

**Route 110-113 Rotary Interchange Study**  
**Study Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting Summary**  
**Tuesday, September 25, 2007**

Searles Building  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room  
41 Pleasant Street, Methuen  
4-6:45 PM

**In Attendance:**

***Committee Members or Designated Representatives:*** Robert Andrew - Methuen City Council, Tony Komornick - MVPC, Frank DaSilva – Citizen Advisor, Jan Buckholder, Sen. Susan Tucker’s office, Eleni Vartimos, Sen. Steven Baddour’s office, Colie Ryan, Chris Metzemaekers – Citizen Advisors, Dennis DiZoglio - MVPC, Joe Onorato – MassHighway District 4, LouAnn Gendro – Rep. Colleen Gary’s Office, Stanley Wood and Hardy Patel, Mass Highway, Glen Edwards - Town of Dracut

***Study Team:*** Ethan Britland - OTP, Paul Nelson - OTP, George Gefrich - TranSystems, Joe Cahill - TranSystems, Peter Grace – TranSystems, Carla Tillery and Jill Barrett – Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc., and Sudhir Murthy - Trafinfo.

***Public Attendees:*** Russell Currier, Jeanne Pappalardo, Joseph Pappalardo, Edward Lawson, Kathleen Lawson, Beverly Oprandi, James Haslam

**Meeting Agenda:**

1. Welcome and Introductions.
2. Review of Alternatives and Modifications since Last Meeting
3. CORSIM Presentation of Alternatives
4. Evaluation Criteria Matrix
5. Alternatives Cost Analysis
6. Public Meeting Schedule and Alternatives
7. Dracut Development Analysis

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Ethan Britland of the Office of Transportation Planning and Project Manager of the study welcomed attendees. Meeting summary from the July 26 Study Advisory Committee was accepted as written. The purpose of this meeting was to review the modifications (suggested at the July SAC meeting) of the four alternatives selected and to identify one or two alternatives to carry forward to the public.

**2. Review of Alternatives and Modifications since Last Meeting**

***Short-Term Alternatives:*** Signal warrant analysis was conducted at Route 113 & Branch Street and Route 110 & Riverside Drive/Bolduc Road. Signalization and coordination could improve operation west of the interchange at Route 113 & Branch Street, Route

110 & Riverside Drive/Bolduc Road and Route 110 & Route 113. Potential Bolduc Street access changes were also considered.

**Long-Term Alternatives:** Modifications since the SAC previous meeting include: lane assignments, shifted alignments to minimize ROW impacts and minor operational improvements. Alternatives now reflect reasonable assessment of the number of lanes required but are still at the conceptual level so may change during design development. At study area intersections there were no significant changes to traffic operations as there is acceptable LOS at all intersections. Southbound on-ramp modifications resulted in major improvement in LOS, particularly during the AM peak hour

### 3. CORSIM Presentation of Alternatives

Analysis indicated that alternatives will greatly reduce the time required to get through the rotary. Allowing double-stacked (2-lane) ramps to I-93 creates significant improvements.

### 4. Evaluation Criteria Matrix

An evaluation matrix was developed by the consultant team. For most evaluation criteria there was very little difference among the four alternatives.

Criteria	Measures	2A	2B	3A	3B
Mobility	Delays (Overall)	Pos+	Pos	Pos+	Pos
	LOS (Intersections)	Pos	Pos	Pos	Pos
	VMT (Veh. Miles Traveled)	Neut	Neut	Neut	Neut
	VHT (Veh. Hours Traveled)	Pos+	Pos	Pos+	Pos
	Queuing	Pos	Neut	Pos	Neut
	Freight	Pos	Pos	Pos	Pos
	Emergency Vehicle Access	Pos	Pos	Pos	Pos
Safety	Crash rates	Neut	Pos	Pos	Neut
	Crash sites	Neut	Neut	Neut	Neut
	Public safety	Pos	Pos	Pos	Pos
	School buses	Pos	Pos	Pos	Pos
	Ped/Bicycle	Pos	Pos	Pos	Pos
Environmental	Wetlands	Med	Med	Med	Med
	Recreation	Pos	Pos	Pos	Pos
	Visual/aesthetics	Pos	Pos	Pos	Pos
	Historic/Archeological	Low	Med	Med	Med
	Additional Noise	Low	Low	Low	Low

	Air Quality	Low	Low	Low	Low
	Wildlife Habitat	Low	Low	Low	Low
Land Use	Right-of-Way	Med	Med	Med	Med
	Economic Development	Neut	Neut	Neut	Neut
	Parking	Low	Low	Low	Low
Cohesion	Neighborhood	Pos	Pos	Pos	Pos
	Ped/Bicycle	Pos	Pos	Pos	Pos
Cost	Const. Costs	High	Med	Med	High
	Permits	Med	Med	Med	Med

### 5. Alternatives Cost Analysis

A cost analysis, based on MassHighway's 2007 weighted average bid prices, was developed for four long-term and one short-term alternative. The cost included construction only. It did not include ROW takings, project design or environmental mitigation. Future costs (after 2007) were projected at 3% rate of inflation/year as follows: long-term - 15 years at 3%/year; short term - 1 year at 3%.

