



Route 2 Concord Rotary Reconstruction Project Summary of Comments and Responses

Public Workshop #1 – June 3, 2008

COMMENT	RESPONSE
Bruce Freeman Rail Trail	
Bruce Freeman Rail Trail should go under or over Rt. 2 and not use other streets; should be accommodated on the existing right-of-way.	There are 4 options being considered, two of which follow the historic rail alignment.
Alternative 3 needs bridge overpass for Rail Trail over Commonwealth Ave.	The current BFRT design plans call for an at-grade crossing of the trail at Commonwealth Ave.
It is important that connectivity at the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail be maintained; all alternatives need to modify the circular ramp to avoid the Rail Trail.	The loop ramp has been modified to avoid the Rail Trail.
If Alternative 5 is selected, make the prison cemetery cloverleaf smaller to avoid the bike trail.	The loop ramp has been modified to avoid the Rail Trail.
Barrett's Mill Road	
Alternative three would make a turn from Barrett's Mill Rd. onto Commonwealth impossible; concerned about access/exit at rotary; consider taking land from NE Corrections and move road to Rt. 2A traffic light; traffic going west from Barrett's Mill Rd. will need a signal for traffic to turn left; back-ups on Barrett's Mill.	The revised alternatives now include signalization at Barrett's Mill Rd., which will improve traffic movements and reduce queues for vehicles exiting Barrett's Mill Rd.
Consider moving traffic light to 2A and use outbound exit from Rt. 2 to access Barrett's Mill Rd. and 2A.	Barrett's Mill Rd. at Rt. 2A has been looked at further for various alternatives and the traffic analysis shows that a traffic signal will work and traffic will be able to flow from Barrett's Mill Rd. much easier.
Consider moving the northern traffic light further north and west; might be easier for cars traveling southwest on Barrett's Mill Rd. to get through to West Concord.	The revised alternatives now include signalization at Barrett's Mill Rd., which will improve traffic movements and reduce queues for vehicles exiting Barrett's Mill Rd.

Bike, pedestrian and wildlife access and crossings	
Consider improving pedestrian/bike access from Elm St. to Barrett's Mill Rd.	Included in refinements.
Opposed to 25-foot inclines for BFRT/bike and pedestrian paths.	The BFRT will be designed to MassHighway standards.
Safe bicycle and pedestrian access, using sidewalks and overpasses – Elm St. to West Concord and at Barrett's Mill and Commonwealth	Pedestrian and bike accommodations have been made on the local roads by way of a wide shoulder for bikes and a sidewalk for pedestrians, as well as connections to the BFRT.
Wildlife crossing should be included under Rt. 2.	Wildlife crossings will be incorporated into the project design at Nashoba Brook and the Assabet River.
Signalization and access to other local roads and neighborhoods	
There needs to be better connectivity between Grove St. neighborhood and Commonwealth Ave./West Concord.	Sidewalks and pedestrian crossings will be incorporated into the project to safely accommodate travel from Grove St. (via Barrett's Mill Rd.) to Commonwealth Ave. and West Concord. Signalization at Barrett's Mill Rd. / Rt. 2A/119 will improve vehicle movements.
Improve access to West Concord.	Access from Barrett's Mill Rd. (and the neighborhoods served by Barrett's Mill Rd.) will be improved. Sidewalks and pedestrian crossings will be incorporated into the project to safely accommodate travel from Barrett's Mill Rd. to Commonwealth Ave. and West Concord. Signalization at Barrett's Mill Rd. / Rt. 2A/119 will improve vehicle movements.
Please retain current local access to Rt. 2 west from Wetherbee St. in Acton and local access to Rt. 2 east from School St. in Acton.	There will be no change at these locations. They will remain right in and right out only with no cross movement of Rt. 2.
Alternative 7 makes it difficult to get into West Concord from Rt. 2 westbound.	Comment noted.

