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For immediate release: 4/10/14

FRAMINGHAM APPROVES TJX PLAN TO CONSTRUCT NEW BUILDING AND STIPULATES HEALTHY COMMUNITY DESIGN AS A CONDITION OF APPROVAL

The Town of Framingham recently approved a plan submitted by TJX Companies to construct a 96,000 square-foot “Corporate Support Center” on its Cochituate Road campus. This project will provide additional space for corporate use, as well as increased opportunities for physical activity.

The new building will be used for employee training and will house a product development library and merchandise presentation center. Importantly, this new project will also incorporate two features supportive of healthier behaviors: an employee fitness center and a pedestrian walkway connection between the building site and the adjacent Cochituate Rail Trail (CRT). The CRT is a 4-mile multi-use trail extending from the northeast quadrant of Framingham into Natick. Completion of the Framingham portion of the CRT is planned for this year, with connections to the Framingham Planned Unit Development (PUD), through the Saxonville neighborhood, and into Natick.

As a condition of the approval, the Framingham Planning Board required TJX to create a pedestrian walkway connection between the Corporate Support Center and the CRT. This action is one of many the town is taking to support healthy living. Framingham will continue to identify gaps in the trail network and work towards filling these gaps by creating connections, like the TJX project.

Moreover, in 2012, Framingham updated their Master Plan, which prioritizes projects and policies that support the development of healthy communities. Additionally, Framingham is in the process of making final edits to the Town’s updated Open Space and Recreation Plan, which promotes trails and non-vehicular modes of transportation. The Town of Framingham is working to shift from a vehicle dependent environment to one where sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and trails connect major nodes in Town.

Framingham is also part of MetroWest Moves (www.MetroWestMoves.org), a [Mass in Motion](#) initiative that focuses on increasing opportunities for physical activity, as well as promoting

community design standards and “Complete Streets” to ensure that transportation planning and development takes into account the needs of all road users: pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. As part of its public health approach, MetroWest Moves also supports worksite wellness as an integral way to encourage adults to lead a healthy lifestyle and help to reduce an individual’s risk for developing chronic disease. The newly planned TJX project provides a unique opportunity for the company to foster conditions that encourage, support and promote wellness.

MetroWest Moves is a tri-community [Mass in Motion](#) initiative to facilitate opportunities for people who live, work, and play in Framingham, Hudson, and Marlborough to engage in healthy eating and active, smoke-free living. MetroWest Moves is funded by the Middlesex County Community Transformation Grant and the MetroWest Health Foundation.