



September 2, 2021

Sudbury Historical Commission
C/O Christopher Hagger, Chair
Flynn Building
278 Old Sudbury Road
Sudbury, MA 01776
historical@sudbury.ma.us

Dear Sudbury Historical Commission,

Thank you for your letters to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) dated August 16 and August 18, 2021, regarding the Sudbury portion of the proposed Mass Central Rail Trail.

I truly appreciate the Commission's outreach to DCR and your recognition that the future Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) represents an important opportunity to incorporate and highlight existing railroad features and artifacts along the Central Massachusetts Railroad Corridor (CMRR) into a positive rail trail experience for all users. The cultural resource inventory that you commissioned for the corridor in Sudbury will be a very useful resource as we complete the final design details for the MCRT and plan for interpretive elements.

The preservation of the historic railroad-related resources referenced in your letter will largely be addressed through the ongoing review of the Sudbury-Hudson Transmission Reliability/MCRT Project under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800). Therefore, I encourage the Commission to make substantive comments to the US Army Corps of Engineers on their most recent proposed determination and draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) as a part of the Section 106 process. While I understand the Commission may be frustrated with the limited scope of the Section 106 review, I believe it is an important opportunity and responsibility for the Commission, and you should submit comments as soon as possible.

Our joint design plans with Eversource demonstrate substantial efforts to retain and protect many of the railroad-related artifacts, structures and features along the corridor. We will be retaining or re-setting the diamond junction, signals and signal boxes, whistle posts, mile markers, rail rests, switch stands, telegraph poles, and nearly all the culverts on the corridor. In addition, we have redesigned the project to avoid impacts to the Section Tool house and its loading platform. I do look forward to discussing these designs and efforts more with the Commission, and consulting and collaborating with you on opportunities to highlight and interpret these and other features through design and signage once the Section 106 process is completed.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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Regarding the Commission's concern about removal of rail infrastructure, while DCR has a right to remove rails and ties under our lease agreement with the MBTA, it is a non-exclusive right, and the expectation is that most of the rails and ties will be removed from the corridor as a part of the first phase of project construction to be executed by Eversource. I believe that Eversource/DCR project team has offered to provide some representative rail sections to the Commission, and is committed to retaining or resetting some representative rails and tie sections, including the diamond junction. Most of the other infrastructure, artifacts and features are to be retained or reset.

I would also like to take this opportunity to clarify that DCR, as a State Agency, is not subject to local bylaw, and thus we will not be seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Sudbury Historic Districts Commission (HDC), although we are certainly happy to share our project plans with them.

I look forward to a more collaborative, ongoing conversation with the Commission to highlight the historic railroad features along the rail trail. As you also noted, I believe that we have a shared interest in historically sensitive rehabilitation along this corridor that will contribute to a positive user experience.

While I will not be available to attend your September meeting, I will make sure that I am available to attend the October 19th meeting virtually.

Again, thank you for your outreach.

Sincerely,



Paul Jahnige
DCR State Park Trail Planner

CC:

Denise Barton, Eversource Energy
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