



## Town of Middleborough

Massachusetts

Board of Selectmen

March 21, 2018

Governor Charlie Baker  
Massachusetts State House  
Office of the Governor - Room 280  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker,

At their weekly meeting on March 5, 2018, the Middleborough Board of Selectmen voted to oppose the plan as it stands for the construction of the Pilgrim Junction Train Station in the Town of Middleborough. The Board would like to formally submit their comments on the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR). More importantly, the Board would also like to submit proposed solutions for the project, the expectation being that the Town of Middleborough and the Commonwealth can have an open dialogue moving forward. We hope our comments and proposed solutions below can be legitimately heard and allows us the opportunity to prove that the proper attention should be given to them.

### **Water Resource Protection District**

Pilgrim Junction Station is in a Water Resource Protection District (WRPD) Zone 2 and there is a potential for contamination of the Town's well water. The proposed project directly abuts an area of land the federal government has designated an environmental justice protected site. According to the DSEIR, there has been insufficient study of water contamination and no archaeological pit tests conducted on the site.

Further, the Town would like to know how the Commonwealth intends to mitigate the 25% impervious area requirement and the 50% natural vegetation requirement ensuring safe drinking water for residents. There is also storm water run-off from the proposed location that drains directly into the Nemasket River, which has already seen significant run-off from the on ramps from Route 495. At minimum, an order of conditions from the Middleborough Conservation Commission would need to be sought for this project to move forward.

We hope that the adequate studies can be performed as soon as possible so that there is a guarantee of no adverse effects to the Town's well water or potential archeologically significant artifacts harmed. We welcome open communication for these processes and our Town departments are more than willing to assist.

### **Environmental Justice**

Everett Square is a federally-recognized environmental justice area and about a mile away from the proposed station. Much of the areas in and around this area are lower income neighborhoods and located close to the railroad tracks. These areas are subject to the consistent practice of idling trains, odorous materials and storage yards. Negative effects stemming from the aforementioned potential contamination of drinking water will be

significantly detrimental to these neighborhoods. Residents of these areas are concerned that the proposed Pilgrim Junction Station will magnify the serious issues that they already face on a daily basis.

### **Economic Development**

Vital economic development plans and opportunities would be permanently disrupted by potential construction of a new station. The Chase Chevrolet property has long been identified as a potential commercial windfall for the Town. As a result, potential gains from this property will not be realized. Poor state infrastructure in the area is not up to standard and will undoubtedly detract from potential investments from outside sources. Making sure the project is street compliant is also a concern for the Board so that our roads are properly integrated and provides the potential for walkways and bicycle pathways.

There is the potential for economic development in the immediate area of the proposed Pilgrim Junction site as well as the downtown area, but only with legitimate investment from the Commonwealth. Incentives and infrastructure improvements will go a long way in solving the many concerns the residents of the Town have.

### **Traffic Studies**

There have yet to be adequate traffic studies performed to date around the proposed Pilgrim Junction site or the major roadways that may be adversely affected. The one traffic study that was performed was on a single clear day in June, when the usual individuals from the High School would not be in session. We would like to see a more comprehensive traffic study performed so that we are able to fully understand the consequences of construction.

Additionally, according to the MassDOT 2015 Top Crash Locations Report (most recent available), the intersection of Routes 28 and 105, adjacent to the proposed Pilgrim Junction Station, is #98 for the most crashes in the Commonwealth for the year 2015. This is already a dangerous intersection and the location of the proposed Pilgrim Junction Station, without remediation plans, would complicate this intersection and make it susceptible to more vehicle crashes and injuries.

Undoubtedly, our Department of Public Works, Police and Fire Departments will need to be expanded to accommodate the additional traffic and riders to the Town. Aid from the Commonwealth in this area will help ease the burden of the expansion of the Town's resources and ensure Middleborough rider safety. A Selectman also recommended a heated structure on the train platform to protect riders from the elements would further ensure the safety of Middleborough riders for over half of the year.

It appears that there are fewer parking spots at the proposed Pilgrim Junction Station than at the current Lakeville/Middleborough Station. If the ridership is projected to increase, the Town would like to know how the Commonwealth intends to address insufficient parking. A solution that would potentially alleviate traffic and congestion would be the introduction of a second entrance on Route 28. This would allow for traffic to be more equally dispersed between the two entrances and would allow for residents to be able to access the station by foot. This idea could also assist with economic development and growth in the downtown area.

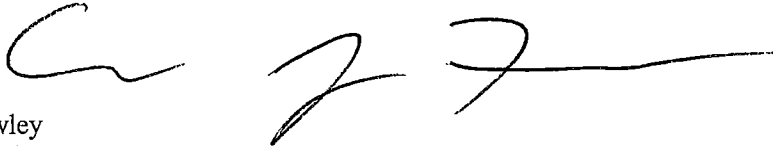
### **Benefit to the Town of Middleborough**

As presented, the proposed Pilgrim Junction Station offers zero benefit to the Town of Middleborough. The Town is being told it will host a new train station; even if it were true that there will be no detriment to the Town (a position with which the Board disagrees, as laid out above), the Commonwealth should work with the Town to develop improvements to the Town's infrastructure and further its economic development plans.

An overarching and preferred solution of the majority of the Board is the rotary flyover project (MassDOT project #606307). It has long been a priority of the Town and would solve many economic development and traffic concerns that have plagued the Town and the region for decades. This preferred solution comes at a significantly lesser cost (\$80 million) and affects 47,000 vehicles on a daily basis. Fixing this problem area would have a tremendous positive effect on traffic safety, economic development opportunities, and congestion that we anticipate from the introduction of a train station less than 3 miles away.

We hope to become cooperative partners to this \$935M infrastructure project, but at this point in time there remains a lack of communication from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with the Town of Middleborough. We are aware that our participation is not required. However, if we are not able to meet with the Commonwealth to discuss these concerns and proposed solutions or the Commonwealth refuses to legitimately address them, the Commonwealth will not receive the Town's support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Allin Frawley', written in a cursive style.

Allin Frawley  
Chairman

CC: Senator Marc Pacheco  
Representative Keiko Orrall  
Representative Thomas Calter  
Representative Susan Williams-Gifford

