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November 15, 2011

Eric A. Kraus, Chairman  
Board of Selectmen  
Town Hall  
135 School Street  
Walpole, MA 02081

Re: Pilot Rail Study

Dear Mr. Kraus:

Last Spring, our firm commissioned the *I-495/Southwest Regional Commuter Rail and Operations Study*, which evaluates the feasibility of expanding public transit systems in the southwest region of the I-495 corridor to address existing needs and future growth. Our Firm is one of the sponsors of the 495/MetroWest Partnership, a public-private nonprofit organization which advocates for the success of the 495/MetroWest region.

We firmly believe that expanded commuter rail is key to long-term economic development in the southwest region of the 495/MetroWest area.

We engaged Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. to study the operational feasibility of additional commuter rail services over lines owned by CSX and currently used for occasional freight trains and event passenger trains to Gillette Stadium. The starting point for our study was a more detailed report prepared by the MBTA and the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development in 2010. The results of our study showed that a pilot program to test commuter rail service was operationally feasible for a very modest investment.

We presented a draft report of our study to the Transportation Committee of the 495/MetroWest Partnership in September 2011, and have made a series of presentations to planning groups since then.

The study was intended to provide additional technical analysis of commuter rail service for the purpose of determining operational feasibility, and is to be forwarded to the MBTA for consideration. As such, the original draft of our study did not call for community input, which would be an element of the MBTA planning process should it decide to further examine a commuter rail pilot program.

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Eric A. Kraus, Chairman

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However, we have received feedback from several communities that they would like the opportunity to provide comment on the study prior to its submission to the MBTA, planned for the end of December. If you have not had an opportunity to review the draft study, it is on our website: [www.mirickoconnell.com](http://www.mirickoconnell.com). We are happy to accept written comments on matters particularly affecting your community that you feel the MBTA should take into account if it decides to move forward with a pilot program. If you will forward written comments to me by December 23, 2011, I will ensure that they are included in the appendix when the final report is given to the MBTA.

While your community may have specific concerns that would need to be considered by the MBTA if the MBTA decides to proceed with a pilot program, I hope that you agree with the concept that expanded commuter rail is a useful tool for long-term economic development in the southwest region of the 495/MetroWest area.

Very truly yours,



John O. Mirick

JOM/caf