

Meeting Date: Thursday November 17, 2005

Location: Williston Central School Cafeteria, 195 Central School Drive

Time: 6:30 - 8:30 PM

- Original Circ Plan: I-89 to Colchester/Burlington.
- What was growth projected for 2005-2025?

Rte 2A Improvement Alternatives:

- What is traffic volume on Industrial Ave? This movement should be addressed.
 - A: It will be addressed.
- What is speed limit on Rte 2A? It should be 25mph. Can't get out of his neighborhood without gaps in traffic, which will be lost with roundabouts.
- Did all short list alternatives have comparable improvements?
 - A: Alternatives 22 and 23 have 4 lanes in the south, 3 lanes in Williston north of Blair Park and 2 lanes in Essex Junction; others have 4 lanes throughout.
- Can 45 mph speed limit work with roundabouts?
 - A: This will be examined in the next step.
- James Brown Drive needs traffic signals at Rte 2A.
- Roundabouts large enough for large trucks and will take much land.
- 150' roundabout at Industrial/Mountain View Road would take my house.
- Underlying issue is volumes. All options assume the traffic goes through Essex Junction via Five Corners. Need to consider beyond the Rte 2A Corridor, where traffic is coming from.
- Flowing traffic with roundabouts "traps" people on side streets because there are no gaps; this defeats the purpose of the project.
- 3-Lane section would make it easier to turn out of side streets.
- Does next step include changes to Exit 12 & other locations? (It currently backs up onto I-89.)
 - A: Yes.
- Why were Brownell and North Williston Road Alternatives removed?
 - A: Screening showed these were not as effective as the short-listed alternatives.
- In the 2A improvement alternatives, are there takings on Rte 2A between roundabouts?
 - A: Yes.
- How are roundabouts consistent with pedestrian safety, especially at Five Corners – where many school children cross?
 - A: It will be studied. Essex Junction public safety officers are being consulted.
- With roundabouts, Five Corners can't function with railroad crossing, as the entire roundabout needs to stop.
- Is a combination of intersections and roundabouts possible?
 - A: It depends on circumstances, but it will be studied.
- Essex Junction was just designated as a Historic Village – how will this be addressed?
 - A: Federal historic preservation laws offer protection and put burden of proof on study to show there is no alternative to their use.
- How would traffic be maintained during construction?

- A: Maintenance of traffic is considered at a planning level during the development of the alternatives in the EIS, and the ability to maintain traffic during construction is a consideration in the evaluation of each alternative. After completion of the Final EIS, the construction documents for the selected alternative will include detailed staging plans to maintain traffic on affected roadways.
- Was cost analysis done in screening? How do they compare?
 - A: Cost was not a major factor in screening decisions. Circ A/B alternatives would cost in the neighborhood of \$60 million; the Rte 2A widening Alternatives would cost less (estimates were exclusive of property acquisition costs, so total cost is not known at this point.)

Circ A/B Alternatives

- Sometimes interchanges are short-changed in highway design – (i.e., more should be provided). Need more than one interchange on Circ A/B between I-89 and Rte 289.
- Connections at US2 would provide better access to Maple Tree Place and other commercial destinations.
- Costs to date on entire Circ Highway has been \$82 million. Right of way is already paid for, design is already done. Circ A/B is the alternative that takes care of the problems. It should be built.
- Large solid waste trucks would need to use Circ A/B to/from the landfill. Can't use it if it is limited access because of state weight limitations on this type of highway – these limitations wouldn't apply on Boulevard.
 - This will be considered during design.
- Boulevard is also more in keeping with the scale of the town.
- Heavy trucks are permitted to use VT 289.
- A boulevard is beautiful compromise, looks better, more flexible for access points. Compatible with recreation path.
- Tree-lined Boulevard could be beautiful.
- 2 or 4-Lane Boulevard?
 - A: Currently it is assumed that 4 lanes are needed.
- Do same mitigation requirements exist for limited access and boulevard versions?
 - A: Yes.
- What are "Spot Improvements"?
 - A: Spot improvements on 2A address remnant congestion; addressed by signal timing adjustments that are standard practice when a new roadway changes traffic patterns. Some small scale intersection modifications are also included where they would fit within the right of way.
- Will interchange at US Rte 2 be considered? Mountain View Road vs. Redmond Road?
 - A: Yes, these are options that will be considered in the analysis.
- Interchanges are more effective than intersections – don't need to stop.
- There's a transition from 4-Lane A/B to 2-Lane Rte 289? How will this work?
 - A: This will be examined during design.
- Circ right of way was purchased to accommodate 4-Lanes.
- 4-Lanes is "overkill".
- Widening Rte 2A to 4-Lanes makes the situation worse in Essex Junction.

Hybrid Alternatives:

- Hybrid alternatives won't eliminate traffic from Five Corners. It will dump traffic onto Mountain View Road.
- Believes there is too much traffic at Marshall for roundabout.
- Is the large number of screening options due to the court's role?
 - A: No, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which created the EIS process requires all reasonable alternatives to be considered.
- Roundabouts can work, do work in other places and deserve to be studied.
- Why no 2-lane alternatives for Circ A/B?
 - A: It's not off the table, although screening suggested that 4-Lanes are needed.
- 2-Lane Boulevard in A/B corridor is easier than adding 2 lanes to Rte 2A and better.
- Should also consider roundabouts on the new roadway component of the hybrid alternatives and on the Circ A/B Boulevard; room for a roundabout is available in this corridor.
- How close are actual volumes today to projections in 1985 EIS?
- When do you integrate town plans and bring study to town legislative bodies?
 - A: The relationship to local plans is one of the categories for analysis. The project team will meet with local boards during the next step, or anytime requested by the towns.
- What is specifically going to be analyzed in terms of neighborhood impacts?
 - A: Includes noise, air, visual, traffic impacts, takings, and community cohesion.
- Whose responsibility is it to take care of these issues? For example providing a berm along A/B.
 - A: If mitigation in the form of berms or noise barriers is found to be necessary, it would become part of the EIS and Record of Decision and become a project responsibility.
- Higher speed results in higher noise, so a boulevard is better than a limited access highway.
- People might not use a boulevard if speeds are not high enough to attract them away from Rte 2A.
- Would curb cut access to a Circ A/B boulevard be restricted? It would be sad to see development occur due to Boulevard.
- Should keep the new road from becoming another Rte 2A with development along it.
- What about cross-country vs. local trips? These can be as much as half of peak hour trips on Rte 2A.

Other Comments:

- Will northern portion of Circ Highway (segments G-J in Colchester) be considered in the EIS?
 - A: This project is part of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), and like the other projects in the MTP it is included in the "No-Build" alternative, the baseline to which the short-list alternatives will be compared.
- Will consistency with regional transportation plan be considered?
 - A: Yes.
- Are sound barriers a consideration?
 - A: Yes, they will be considered if noise levels high enough to meet FHWA criteria.
- Need Park and Ride lots for transit.

Comments on Public involvement?

- Comments can get repetitive – start with what you/we heard and go on from that.
- Post the flip-chart notes on the web. The June forums held in Richmond were good in this respect.
- Put maps and design drawings of the alternatives on website
- Do eye-level renderings of the alternatives.