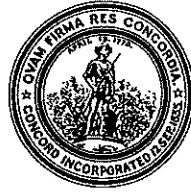


Melissa Saalfeld, Chair
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August 19, 2021

Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT Highway Division
ATTN: Kurt Jergensen
10 Park Plaza Room 4260
Boston, MA 02116

Subject: COMMENTS on 25%/75% Plans for Project #608495 Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 2A

Dear Mr. Jergensen,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments regarding the project to resurface State Route 2A (Bypass Road/North Great Road/Marrett Road. Based on the Commission's review of documents thus far available to us and comments received from interested citizens and your own letter; it is clear that this project involves much more than resurfacing the road and as such we strongly request that you actively solicit additional public comment. There have been no public meetings to date and no evidence presented that would compel these dramatic and intrusive changes. The proposed work in no way recognizes the historic importance or integrity of the Battle Road of which a considerable portion is overlain by Route 2A.

Efforts to protect this historic road date back to at least ca. 1926 when the Commonwealth of Massachusetts considered legislation to protect the Battle Road and adjacent Revolutionary War sites as a commemorative highway. A major step forward in protection came in 1959 with the creation of Minute Man National Historical Park (MMNHP). Since that time, many entities and organizations including the national park, the surrounding towns of Concord, Lincoln, Bedford and Lexington, the Massachusetts Highway Department, Hanscom Air Force Base and the Massachusetts National Guard have worked together to preserve the character of the Battle Road. The Battle Road Scenic Byway Committee also seeks to protect the resources along the Battle Road in Arlington, Concord, Lexington, Lincoln and MMNHP.

The recent designation of the Battle Road Scenic Byway as an All-American Road is expected to further underscore the importance of the road and help ensure context-sensitive approaches which more naturally calm traffic while making bicycle and pedestrian travel safer. The changes briefly outlined in your letter of June 28, 2021 would dramatically and irretrievably alter the character of Route 2A/The Battle Road and definitely compromise the historic sites and landscapes of the national park.

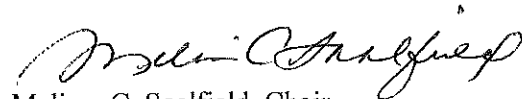
We ask to you consider why visitors travel along this road. Of course, there are commercial vehicles, commuters and bicyclists; but in addition, visitors are interested in gaining a better understanding of the

events of April 1775. A million people come every year to see and walk amidst the restored and rehabilitated landscape of Minute Man National Historical Park. The Battle Road/Rt 2A is a critical artifact of this national park which merits great care when altering it in any manner. The few suggested changes of which we are aware would dramatically negate so much of the efforts to reclaim this area as a national park that inspires visitors not only from America but from throughout the world. Such changes would also compromise fragile archaeological sites yet to be studied.

We have learned that Minute Man National Historical Park proposes the creation of a small interagency Working Group to evaluate some of the more technical details of the proposed project. We fully endorse the creation of such a group. However, we also request open and publicized public meetings. The Park and the road are national treasures that belong to the American people.

We look forward to learning more about work on Route 2A/The Battle Road.

Sincerely,



Melissa C. Saalfield, Chair
Concord Historical Commission

CC:

Teri Ackerman, Chair, Concord Select Board
Stephen Crane, Town Manager, Concord
Chair, Bedford Historical Commission
Chair, Lexington Historical Commission
Chair, Lincoln Historical Commission
Giles Parker, Acting Superintendent, Minute Man NHP
Brona Simon, Massachusetts Historical Commission