

August 4, 2021

224 Cummington Rd.  
Worthington, MA 01098

Francisca Hemming,  
Region One MassDOT Director  
270 Main St.  
Lenox, MA 02140

Dear Ms. Hemming

I have presented the Worthington, MA town Select board a list of approximately 209 signatures from town residents petitioning MassDOT, the Office of the Governor and state Representative Natalie Blais for the removal of recently installed rotary obstruction on Rt. 143 at Rt. 112 in the center of Worthington. Considering this town maintains approximately some 900-odd voters, I believe the number of petitioners is relatively significant.

We residents take pride in the fact our town has remained rural and has been christened as a "Scenic Byway" for those traveling along the Rt. 112 roadway. The design of the rotary obstruction was never presented to the residents for their consideration, input or approval prior to the installation. The concrete obstruction is a detriment to this scenic byway concept, presents needless and costly maintenance to be born upon our taxpayers making the rotary, in essence, an unfunded mandate. Large farming vehicles, low-slung livestock trailers, logging trucks and tractor trailer combinations are currently seen transiting the over the top of the concrete obstruction barely making clearance or tilting sideways as so to nearly topple. These have clearly been an unnecessary and unsafe situation.

A representative from MassDOT joined a recent Select board meeting where he professed of four options available for reconstruction of the intersection. The "smaller" rotary model design was chosen. It doesn't fit. Two other options were a four-way stop or a traffic light controlled intersection. Had the simple four-way stop been selected, the minimum of engineering and construction time would have been expended while at the same time maintain the original, picturesque view of Worthington Corners. A rearrangement of the town corners would have been avoided.

For these and other reasons the petitioners want the intersection restored with the bare minimum of traffic obstruction and associated signage consistent with public safety while maintaining the previous rural character of Worthington Corners.

With every best wish, I am,

Sincerely,  
  
David Cooke  
Worthington, MA



Charles D. Baker, Governor  
Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor  
Jamey Tesler, Secretary & CEO  
Jonathan L. Gulliver, Highway Administrator



August 20, 2021

**SUBJECT** PROJECT DEVELOPMENT – Worthington  
Roundabout at the Intersection of Route 143 with Route 112

David Cooke  
224 Cummington Road  
Worthington MA 01098

Dear Mr. Cook:

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Highway Division has received your letter requesting the removal of the roundabout at Route 112 and Route 143.

The Design Public Hearing for this project was conducted April 7, 2016. The Hearing was attended by over 40 people and MassDOT received multiple comments on the project. At the Design Public Hearing, MassDOT presented multiple options for improvements to the intersection of Old North Road / Main Road (Route 143) with Huntington Road (Route 112) and Williamsburg Road (143 and 112). The options presented were a roundabout, a mini roundabout, four-way stop or new signals. There was a lot of concern expressed about the safety of the four-way stop alternative and the visual impact of new signals. MassDOT did receive support for the mini roundabout and as a result of the input from the Design Public Hearing, that is the option that was advanced to final design and ultimately constructed.

The mini roundabout is designed such that cars will circulate around the center island at a reduced travel speed to safely move through the intersection. The design also accommodates larger vehicles such as the farming vehicles and tractor trailers that you mentioned by allowing them to drive over the raised center island of the mini roundabout. A traversable center island is typical of most roundabouts and the design has proven to be safe and accommodating for larger vehicles.

We were recently informed by the designer (John Morgan of CHA) that he was invited to a Select Board meeting on July 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss concerns about the roundabout. Those concerns centered around maintenance (snow removal) and whether or not trucks with low clearance would get hung up driving over the mountable islands. The town asked CHA to run some additional 3-D turning analyses to verify that low trailer trucks could traverse the roundabout. CHA recently ran those analyses and determined that truck clearance should not be an issue; those analyses will be sent to the town shortly.

Also at the meeting, the topic of other alternatives was discussed. It was determined that, at this point, the only viable alternative to a roundabout would be an all-way stop. However, it is important to note that all-way stop intersections typically experience more safety issues than roundabouts, and, as we have stated previously, the all-way stop alternative did not receive support during the Public Hearing, specifically due to safety concerns, which is why the mini-roundabout was selected as the preferred alternative. It is our understanding that, for the town to take any action on removal of the roundabout, petitioners would need to secure the required number of signatures to initiate action for a town vote.

We should reiterate that the town of Worthington selected CHA to design this project. MassDOT is constructing this project using State and Federal funds specifically programmed for transportation by the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization. As a condition of MassDOT funding this project, the town of Worthington has agreed to pay for any additional work that is incurred outside the original contract. As such, the town Select Board would need to request MassDOT to remove the roundabout and would be responsible for funding the re-design, removal of the roundabout, and reconstruction of the intersection. MassDOT has not received a request from the Select Board at this time. We will certainly work with town officials if they contact us regarding this issue.

If you would like further discussion, please contact Mark Moore, District Project Development Engineer, at (857) 368-1030.

Sincerely,

*Francisca Heming*

Francisca Heming  
Digitally signed by  
Francisca Heming  
Date: 2021.08.20  
12:14:50 -0400

Francisca R. Heming  
District Highway Director

PLF/Ib

cc: Rep. Natalie Blais  
ecc: ProjDevLen, PlanLen