

# MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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September 23, 2011

Edward M. Lambert Jr.  
Commissioner  
Department of Conservation and Recreation  
251 Causeway Street Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114-2104

Dear Commissioner Lambert:

I am writing on behalf of the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC), a subcommittee of the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC), to express our committee's support for the Squannacook Greenways, Inc., and their efforts to build the Squannacook River Rail Trail.

It is our understanding that that Squannacook Greenway Inc., has discussed a public/private partnership with DCR concerning the MBTA rail bed and that the intent is for your agency to lease this easement from the MBTA. Then, according to a presentation made to the MJTC on September 21<sup>st</sup>, the Squannacook Greenway, through a memorandum of agreement with your office, would construct and maintain the trail.

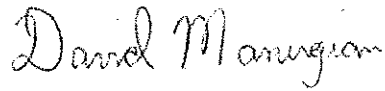
Over the last few years, the MJTC has maintained contact with the towns of Groton and Townsend related to their efforts to develop the rail trail. The individuals involved in this effort have been a focused and determined group that has continually sought out methods to develop and secure funding for the trail. This commitment can best be illustrated by the number of years devoted to this effort (some eight plus years of work), their strong ties to the Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA), an environmental non-profit with 40 years of commitment to the Nashua River Watershed and its communities, and the work done in the towns of Groton and Townsend to advance the trail. The communities themselves have indicated their support through funding commitments, \$10,000 of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds by Groton, and town vote, i.e. a non-binding vote in 2006 by Townsend of 1021 to 259 in support of the trail. In addition, each town has established official town committees that supported the formation of the non-profit Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

Through these actions, we feel that a strong commitment exists by the Squannacook Greenways, Inc. that will continue to operate and maintain the trail as outlined in any memorandum of

agreement between DCR and Squannacook Greenways. Additionally, the trail will be a benefit to the Montachusett Region both recreationally and economically and it also supports the goals and policies outlined in our current Regional Transportation Plan related to environmental issues and transportation options.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter and we look forward to the successful implementation of the Squannacook Rail Trail.

Sincerely,



David Manugian  
Chairman, MJTC

DM/BH/bh

CC: Groton Board of Selectmen  
Townsend Board of Selectmen  
Bruce Easom, Squannacook Greenways, Inc.  
Bill Rideout, Squannacook Greenways, Inc.  
Glenn Eaton, Executive Director, MRPC  
Brad Harris, Transportation Project Director, MRPC