

MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
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Administrator
Mohammed H. Khan

October 30, 2009

Richard Doyle
Administrator
Federal Transit Administration, Region 1
Volpe Center
55 Broadway Street, Suite 920
Cambridge, MA 02142-1093

RE: Extension of the Fitchburg Commuter Rail Project –
Section 106 Approach and Area of Potential Effect

Member Communities
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Stow

Dear Mr. Doyle:

Thank you for the comments from Noah Berger of your staff, received by e-mail dated October 8, 2009, regarding the Extension of the Fitchburg Commuter Rail Project as presented in the Draft Environmental Assessment prepared by the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) and our consultant McMahon Associates. In the comments, Noah requested information related to the Project's completion of review with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. To initiate this review process, MART is requesting concurrence from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and Section 106 approach for this project.

Since this project involves mostly work within the existing right of way (ROW) on an active freight corridor, previously disturbed land, or on land previously reviewed for effects to cultural resources, MART is proposing the following efforts to identify historic properties:

- Survey all known historic properties within 200 feet of the ROW whose setting may be visually affected by new above-grade structures within the ROW.
- Where work is outside the existing ROW at the proposed station parking lot, no above ground resources have been identified within the site, and it has been subject to past disturbance associated with construction of the 231 Industrial Park, previously reviewed under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA #8261) in 1990. If required, an archaeological survey of this area will be undertaken prior to the commencement of construction.

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property, contains no above ground resources and has already been reviewed under MEPA (MEPA #8074) in 2008 and was subject to an intensive (locational) archaeological survey resulting in no significant resources identified within the proposed layover facility site, therefore, no additional archaeological survey is proposed.

- Screen potential staging areas outside the ROW and conduct historical and archeological investigations, as appropriate, prior to commencement of construction.

MART respectfully requests FTA's review and recommendation of this approach to the MHC as soon as possible so that we may proceed with the required surveys. A project description and associated graphics are enclosed for transmittal to the MHC along with the FTA's Section 106 letter.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 978-665-2263 or bfisher@mrta.us if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Bruno Fisher
MART Chief Operating Officer

Attachment

- C: Brona Simon, Massachusetts Historical Commission
Holly Palmgren, MBTA
Christine Apicella, McMahon Associates
Taya Dixon, Epsilon Associates