Historic, open space and natural resources and aesthetics	
Concerned that rural landscape of area will be replaced with unpleasant highway aesthetics.	Refinements will begin to present a landscaping scheme for the area to lessen these impacts.
Opposed to farmland encroachment, preserve farmland as much as possible.	Refinements have reduced farm land impacts.
Consider going under rotary to preserve character of the area; create a flyover over the rotary for Rt. 2 traffic.	That option was considered in earlier studies and is not feasible due to high groundwater, cost, and construction issues related to maintaining traffic during construction. The three alternatives presented at the first open house are being refined into a preferred alternative.
Consider wide span elevating Rt. 2 over the Rail Trail, Nashoba Brook, and a wildlife crossing.	That alternative is being considered.
Find a way to save trees on the rotary and minimize the footprint while accommodating Rt. 2 east and west.	We will look for ways to save as much existing landscaping as possible.
Consider an alternative without a flyover as it is visually disruptive to historic farm fields.	At-grade options with signals, larger rotary, or multiple intersections cannot adequately process the 62,000 vehicles per day currently entering the rotary. Grade separation of the 62,000 vehicles per day is required. Efforts will be made to keep the profile of the bridge "thin" and treatments to the walls and abutments will be made to help it fit in with the surroundings.
Concerned about historic resources such as the John Cuming House, the effect on cultural resources along the abandoned railway corridor, historic views of prison farmland and impact of potential widening of Rt. 2 on the Warden House.	No work of any kind, related to this project, will occur within the limits of the Cuming House property . Other areas to be constructed on will be investigated for historic artifacts before any work begins. Rt. 2 will have to be widened in front of the Warden's House to add a median and on/off ramps. The Warden's House will remain outside the limits of work.
Would like a dialogue on the Nashoba Brook bridge and the Assabet River bridge.	Options are being presented at Open House #2 and comments are welcome.
Concerned about historic prison relocation/removing the cemetery historic landscaping by sticking it the middle of a circular off-ramp and that no plan is in place for possibility.	The prison will not be relocated. Refinements have been made to the alignments to avoid the cemetery.

Traffic (general/regional)	
There is too much back-up at the 2A/119 signal for Alternative 7.	Comment noted.
Alternative 3 does not provide a simple exit from eastbound Rt. 2A/119 to eastbound Rt. 2.	A typical traffic signal allows for this movement to take a left turn and continue on Rt. 2 east.
Alternative 5 provides the easiest flow from Rt. 2 west to Route 2A/119 and from Rt. 2A/119 eastbound to Rt. 2 east; alternative will interfere with the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.	The loop ramp has been modified to avoid the Rail Trail.
Provide an extra lane where Elm St. merges into Rt. 2 westbound; current merge is too difficult.	This has been reviewed and a new concept is being proposed at the Baker Ave. interchange. Elm St. will become a cul-de-sac for business use only. Westbound traffic will be processed through a free right turn at the Baker Ave. signal and merge from a new lane into the two westbound lanes before the Assabet River Bridge. This will allow the Assabet River Bridge to remain two lanes wide. It will still need to be widened 6' to accommodate the median.
Traffic studies should include lights at ORNAC, Rt. 62, Baker Ave.; all should be synchronized to minimize back-up on Rt. 2 to eliminate use of Commonwealth Ave. as a cut-through.	This is being looked at. At this time, Baker Ave. is part of the project.
Alternatives 5 and 7 seem to eliminate Commonwealth Ave.	The overpass (bridge structure) will become a new Commonwealth Ave. segment before tying back into the existing Commonwealth Ave. alignment near the BFRT crossing. A stub of the existing Commonwealth Ave. will be discontinued within the area adjacent to the MCI-Concord facility.
In favor of Alternative 5 with no stop light for cars going west on Rt. 2 to west on 2A/119.	This traffic signal is required, but the traffic will be more a right on red situation. Traffic simulation indicates it will work at an acceptable level.
Concerned about traffic entering Rt. 2 without a rotary.	With 62,000 vehicles per day in the current rotary, it is an unsafe condition and needs to be replaced with a more defined interchange that separates the regional and local movements.
Would like to see Rt. 2A remain a widely used road for regional traffic.	Comment noted.
Baker Ave. intersection will need better signage for cars turning left.	Current concept has changed the left turn movement from Rt. 2 westbound to Baker Ave.

