



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 30, 2016

Re: “Proposed Eversource Use of MBTA Rail Corridor Opens the Door to Evaluation of Future Commuter Rail Along the Route 20 Corridor.”

NorthEast Logistics Systems, LLC (NELS) an independent consulting firm in Framingham, MA recently completed a study on the proposed use of the Central Massachusetts Rail ROW as part of the Hudson-Sudbury Transmission Reliability Project. The goal of the study was to identify alternative routes that would meet Eversource’s needs for transmission line improvements, while causing the least disruption to the communities involved -- particularly Sudbury, Stowe and Hudson.

As an outcome of the study, NELS identified and evaluated seven specific alternative transmission line routes. It also assessed Eversource’s “Preferred Route”, which if approved, would use a highly-valued portion of the rail-banked MBTA Massachusetts Central Rail ROW and likely preempt future use as a transportation corridor, mid-term and long-term.

“The original land-taking for the railroad was for transportation purposes. Using the ROW for high voltage transmission lines, which would inhibit, in any way, future transportation possibilities violates the provisions of rail-banking and the rights of the landowners who originally succumbed to the land-taking.” said Richard Flynn, President of NELS.

“While transportation development may not materialize until 30 or 40 years from now, no action should preempt future transportation use”. “Next generation, green, transportation solutions will be needed along the Route 20 corridor at some point.” Flynn said. “It could be new technology providing personal transportation. “Advancements in on-demand driverless vehicles powered by fuel-cells or electric technologies will be mainstream in coming years.”

An example of successful rail-banking in Eastern Massachusetts is Cape Rail. A key ROW between Stoughton and Taunton remained dormant from 1959, though preserved and now the key connector in the extension of MBTA service to Fall River and New Bedford.

Short-term, towns along the ROW from Sterling to Waltham, including Hudson, Stowe, Marlboro, Sudbury, Wayland and Weston need to understand the once in a generation chance to preserve a valuable transportation asset. “There are mixed feelings about commuter rail”, Flynn added, – “particularly in its current form, but if there is a consensus that there is no need for transportation on this corridor, rightfully, the land should return to private owners. You can’t just reassign its use for power transmission”