

Public Testimony

October 19, 2020

By Mary Z. Connaughton, Pioneer Institute

This is Mary Connaughton from Pioneer Institute regarding the I-90 Allston Multi Modal project.

Thank you, board members and Madam Secretary.

Until the pandemic struck, I had been commuting on the Worcester line for about a decade. During that time, I saw tremendous improvements in service, primarily because full-time two-track service became a permanent reality. Gone are the days when taking an early train home meant long delays around Beacon Yards when the conductor would announce “we apologize for the for the delay but we must stop and wait for an incoming train to pass.” I remember waiting for up to ten minutes - all the time wishing I had driven in.

Framingham alone has five new residential developments under construction or recently opened within reasonably close proximity to the train station. It is of the utmost importance that two-track service be maintained throughout the project’s duration. I believe that the modified all at-grade option will do that best. However, to confirm that belief, more transparency is needed from MassDOT.

In the late 1950’s and early 60’s, it was the Massachusetts Turnpike that caused Framingham to be the fastest growing community in the nation. Turnpike access has been the life’s blood of MetroWest ever since and significant commuter disruption from this project threatens the economic well-being of so many west of Boston. It is of the utmost urgency that six turnpike lanes be operational throughout the project’ duration.

To ensure the public that the option chosen will not economically devastate our communities and be in the interest of sound good governance practices, the construction phasing plans for all throat

options under consideration should be made available to the public for comment well in advance of a consensus option being agreed-upon. It is my understanding that MassDOT has not yet provided the public with this information. Transparency, as always, is an absolute must to ensure the project is completed with the public's support.

Thank you.