Groton, so that it can be used as a recreational trail. We understand that this trail will become part of the "Squannacook River Rail Trail". The rail bed in question is 0.9 miles in length. It extends from north of the Bertozzi Wildlife Conservation Area in West Groton, to the Groton-Townsend town line.

The Squannacook River Rail Trail Friends organization is carrying out fundraising and a preliminary engineering study for the 2.4 mile portion of the rail trail from the Groton-Townsend town line to just east of Route 13 in Townsend Center. If possible, it would make sense for the two towns to combine their studies so as to save money.

The Stewardship Committee feels that a well-designed and constructed rail trail would be a significant benefit to the residents of West Groton and Townsend, in particular. The rail trail will further everyone's appreciation of the spectacular environment in this area by making it safe and easy for them to enjoy the outdoors. We believe that this in turn will lead to greater public support for protecting the environment of this area.

Sincerely,



Rick Muehlke  
Coordinator  
Stewardship Committee  
Squannassit and Petapawag Areas of Critical Environmental Concern