

March 12, 2013

Board of Alderman Land Use Committee  
Newton City Hall  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton Centre, MA 02459

RECEIVED  
Newton City Clerk  
2013 MAR 12 PM 2:37  
David A. Olson, CMS  
Newton, MA 02459

**Re: Walking and Biking Trail Connections To and From BH Normandy's  
Proposed Station at Riverside**

Dear Land Use Committee Member:

We are a group of Auburndale and Lower Falls neighbors who are concerned that the developer's proposal for Riverside Station does not address walking and biking trail connections in the neighborhood including the adjacent Charles Riverside Park. Please accept this letter and five attached exhibits as our proposal to correct this problem.

### **Introduction and Summary**

The proposed development of a mixed-use project called The Station at Riverside by BH Normandy Riverside LLC offers a unique opportunity to create enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access from Riverside to neighboring villages and to the beautiful Charles Riverside Park which is adjacent to the site. The goal of this proposal is to enhance existing infrastructure, at minimal cost, to promote safe and efficient pedestrian and bike access between the new development and the Newton communities of Auburndale and Lower Falls.

There is no dispute that green spaces and nature paths provide a benefit for all Newton residents as well as Riverside Station office workers and apartment dwellers. Providing this river access to and from the proposed Riverside Station development seems essential to any responsible permitting of the project. We believe it is very important that there be walking and hiking access from the Riverside Station development to the following two areas:

- The hiking loop passing through DCR's adjacent Riverside Park and into Auburndale, and
- Safe Pedestrian Connection Over To Newton Lower Falls.

#### **A) A hiking loop around Riverside Park and into Auburndale:**

Riverside Park is literally right next door to the Riverside MBTA station and the Park provides a green, surprisingly quiet oasis in the midst of a highway-riddled area. The Riverside Park also has a rich history which includes community recreation in the middle of the last century. Today, Riverside Park features fields, woods, the beautiful concrete

arch railroad bridge, and a section of the Charles rich with herons and wood ducks, providing a serene refuge from the development that surrounds it. There are two attractive footbridges leading into Riverside Park -- one recently renovated and the other slated for repair soon -- as well as playing fields, picnic areas, and a canoe dock. Six months ago, the MWRA built a paved trail connecting the Weston end of the downstream foot bridge up to Recreation Road.

Our group of Auburndale and Lower Falls neighbors urge the Land Use Committee ("LUC") to ensure that the Riverside Developer improve access to the Riverside Park and into Auburndale in two ways:

1. Ensure there is a two lane bike and pedestrian path or sidewalk (as set forth in the developers June 2012 proposal) which connects the Northwest corner of the Riverside Station project to Recreation road. This will allow one connection to the existing Riverside Park loop.

2. In addition, we urge the LUC to provide funding to upgrade the Tunnel at the end of Charles Street in Auburndale. This tunnel lies at the Northeast end of the Riverside Park loop and it will allow a second connection to the Riverside Park loop. This tunnel at the end of Charles Street is currently the only point of access to the loop from the Newton side.

If the tunnel at the end of Charles Street is repaired, it will allow Auburndale residents to reach the Riverside MBTA station by going through the tunnel, over the trestle bridge, and up through Recreation road. The other advantage of completing this tunnel and Riverside Park trail loop is to connect Riverside Station to the Charles River Bike Trail, which currently has its southern terminus in Lyons Park in Auburndale.

#### **Attached Exhibits 1 - 4**

1. Satellite1.png is an aerial view of the Riverside Park, with the concrete arch railroad bridge in the center, DCR's pedestrian bridges upstream (right) and downstream, the parking garage of the Riverside Office Center to the southeast, and the Mass Pike to the north.

2. LeoJMartin.jpg is a map from DCR's web site that shows the extents of Riverside Park at the north end.

3. CRNF bike trail alternatives.pdf showing potential trail routes along the Charles, including loops to the northeast that take advantage of DCR's pedestrian bridges in Riverside Park.

4. The concrete arch bridge, taken from the downstream pedestrian bridge. The concrete arch is one of several beautiful features of Riverside Park.

**B) Safe Pedestrian Connection over the Highway to Lower Falls:**

Our group of Auburndale and Lower Falls neighbors (but not the Charles River Neighborhood Foundation) further urge the LUC to ensure that the Riverside Developer renovate the existing train bridges crossing recreation road and I-95 to create a path between the Riverside development and the street grid in Lower Falls. This path would terminate on existing spurs of Clearwater and Deforest Streets in Lower Falls.<sup>1</sup> The costs involved would include an engineering study to assess the structural soundness of the bridges, converting the existing rail bed to a pedestrian / bike path, and enhancement of the bridges with new wooden planks, fencing or perhaps a cage in order to meet safety codes.