Rt. 2 and Baker Ave. intersection should not have a traffic light; all traffic lights should be replaced with overpasses for the entire length of Concord.	This is not feasible due to cost, ROW impacts, environmental impacts, and Concord's opposition to multiple overpasses.
Commerford Rd., currently off Rt. 2A, is very difficult to make a left from Commerford onto 2A; with increased traffic flow making cars drive faster, making that left will be even more difficult and dangerous.	Any increases in traffic on Rt. 2A are associated with background traffic and will exist with or without the project. The proposed signal at Barrett's Mill Rd. will create gaps in traffic to assist movements from side street locations such as Commerford Rd. As traffic flow on Rt. 2A is more free flow, there will be more gaps to allow for left turns.
Not sure any alternative will be worth project cost; consider getting rid of nearby gas station and making rotary larger.	In order for a rotary to be large enough to allow for proper merge and weave distance on all legs for 62,000 vehicles per day, the rotary may be five to ten times larger than the one that currently exists. This is not feasible due to the extensive impacts to ROW, and environmental items.
What impact will this project have on traffic at the intersection of Rt. 62 and down towards Crosby's Corner?	MassHighway is looking at the Rt. 2 corridor between Baker Ave. and Crosby's Corner.
Do traffic simulations take into account cars coming off the side roads, like Main St.?	The traffic simulations account for movements to and from all major side streets within the study area network.
How do cars westbound on Rt. 2 get onto Baker Ave. for Alternatives 5 and 7?	The concept at Baker Ave. is the same for any alternative at the rotary.
Environmental and other	
Alternative 5 has less of a buffer between the rotary and Warner's Pond; it has impacts to the Rail Trail.	Loop ramp has been redesigned and moved away from the Rail Trail and the pond.
Alternative 7 seems to have more wetland impacts and traffic back-ups.	Comment noted.
Consult with plans for potential train to Fitchburg.	The study of improvements to the Fitchburg commuter rail line included an alternative that eliminated traffic flow across the Baker Ave. at-grade rail crossing. This component does not appear to be part of the preferred alternative for improvements to the Fitchburg line.
Concerned about school bus safety and nature trail.	With the elimination of the rotary, safety will be improved for all vehicles as well as pedestrians.

Improve signage in area.	All signage will be improved as part of the project.
Concerned about stormwater runoff and water quality of Warner's Pond.	A new storm drainage collection system will be installed as part of this project to collect the highway drainage, provide the required levels of cleaning and infiltration required by today's standards and then detain high storm levels before releasing them to Warner's Pond.
Engineers should present to Acton Board of Selectmen.	Everyone is welcome to attend these Open House meetings. Individual one-on-one meetings have taken place with direct abutters like the Department of Corrections, State Police, Maintenance Depot, and Town of Concord.

Public Workshop #2 – September 24, 2008

COMMENT	RESPONSE
Bruce Freeman Rail Trail	
Bruce Freeman Rail Trail should go under Route 2 to create the least visual impact. Tunnel must be wide enough for traffic and have sufficient lighting.	Your comment has been noted, thank you.
BFRT should go over Route 2 but grade level should be 3 ½ % not 4 ½%.	Your comment has been noted, thank you. Please understand that a flatter grade makes the approach sections longer and may impact more wetlands.
BFRT should go over to Route 2 to maintain access during high water conditions.	Your comment has been noted, thank you.
Consider designing separate human and wildlife access points to BFRT underpass or overpass.	As currently designed, there are separate facilities for humans and wildlife. We will consider a greater separation distance.
Pleased at efforts to include BFRT crossing. Town and Advisory Committee prefer the trail be located under Route 2, which will retain visual aesthetics, including views of farmland recently put under conservation restriction. Also easier for bicyclist and pedestrian connections and access to other community facilities and resources.	Your comment has been noted, thank you.
Pedestrian/Bike Access	
Happy to see sidewalks planned.	Your comment has been noted, thank you.

