

City of Woonsocket, RI

Department of Planning & Development

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August 19, 2019

To: US Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Cc: Parties of Record: Peter Denton, Robert Billington, Pawtucket Mayor Grebien, NRI Chamber
John Gregory in care of Paul Ouellette

From: Department of Planning & Development
The City of Woonsocket
169 Main Street
Woonsocket, RI 02895

Re: Docket No. FD 36326
Brookfield Asset Management, Inc. And Djx XX, LLC - Control Exemption - Genesee &
Wyoming, Inc., Et Al.

To Whom it May Concern:

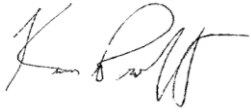
The Providence and Worcester Railroad (P&W) travels through the heart of Woonsocket and, therefore, the City has an interest in the railroad's future, especially regarding the return of commuter rail service between Woonsocket and Providence and Woonsocket and Worcester. Additionally, the City is within the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and has an interest in seeing the completion of the Blackstone River Valley Greenway - a 48-mile multi-use path between Worcester and Providence that travels along the Blackstone River and offers a unique way to enjoy the Heritage Corridor.

Commute conditions between Woonsocket and Providence are not ideal despite their proximity. Commuting between the city by car takes between 30 and 60 minutes depending on traffic. The public bus, which travels on the same roads, takes at least 45 minutes to travel between the two cities' downtowns, which does not include first- and last-mile commute times or traffic conditions. Commute conditions between Woonsocket and Worcester are worse. It takes a minimum of 35 minutes to travel to Worcester by car, but can take much longer given traffic conditions. Public transportation is challenging as the Rhode Island and Massachusetts bus agencies are separate entities and no logical route exists between the two cities. The return of commuter service along the P&W rail line between Worcester and Providence would better allow residents of Rhode Island and Massachusetts to live in one of these three cities and commute to one of the others. This would greatly increase Woonsocket economic potential and increase the size of the hiring pool for businesses all along the rail line.

The Blackstone River Valley Greenway is approximately 50% complete. In the City of Woonsocket, much of the bikeway is already complete or is under construction. That said, for the Greenway to maximize its value to the communities through which it travels, it needs to be uninterrupted by missing segments. Therefore, Woonsocket has a strong interest in seeing the Greenway completed from Worcester to Providence. In years past the P&W owners have been helpful in establishing a workable route for the Greenway through much of Rhode Island, where the route is near or crosses the P&W right of way. Many of the remaining segments, especially in Massachusetts, will also be located near the right of way, so will require similar cooperation and communication between the P&W owners and the transportation planners working on the project.

Thank you for your consideration of these two issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Proft', written over a horizontal line.

Kevin Proft
City Planner