Long-Term Alternatives:

Alternatives	Construction Cost (2007)	Future Year Construction (Year 2022)
2A	\$55,000,000	\$86,000,000
2B	\$44,000,000	\$68,000,000
3A	\$40,000,000	\$62,000,000
3B	\$54,000,000	\$84,000,000

Short-Term Alternatives 1 & 2 costs: Present Day (2007): \$1,530,000; Future (2008): \$1,580,000. This would include realignment of the intersection at Route 110/113 west of the rotary, added travel lanes. It does not include signalization, design fees and environmental mitigation.

It was noted that bridges add significant costs to a project. Also, 2A and 2B have a 2-lane southbound on ramp that may need a design exception. If this is not allowed, the cost of both alternatives would increase because the bridge of the Merrimack River would need to be widened.

### 6. Public Meeting Schedule and Alternatives

The recommended alternatives will be brought before the public in the last week of October or early November. The auditorium at Marsh Grammar School is being

considered as a location to comfortably accommodate the number of people expected to attend. The SAC was asked for guidance on how to best present information to the public. Citizen advisors on the SAC committee suggested:

- Quality of life issues are most important to residents. Do not emphasize traffic considerations in the presentation.
- Focus on how the plan minimizes impacts, the tremendous effort put into mitigation.
- Sound barriers. There will be an uproar if sound barriers aren't included to address noise, especially because residents see how the nearby town of Andover has received a speedy response to their request for sound barriers.

### **7. Dracut Development Analysis**

The consultant team detailed how it considered and analyzed transportation issues related to industrial development along Route 113 in Dracut. While the road could benefit from improvements (signals, left turn lanes) at key traffic generators, the capacity of the road was considered adequate.

### **Committee Discussion on the Alternatives**

The committee was asked to reduce the number of long-term alternatives to carry forward from four to two. The four alternatives are:

- Concept 2A Modified SPUI (Single Point Urban Interchange)
- Concept 2B Modified SPUI
- Concept 3A Partial Cloverleaf
- Concept 3B Partial Cloverleaf

Primary considerations were: cost, mobility improvements and minimize property impacts. The two alternatives the committee decided best met these objectives were: 2B and 3A.

### **Questions from the public**

1. What is the timeframe to approve this project? **Answer:** 5-10 years at best.
2. Are the drawings done to scale? **Answer:** No. We are working from an overlay on an orthophoto. Our approach was to look at a number of alternatives and select alternatives for further study that minimized impact (on property and the environment). We tried to really limit takings. Citizen Advisory Committee members wanted to stay away from elevated ramps to keep the noise profile low.
3. Won't traffic problems increase if we wait 5-10 years? **Answer:** We hoped to use the \$1.5 federal earmark for temporary relief. This study by identifying short-term improvements will produce some results within a few years.

4. Have any more chapters been completed that aren't posted on the website?  
*Answer:* Chapter 3 has been completed but the technical review has not been finished.
5. Are your assumptions for the traffic operations at the rotary based on I-93 being widened to four lanes? *Answer:* Providing double lane entry to I-93 ramps will improve traffic operations in the rotary regardless of the number of lanes on the interstate.
6. What's the time frame for getting short term solutions built? *Answer:* It can take five years. A representative from Senator Baddour's office said the earmark won't be released until the study is done.
7. Once a decision is made on going forward with a short term improvement, what happens next? *Answer:* If there is support for an improvement, the Mayor has to write Mass Highway to ask the state to do the project. The request then goes through a multi-step 3-5 year process before there is a shovel in the ground. It is important to note that none of the proposed short term improvements will affect property owners.
8. You should know that three years ago when the I-93 study identified alternatives to fix the rotary there was a big story on the front page of the newspaper. The paper gave the impression that a project was about to happen. When that occurred, our real estate values were seriously hurt. Now you're saying that you're only doing a study, not a project. When are you going to the newspapers to let the public know that what you're doing is a study, not a project and potential physical impacts are years away? You have a responsibility to do right by us.  
*Answer:* We will publicize the study widely for the upcoming public meeting to be held in November. How the information is handled by the newspaper is not in our control.
9. There are a few homes slated for takings in this study. Once the state identifies them, then their value will plummet so the state should immediately step up and buy the homes. *Answer:* When the next phase begins there is a process for the state to do early acquisition BUT it can't be done before the 25% design phase because only then will the state know how much, if any, property needs to be taken.
10. The state needs to provide sound barriers. *Answer:* We will note resident's concerns in the study. However, the study cannot recommend sound barriers because the state has process in place for evaluating sound barriers that must be followed.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.