

**Methuen Rotary Study
Marsh Grammar School
309 Pelham Street, Methuen, MA
November 8, 2007, 7-9 PM
Meeting Notes**

The second Public Informational Meeting for the Route 110 and 113 Rotary Interchange Study in Methuen, MA was held on November 8, 2007 at the Marsh Grammar School to provide an update of the study underway to improve safety and relieve congestion at the Route 110 and 113 Rotary Interchange. The primary focus of the meeting was a review and discussion of short-term (1 to 5 years) and long-term (5 to 10 years) improvement alternatives developed since the completion of the Route I-93 Corridor Study. Maps and displays were available for viewing from 6:15 p.m., followed by a presentation and question/answer period at 7 p.m.

Ethan Britland of the Executive Office of Transportation and several members of the study team, led by George Gefrich of TranSystems, participated in the presentation. Approximately 100 members of the public attended the meeting as well as State Senator, Steven Baddour and State Representative, Linda Dean Campbell. Representative Campbell thanked the citizens of Methuen and those in the transportation community for their commitment to the project and that her office is looking at the issue of redirecting truck traffic from Route 113 down to Route 110. Senator Baddour thanked all in attendance including the Study Advisory Committee and the study team, and assured the audience that this project would be a priority.

At the beginning of the meeting the study team emphasized the alternatives being shown were different from those presented as part of the I-93 study. The new alternatives strived to stay within the state's right-of-way avoid property takings and wetland impacts. Elevated highway ramps were avoided to minimize noise and visual impacts. The audience was told the newspaper story of property takings of Noyes Street homes and land was not correct.

A PowerPoint presentation was made followed by a question and answer session. The following is a summary of comments and questions raised by meeting attendees. Responses are in italics.

Noise/Sound Barriers

- For residents, a quality of life issue is whether a sound barrier is coming for residents living around the rotary. When will the barrier be built? *This study looks at traffic operations and safety. This study discounted a fly-over alternative to avoid increase in noise penetration into residential neighborhoods. Noise analysis will be one of the main components of the next study. From a legislative perspective, noise abatement will be mandated as the process moves forward.*

- Would sound barriers go in prior to start of construction? *The areas south of the Rotary on the east and west sides of I-93 are on an EOT waiting list (#42 and #47) for sound barriers so their placement is several years in the future. Noise barriers can go in at the beginning of the construction process to mitigate the noise of construction and traffic. We will list this as one of the recommendations in the report for short term recommendations.*

Trucks

- What is happening with respect to Representative Campbell's statement about diverting truck traffic from Route 113 to 110? Would hours of truck traffic be restricted? *There is a commitment from the town of Dracut to look at this issue but specific strategies have not yet been identified.*
- Living at Route 113 and Burnham Street, we notice truck traffic at 4:45 AM downshifting and using engine braking – it is very noisy. The traffic speed is supposed to be 35 mph but it is not observed. Sidewalks are not inviting due to dust and debris being blown up onto pedestrians by passing traffic. What can be done? *Alternative 3A should have traffic calming aspects and changes in sight lines to improve traffic flow. Enforcement of speed limits could be implemented more frequently. Use of signage to prohibit the use of engine braking by trucks would reduce noise issues.*

Crosswalks

- Would every intersection have crosswalks so we can get to Dunkin' Donuts, KFC, the pizza place, etc? *All alternatives have pedestrian and bicycle right-of-ways with crosswalks for community connectivity at signalized intersections.*

Property Takings

- I live on Noyes Street right next to the Rotary and should I consider renovating my house or will I lose property value with future roadway alteration plans, *There are no property takings of Noyes Street properties being considered in any of the alternatives presented, so home owners can pursue plans for home improvements.*
- On the east side of I-93 around Forest Street, the Alternative 3A shows a yellow line to Burnham Road and Lowell Street and then the road narrows down. Is that what will really occur in construction? *Yes, the intent is to stay within the state right-of-way boundaries and concentrate on the interchange and roadway leading to and from Rotary.*

Park and Ride

- The concept of putting a Park and Ride lot on Route 113 west of the rotary (south side of Route 113 near Youngfarm Road and Hill Street)—why would that be considered feasible when it is ¼ mile away from I-93. Wouldn't it cause more traffic in a highly residential neighborhood? Wouldn't it be better to expand the current Park and Ride lot that is about 100 feet from the I-93? ***The anticipated benefit of the proposed Park and Ride lot would be to intercept traffic coming from Dracut to remove it from congestion closer to I-93. Expanding the current Park and Ride at Pelham Street would only benefit those people to the north.***
- Build it in Dracut, please!

Short term alternatives

- Why do short term alternatives only address the west side of the Rotary and not the east side? ***The short-term alternatives do consider improvements east of the rotary. On the east side there is a bypass lane from the off ramp. In addition, signal timings at two traffic signals, 110-113 and at Burnham and Green will be modified as needed.***

Long term alternatives

- What is the difference between short and long term improvements on the west side of 93 with respect to how they impact Griffin Street? Short term improvements will reflect the existing geometry with signal improvements, re-striping, and signage. Long term improvements will reflect a full modification to the interchange.
- Alternative 2B from off ramp to 110-113 shows a loop ramp – is that a push and shove at the bottom of that with no lights? ***The ramp comes around with enough length and width for proper merge and weave into traffic flow without needing a light.***
- Getting onto I-93 southbound in the morning takes 10 to 15 minutes because I-93 is backed up for miles. How will local improvements help when I-93 is also an issue? I don't see any improvement even after spending \$48 million. ***The study has taken into consideration traffic flow to the year 2025 when the I-93 will be widened.***
- Won't putting a light at Branch Street cause traffic at ramp to back up onto I-93? ***Study findings have indicated that traffic flow will improve with signals at Branch Street and at the off ramp that will be coordinated to optimize flow patterns.***

- Alternative 2B seems to have less invasive construction plan than Alternative 3A. Does that carry more weight when making decision about which alternative to select? ***Point taken. Aesthetics and construction impacts will be taken into consideration during the next study phase.***

Timing and Process

- \$1.5 million is already set aside for short term improvements which you say will be done in 1-5 years. When will these improvements take place – in 6 months or 5 years? Could you be more specific? ***No. State officials will make it a high priority to get the work done as quickly as possible.***
- How much involvement has Congresswoman Tsongas had in this process and are there any federal roadblocks to the project? ***Congresswoman Tsongas has only been in office two weeks. There are no federal roadblocks anticipated. State and federal officials have been working cooperatively and will continue to do so.***