As it stands, the developer has proposed a double-roundabout system on Grove Street crossing Rte. I-95/128 which focuses on vehicular traffic, rather than those traveling on foot or bicycle. These two rotaries make the crossings problematic and confusing for pedestrians/commuters but particularly for the young elementary children and their families walking to and from the Williams school. The train bridge crossing would be a safer alternative for pedestrians and bicyclists traveling from Newton Lower Falls to the Riverside Station.

**Attached Exhibit 5.**

5. An additional trail map which includes the safe pedestrian/bike connection between Riverside Station and Newton Lower Falls.

The specific segments involved in the above proposal on Exhibit 6 are numbers:

- #1- the old rail bed from Riverside across two bridges to Newton Lower Falls
- #14 - Charles St to Lasell Boat House – from Charles St across the Lasell Boat House bridge to Recreation Road at Riverside Park
- #16 - Charles St to Riverside -- from Charles St through the tunnel under the commuter rail T line along the rail spur to Riverside
- #17 - Riverside to Recreation Road – from Riverside parking lot through the back of Hotel Indigo along Recreation Road across the Charles River to Riverside Park
- #18 - Charles River Bike Path to Charles St. - the end of the Blue Heron Bike Trial at Lyon's Park along Commonwealth Ave, to Auburn St and Charles St under the Mass Pike.

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<sup>1</sup> This proposal is limited to bike/pedestrian trails that could be accomplished with relative minor investments, using existing infrastructure. The proposals deliberately exclude any path segments that would be objectionable to the Lower Falls community.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge the LUC to recommend that the full Board not approve the Riverside Station project until the Developer addresses the above issues.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Tod Cochran', written in black ink.

Tod Cochran, (Auburndale, [tod.cochran@gmail.com](mailto:tod.cochran@gmail.com))

Amy Sangiolo (Auburndale, [amysangiolo@gmail.com](mailto:amysangiolo@gmail.com))

Bob Persons (Auburndale, [rpersons@rcn.com](mailto:rpersons@rcn.com))

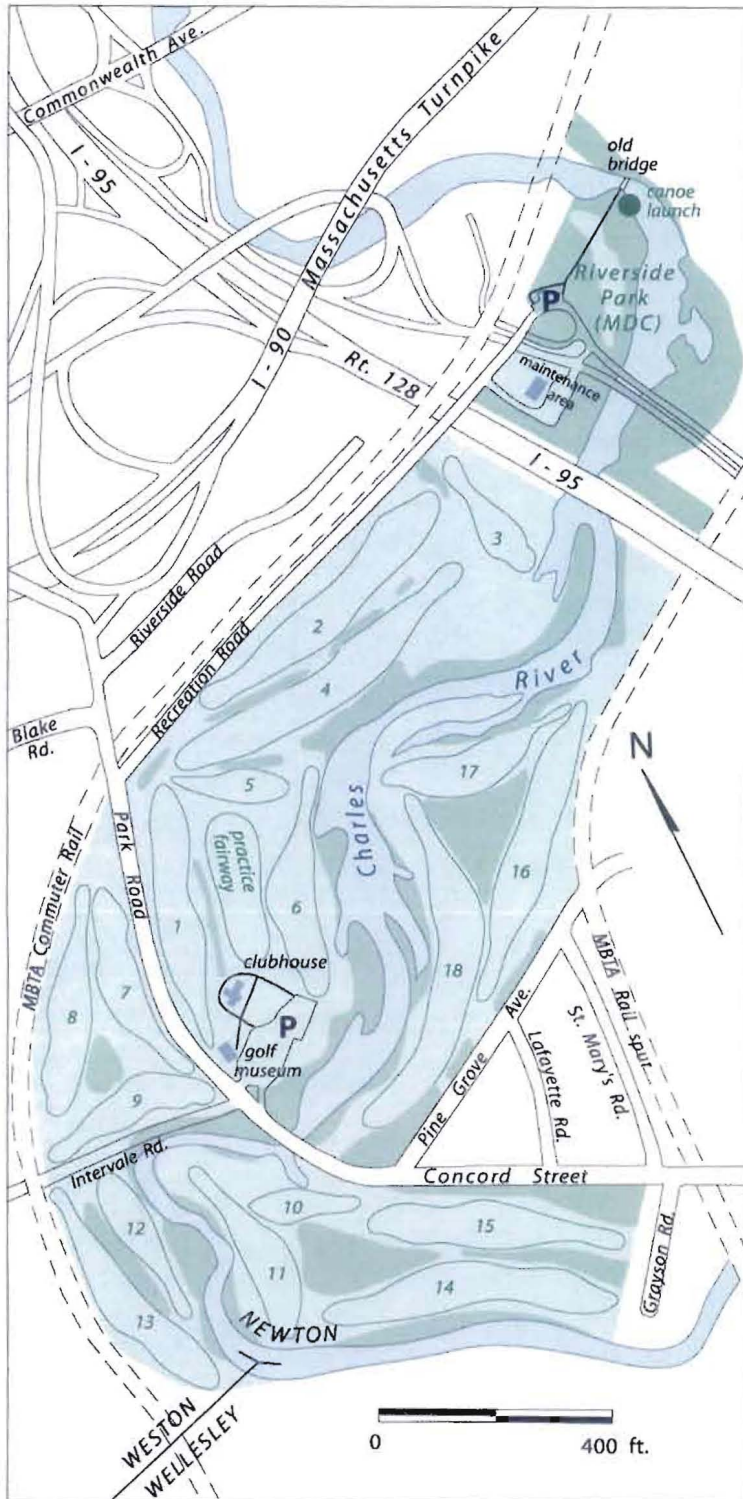
Ted Chapman (Newton Lower Falls, [ehchapman@verizon.net](mailto:ehchapman@verizon.net))

