

## **Lincoln Ad Hoc Traffic and Roadside Committee: Draft Notes on Public Comment**

*As Recognized from Public Feedback from May 30 to September 9, 2008*

September 9, 2008

The following summary is a working compilation of concerns and suggestions conveyed by residents and other interested parties to the Ad Hoc Traffic and Roadside Committee. This compilation is intended to inform design engineers in their effort to produce a concept design proposal congruent, on balance, with the wishes of Lincoln residents and partner organizations. This compilation is also intended to nucleate continued discussion with the goal of arriving at design proposals optimal for Lincoln.

### **Requests from Partner Groups and Agencies**

- 1) Minute Man National Historical Park is interested in finding ways to allow cyclists and walkers to get to the park safely. However, they have just begun their planning process for new roadway designs and have no specific proposals to relay to Lincoln at this time.
- 2) Cambridge Water Board requests that we better service drainage catch basins.
- 3) An affiliate of Gropius House requested provision for clear signage during the repaving to minimize the number of patrons deterred from museums during construction.
- 4) The FACTS subcommittee of the CLRP group described a draft document last revised June 4, 2008 entitled "Transportation and Circulation." Though not yet finalized for public release, it promised good alignment with the guideline adopted by the Ad Hoc Traffic and Roadside Committee. If possible, reference to this FACTS report should be made during the design process.

### **Specific Roadway Treatment Considerations**

#### Traffic Calming Measures:

1) Residents proposed a roundabout or other traffic calming flow diversions such as islands or roundabouts at:

- Bedford Rd. and Rt. 2A
- Intersection of Tower Rd. and Rt. 117
- Intersection of Lincoln Rd. and Rt. 117
- Intersection of Lincoln and Ballfield Rds.
- Intersection of the railroad with Lincoln Rd.

In general the reasons were based primarily on lack of safety inherent from the excessive speeds of drivers. However, an aesthetic value to slowing traffic was also recognized. It was noted that pedestrians have difficulty crossing Rt. 117 at Lincoln Rd., which is a quality of service consideration.

- 2) Confusion, speeding, and perceived lack of safety were cited as reasons to explore narrowing the intersection at Codman and Lincoln Rds.
- 3) Regarding the intersection at Trapelo Rd. and Old County Rd., we received anecdotal estimates that "at non-rush hours the ratio of northbound to southbound traffic on Old County is 10 to 1 and at rush hour, 25 to 1. Northbound traffic on Old County backs up at Trapelo intersection, creating dangerous conditions when exasperated drivers at the stop sign dart across." In conjunction with this observation, it was suggested Lincoln take measures to slow east-bound downhill Trapelo Rd traffic as it approaches this intersection with Old County Rd., considering for that purposes (a) speed bumps on the Trapelo Hill west of intersection with Old County; (b) stop signs on Trapelo at intersection with Old County Road; and rumble strips on east bound lane of Trapelo approaching Old County.

4) There was other request for strategic use of rumble strips on the Trapelo Rd. causeway across the reservoir. And, to the contrary, there were also arguments against their use, particularly concerning noise. CEI noted that in their Project Development Manual, Mass Highway voices an opinion against the use of rumble strips for traffic calming:

<http://www.mhd.state.ma.us/default.asp?pgid=content/designGuide&sid=about#para4>

At this webpage, you will see a list of chapters of the Manual. If you select "Chapter 16 - Traffic Calming and Traffic Management" and go to paragraph 16.7.5 (on page 16-34) the basis of their opinion is explained.

5) Some residents sought data to support the rationale for any new traffic calming measures. In response, CEI reported the clear correlation between speed and traffic-related injury/fatality. Apart from that, CEI stated that effective traffic calming is more of an art than a data-supported science. Sometimes these efforts have positive outcomes, sometimes negative outcomes. CEI encouraged Lincoln to recognize that traffic calming measures like speed bumps should be introduced only after careful study of context-specific factors.

#### Bicycles:

1) Many bicyclists expressed concern to accommodate bicyclists in roadway design and several drivers expressed concern about safety hazard posed by bicyclists on roads.

2) The 2007 "Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements in Town Centers" report from the Mass Highway Department was cited for reference:

[http://www.ctps.org/bostonmpo/4\\_resources/1\\_reports/1\\_studies/4\\_bicycle/ped\\_bic\\_imp.html](http://www.ctps.org/bostonmpo/4_resources/1_reports/1_studies/4_bicycle/ped_bic_imp.html)

One common suggestion in this report is the use of share-the-road signage to encourage drivers not to dismiss the rights of bicyclists.

3) Roadside maintenance was cited as an opportunity to improve provisions for bicyclists by sweeping sand and debris from roadway edges.

4) The committee had considered that fog lines painted closer to the center of the road (2 feet from the edge instead of 1 foot from the edge) as a traffic calming element may have the ancillary benefit of contributing to a "habit" that may provide space on the edges where bicyclists ride. However, it was noted that Mass Highway Dept. requires 4' widths to meet a definition of "bicycle lane."