Would like pedestrian traffic signals.	The three traffic scenarios include pedestrian signals.
Traffic Concerns	
Too much traffic uses Strawberry Hill Road as a detour. Project should fix this.	One of the intended consequences of the reconstruction of the Concord Rotary is to improve travel time and direct traffic away from local roads and back to Route 2.
Happy with eastbound access ramp from the prison cemetery and Baker Avenue intersection improvements.	Your comment has been noted, thank you.
Supports conceptual plan design of Baker Ave. intersection, which allows the bridge over the Assabet River to remain within current footprint and increases safety of this intersection. Request that sidewalk on Assabet River Bridge be widened to encourage and support bicycle and foot traffic between Grove St. and Elm St./downtown area. Appreciate pedestrian connectivity from Elm St. through Assabet Ave. to Barrett's Mill Rd. Ensure that these connections remain safe, accessible and visually attractive.	Your comment has been noted, thank you. We will attempt to include a larger sidewalk within the limits of bridge footprint.
General Comments	
Pleased with refinements to Alternatives 3 and 5.	Your comment has been noted, thank you.
Project should be coordinated with the MBTA's plan to greatly increase ridership on the Fitchburg line; potential parking station for that project would be near rotary.	Your comment has been noted, thank you.
Concerned about noise pollution; consider depressing Route 2 so that the access ramps and the Commonwealth Ave. crossover is closer to the current grade.	Due to the high water table and resulting high construction costs, depressing Route 2 was dropped from further consideration by the prior feasibility study.
If the new Baker Ave alternative is not used, improve signage for cars crossing Route 2 from the east to Baker Ave. south.	Your comment has been noted, thank you.
Make sure highway stormwater run-off is directed away from wildlife tunnel.	Your comment has been noted, thank you.
Avoid disrupting the habitat of the Eastern Painted Turtles in Warner's Pond.	Your comment has been noted, thank you.

<p>In favor of retaining the historic Nashoba Brook bridge</p>	<p>Your comment has been noted, thank you.</p>
<p>Key priority is minimizing loss of open space to extent possible. Alternative 5 consumes more farmland and greenspace. Alternative 3 saves more precious farmland and provides a buffer between noise and activity of highway and Warner's Pond and residential areas.</p>	<p>Farmland is one of many factors to be considered when comparing the various alternatives. Other factors include safety, traffic flow, sight distance on Route 2 to the on-ramp, distance between the on-ramp and the Elm Place right in/right out at the easterly side of the prison, the number of lanes and size of the New Commonwealth Ave. bridge, as well as the amount of wetland impacts.</p>
<p>Pleased wildlife accommodations are planned via a wildlife underpass, acknowledging importance of corridors, including the turtle nesting habitat layout of the rail trail. Hope trail will hew as closely to existing rail easement as possible to avoid disruption for wildlife and loss of undeveloped acreage.</p>	<p>Your comment has been noted, thank you.</p>
<p>Urge MHD to locate all utilities underground within project area to provide some visual improvement in high traffic volume area.</p>	<p>Undergrounding utilities is considered a betterment and is not allowed as per MassHighway and FHWA policy. The utility relocation policy is to relocate utilities in kind; therefore, MassHighway cannot direct a utility to relocate underground. There is a law that exists that the town can request the undergrounding of utilities. The town then agrees that the price of the undergrounding will be reimbursed to the utility by way of a surcharge to the town's ratepayers over a number of years. This undergrounding must be independent of the MassHighway project and completed before the start of the MassHighway project.</p>
<p>Hopeful that every effort will be made to minimize likelihood of vehicles "cutting through" West Concord to bypass Route 2 traffic signals.</p>	<p>With the removal of the Rotary, and upgrade at Baker Ave., Route 2 traffic will flow much better, and it is likely that the cut-through traffic will return to Route 2 from West Concord.</p>