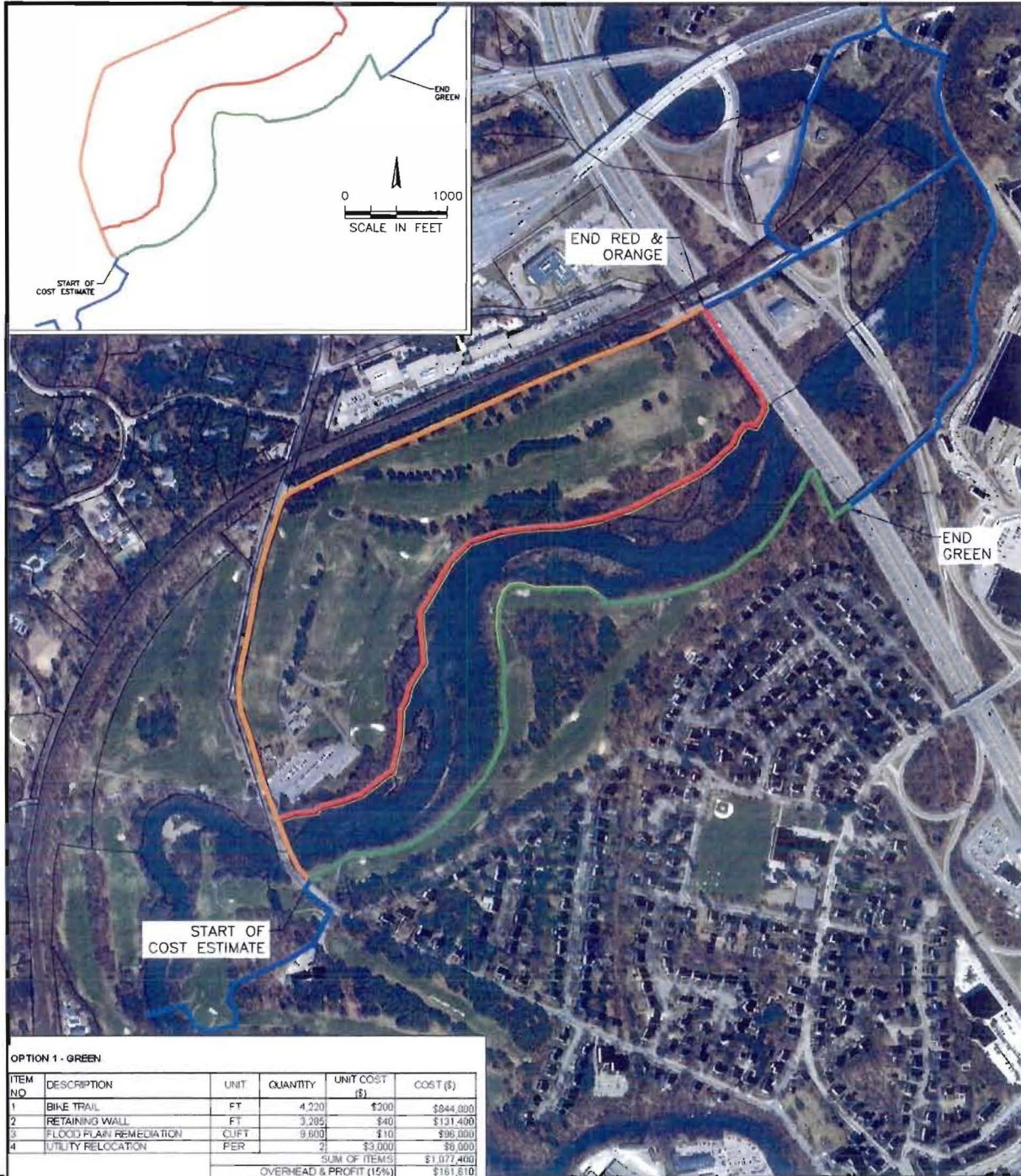
Cc: Board of Aldermen  
Candace Havens  
Steve Buchbinder  
Riverside Station Neighborhood Coalition



