

TOWN OF EASTON
MASSACHUSETTS
Office of the Town Administrator

March 1, 2018

Matthew A. Beaton
Secretary, Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Re: South Coast Rail - Easton, Massachusetts

Dear Secretary Beaton:

These comments are submitted on behalf of the Easton Board of Selectmen in response to the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR), South Coast Rail Project Phase 1 filed with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. At a meeting held on February 26, 2018 the Board of Selectmen voted its continued opposition to the Stoughton alternative altogether and expressed its support of the Middleboro alternative as the long-term solution to provide commuter rail service to the South Coast.

The Town of Easton, through the Board of Selectmen, have documented in past comments its concerns the impacts the Stoughton Alternative will have on the town. Those concerns remain and are summarized here:

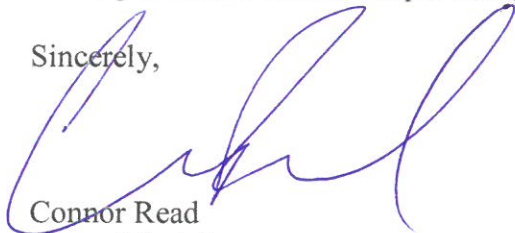
- The existing Main Street overpass will not accommodate double-decker train cars and would need to be reconstructed so that there is no material grade change along Main Street itself. An at-grade crossing or an improved overpass with a significant rise from current grade is not acceptable. Either would negate the economic boost this area is realizing as a result of the millions of revitalization dollars invested by the town and Commonwealth.
- The activated rail line and its attendant catenary wires, signaling and crossing infrastructure will have a severe visual impact on the town, especially the historic districts in and around North Easton Village. As noted in the previous bullet the town has spent millions of dollars revitalizing this area, with significant assistance from the Commonwealth. Impacts to these historic districts would need to be appropriately mitigated.
- Sound barriers and other noise mitigation measures would be required in areas of high residential density along the line, in addition to the locations proposed in the FEIR.
- The Middleboro alternative achieves the goal of providing commuter rail service to Fall River and New Bedford at a lower cost and with less environmental impact. The DSEIR

does not provide a full cost analysis comparing the cost of Full Build to the full cost of Phasing the project (i.e. Phase 1, followed by construction of the Stoughton to Taunton connection). Both a DSEIR Fact Sheet (available on the South Coast Rail website) and the DSEIR itself, state significant savings will be realized by constructing the Middleboro connection to the Southern Triangle sooner than would be possible for the Full Build. Once constructed it would seem the Middleboro Alternative has met the project's goal and the Stoughton Alternative will be unnecessary.

Enclosed with this letter are copies of the comment letters previously submitted and which detail the Town's concerns and the mitigation measures necessary to protect the safety of Easton's residents, preserve the integrity of Easton's nationally recognized historical districts and protects the nascent revitalization of Easton's downtown.

Thank you for your consideration of Easton's concerns. We ask that the Middleboro Alternative be the permanent solution to providing the South Coast to Boston connection.

Sincerely,



Connor Read
Town Administrator

enclosures

cc: Easton Board of Selectmen
Senator Walter F. Timilty
Senator Michael D. Brady
Representative Claire D. Cronin
Representative Shauna O'Connell
Stephanie Danielson, Director of Planning & Economic Development
David Field, Director of Public Works