5) Overall, the debate on bike provisions was well summarized by FACTS committee member Alaric Naiman:

*"This was an energetic discussion, melding factors of cost, general traffic calming, public safety, and bicycle/car interactions. The [CEI] consultants' opinion is that the best answer will be better bike paths, which several attendees made clear is not likely to occur for a variety of practical reasons..*

*The question was posed: Does anyone know whether broader roads and/or cyclable shoulders make roads safer for either cars or cyclists, and is there is a "sweet spot" constrained enough to induce caution but not collision? The [CEI] consultants reiterated that traffic safety is not an exact science and is highly situational. It suggests once again that a long-term and integrative view of both bike and car needs will serve us better than ad-hoc (re)construction."*

6) Bob Wolf of Meadowbrook Road relayed his assessment of the issue in discussion with several Lincoln cyclists and confirmed his agreement that this is an important issue for the safety of cyclists and to avoid conflict between cyclists and drivers. His comments are noted in separate memo.

### Pavement design:

- 1) Several residents expressed concern to avoid problems associated with vertical transitions and grading where driveways and curbscuts meet roadway; avoid exacerbating drainage problems or inclines that make it difficult to navigate steep driveways.
- 2) Residents requested provision for better walking along Sandy Pond Rd. and wondered whether non-paved gravel shoulders could be widened and leveled to better accommodate walking in this stretch.
- 3) Residents acknowledged the aesthetic appeal of the “pink topcoat” if affordable.
- 4) Residents acknowledged appeal of blue crosswalk paint.
- 5) Residents requested narrowing the roadways, if practical.

### Roadside Treatments:

- 1) We have heard arguments for and against gateway treatments. In their favor, it is noted that gateways can serve as welcoming features as travelers cross the Town line on major roads. Gateway signage could also alert travelers to the no salt policy that makes Lincoln roads icier than roads in neighboring towns. In contrast, we have heard opinion against over-crafted gateway treatments that include excessive signage and markings that risk undermining Lincoln’s rural and uncrowded aesthetic.
- 2) CEI team member Pam Shadley proposed several gateway design options that included:
  - Relocated signage
  - Plantings to visually frame signage
  - A painted green road line to demark the Town line
  - Featuring a granite Town line marker as a cue that travelers are entering Lincoln
  - Narrowing the perceived roadway width at gateways with bushes and other plantings.

Ms. Shadley’s proposal seemed to enjoy a warm response at the August 22 public meeting.

- 3) Sightlines were recognized as a delicate matter. In some locations, safety would require cutting back vegetation to permit views to safe stopping distances. CEI suggests that our consideration could include the felling of select trees. Yet in other cases, retaining roadway views with natural borders is a critical element for Lincoln’s rural aesthetic. Specifically, it was noted that at a recent work day on conservation land north of Trapelo Road and east of Page Road that spilled over to the Trapelo Roadside volunteers needed to cut back vegetation at the northeast corner of Trapelo and Page, significantly increasing the sight line.
- 4) A resident expressed a desire for more uniformity in signage color, design, and content.
- 5) A resident at 117 Lincoln Rd. requested that the nearby pictorial “road bend with intersection” sign be relocated to minimize visual obstruction as drivers exit his driveway and turn onto Lincoln Rd.

### Other Items of Note

- 1) Both the Lincoln Garden Club and Stonegate Gardens entertain a consultative role in deciding what trees and plantings would be ideal in the context of roadside plantings.
- 2) Many residents expressed concern for roadway noise as detrimental.
- 3) Many residents bristled at notion that trees may need to be cut down in this road rehab process.
- 4) Residents encouraged Town officials to ensure that if an archeologist is required by law for counsel on these projects, one is retained. These residents were also hopeful an archeologist could be retained even without a legal requirement. CEI commented that no legal requirement to retain an archeologist has been discovered for the current road rehab project.

- 5) Complaint was registered that parking near the library is inadequate, yet no attractive proposal to resolve the problem was forthcoming.
- 6) Concern about mailboxes and question about how they would be treated were taken.
- 7) Noah Eckhouse, chair of the FACTS subcommittee of CLRP suggests the following points for consideration:
  - a. Mitigate adverse impacts of increasing traffic density and speed.
  - b. Promote transport methods that also enhance sense of community.
  - c. Improve options for those for whom personal vehicle use is not possible or practical.

#### Proximity of Roads and Roadside Paths

- 1) Several residents expressed concern about the unsafe proximity of Bedford Rd. to the bike path that runs parallel to it near Morningside Ln. and requested measures to create distance between the bike path and the roadway.
- 2) Similarly, it was noted that the two design features invite unsafe automobile driving on the roadside path that parallels Rt. 117: (a) the paths are less than 2-3 feet from the Rt. 117 pavement and (b) the paths are level with the Rt. 117 pavement. One resident observes U.S. postal mail carriers driving and parking on this roadside path!

#### Traffic Enforcement:

- 1) It was noted that speed limits vary significantly over Trapelo Rd. and scrutiny was promoted for review of what the posted speed limits should be.
- 2) A resident proposed a traffic enforcement camera system that could automatically issue tickets to speeders.
- 3) Asked for a show of hands, a majority of residents at the July 22 meeting indicated they (a) thought unsafe speeding was rampant on Lincoln roads and (b) would welcome more active speed limit enforcement.
- 4) It was noted that on Bedford Rd. automobile parking has been observed on the roadside and partly on the road itself, constricting the width of navigatable roadway and presenting a safety hazard. The question was raised of whether this constitutes an enforceable traffic violation.