Navigation controls including a compass, a zoom-in (+) and zoom-out (-) button, a zoom slider, and a zoom reset (X) button.

200 ft





**OPTION 1 - GREEN**

ITEM NO	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	QUANTITY	UNIT COST (\$)	COST (\$)
1	BIKE TRAIL	FT	4,220	\$200	\$844,000
2	RETAINING WALL	FT	3,285	\$40	\$131,400
3	FLOOD PLAIN REMEDIATION	CUFT	9,600	\$10	\$96,000
4	UTILITY RELOCATION	PER	2	\$3,000	\$6,000
SUM OF ITEMS					\$1,077,400
OVERHEAD & PROFIT (15%)					\$161,610
PERMITTING & ENGINEERING (20%)					\$215,480
CONTINGENCY (25%)					\$269,350
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>\$1,730,000</b>

**OPTION 2 - RED**

ITEM NO	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	QUANTITY	UNIT COST (\$)	COST (\$)
1	BIKE TRAIL	FT	4,530	\$200	\$906,000
2	RETAINING WALL	FT	3,285	\$40	\$131,400
3	FLOOD PLAIN REMEDIATION	CUFT	43,500	\$10	\$435,000
4	UTILITY RELOCATION	PER	2	\$3,000	\$6,000
SUM OF ITEMS					\$1,478,400
OVERHEAD & PROFIT (15%)					\$221,760
PERMITTING & ENGINEERING (20%)					\$295,680
CONTINGENCY (25%)					\$369,560
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>\$2,370,000</b>

**OPTION 3 - ORANGE**

ITEM NO	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	QUANTITY	UNIT COST (\$)	COST (\$)
1	BIKE TRAIL	FT	4,320	\$150	\$648,000
2	RETAINING WALL	FT	220	\$40	\$8,800
3	FLOOD PLAIN REMEDIATION	CUFT	0	\$10	\$0
4	UTILITY RELOCATION	PER	10	\$3,000	\$30,000
SUM OF ITEMS					\$686,800
OVERHEAD & PROFIT (15%)					\$103,020
PERMITTING & ENGINEERING (20%)					\$137,360
CONTINGENCY (25%)					\$171,700
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>\$1,060,000</b>

- ASSUMPTIONS**
- Cost estimate is for the colored sections (Green, Red, Orange) shown in the plan ONLY as an aid to determine the most economical route.
  - Unit Base Cost is estimated to be \$150 per foot of 8-ft wide trail for well compacted material along existing roadway or rail bed.
  - Unit Base Cost is estimated to be \$200 per foot of 8-ft wide trail along the golf course and/or resource area due to trail base material import/compaction and export of unusable material.
  - Flood plain remediation assumes a 12-ft wide and 1-ft deep impact. Cost is an estimate of providing flood storage to mitigate the loss of this storage.
  - Estimate does not include a safety fence within the golf course areas (options 1 & 2) to protect pedestrians from the golf activity. This may be required for public safety.
  - Detail on the bridge crossing at the start of the trails (options 2 & 3) is insufficient and therefore the cost associated with this crossing has not been included.
  - The contingency is provided for the variability and unforeseen conditions that will arise due to the conceptual nature of this project at this time.

Color: Ortho Imagery, Miss08 2005

**Horsley Witten Group**  
 Environmental & Geotechnical Services  
 www.horsleywitten.com

**Preliminary Cost Estimate  
 CRNF Bike Trail  
 Newton, Waltham & Weston  
 Massachusetts**



