

March 12, 2010

Dear Board of Selectmen:

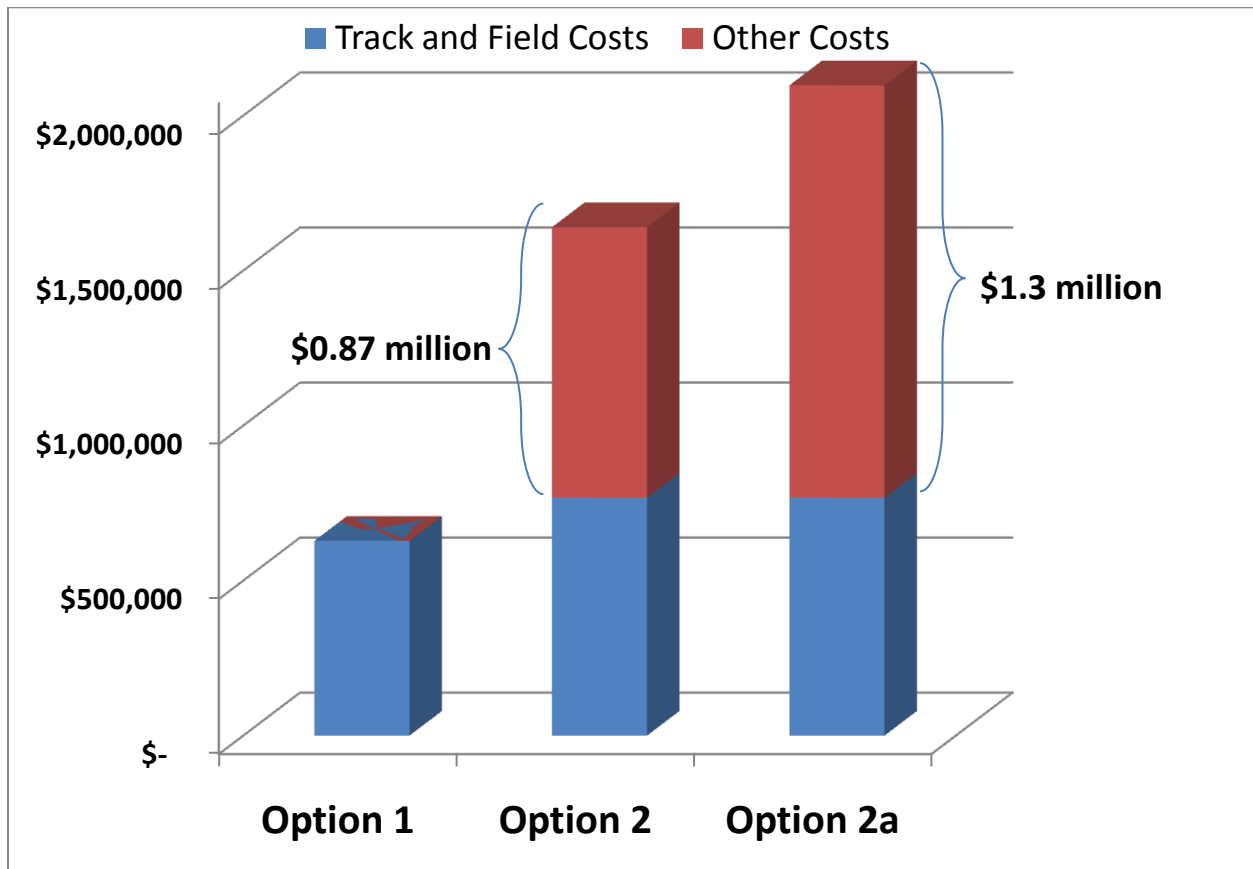
As you know, for the past year and a half, the Littleton Track Organization (LTO) has been involved in a variety of efforts to achieve a goal of having a safe and usable track and field facility for our Town. These efforts have produced three highlights in the past year:

- Article 11 at Town Meeting was approved to fund a feasibility study for a track and field facility. This article was the result of a citizen's petition with over 200 signatures that also had unanimous support from the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, School Committee, and Park & Recreation.
- Significant publicity and communication with town residents about the need for a safe and usable track facility have resulted in broad-based support for this project. These include the LTO website, community presentations and meetings, and articles and letters in the Littleton Independent.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Littleton Road Race was held last fall. Thanks to hundreds of Littleton residents who participated or volunteered, the 5k race and 1-mile fun run were a successful community event that built support and raised funds.

The LTO has been extensively involved in the track and field feasibility study that has been overseen by the PMBC and performed by Gale Associates. When permitted, the LTO has sought to offer constructive comments and analysis during this process. As you know from the interim presentation given on October 5<sup>th</sup>, the finalized presentation given on February 4<sup>th</sup>, and the revised report issued on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the feasibility study outlines a total of six options at three sites. It is important to note that all six options meet the needs of the Town's track programs and recreational runners. From a track and field perspective, all six options provide essentially the same facilities (identical track surfacing, 6/8 lane configuration, and field event areas for long jump, triple jump, high jump, discus, and shot put). The significant cost differences between the options are due to additional site and playing field work specified within the options.

After analysis of the six options, the LTO recommends and supports Option 1 due to its many advantages and comparatively few disadvantages. The geotechnical analysis that was done as part of the feasibility study concluded that the underlying conditions for Site 1 are indeed suitable for a track. This site also provides a dedicated facility that would result in very few schedule conflicts and be available to residents for recreation and fitness. A disadvantage of this site is the proximity to I-495, but a proposed berm would mitigate the visual, wind, and noise issues. Furthermore, the estimated cost (including a 15% contingency) of this option is \$628,652, and is by far the least expensive of the options presented in the study. Based upon our engagement with the community on the issue of the track, we believe this option would result in a successful outcome if brought before the Town. If approved, a "design and build" bid could be sought while the bidding climate is still advantageous to the Town. Work could be completed in time for the spring 2011 track season.

The other options that have received a lot of discussion are Options 2 and 2a. Building on this site causes a loss of parking and is detrimental to the daily traffic patterns of pick-up and drop-off at Russell Street School (RSS). In addition, these plans show significant impacts and reduction of RSS playground space, which still remain unaddressed even in the revised report of the feasibility study. The main attraction of this site seems to be the artificial turf field in Option 2a. With no direct evidence of grass-roots support and a price tag of \$2.1 million, it is unclear whether voters and taxpayers would approve this option. A single facility with an artificial turf field and a track would make scheduling much more difficult and would certainly lead to a loss of availability of the track for recreational and fitness uses by residents.



The LTO will be asking the Selectmen to support Option 1 and to include an article on the May 2010 Town Meeting warrant to provide funding to proceed with both the design and build of this option.

Sincerely,

Cindy Heitmeyer  
President, Littleton Track Organization