



Newsletter 4 June, 1997

Alternatives Workshop Results

Nearly 75 participants attended the Alternatives Workshop, held at the Devens Officer's Club June 5, 1997. Jonathan Lane, of ICON architecture, inc., began the meeting by discussing each of the five alternatives and the thought process that went into forming each of the diagrams. After Lane's presentation, participants were asked to comment on the schemes and vote for their first and second choices. Diagrams of each alternative were placed at the back of the room and two steering committee members were stationed at each alternative to facilitate discussion. The response was tremendous!

We received many helpful comments on both the strengths and the weaknesses of each of the proposed alternatives. After the public's first chance to comment on the draft alternatives, we have been able to pull together some common themes from the comments on the alternatives.

- **Inclusion:** Participants at the meeting expressed concern that we try to include the whole study area in a final proposal. At the same time, however, participants also hoped to have the area divided into manageable units so as to facilitate interpretation and to encourage participation.
- **Connection:** Many participants felt that strong connections between parts of the study area were necessary for a successful plan. Participants noted the power of Rt. 2 as a means of accessing the area, but also the need to utilize the secondary roads in the area.
- **Balance:** Many participants reacted strongly to both Alternative 1 and Alternative 3 because they felt that each of these interpretations is one-sided. Participants commented on the need to balance green space and conservation efforts with emphasis on the cultural and historic importance of the area. Some participants suggested combining Alternatives 1 and 3 to create a more well-rounded interpretation of the area.
- **Identity:** There was strong support at the meeting for allowing towns to develop their own interpretations of the importance of the area. There was also strong support for emphasizing the aspects of the region which make it unique and warrant designation as a Heritage Corridor.



These were the four strongest themes we encountered in analyzing the results of the alternatives workshop. They do not include all the comments made at the meeting, but rather try to draw some conclusions from the enormous response to the alternatives presented.

We also still welcome your comments. If you were unable to attend the third workshop or have anything else to add, please use the comment/preference sheet inside this newsletter to make your voice heard.

An overview description for each alternative is presented inside this issue, along with a brief summary of strengths and weaknesses and the results of the votes.

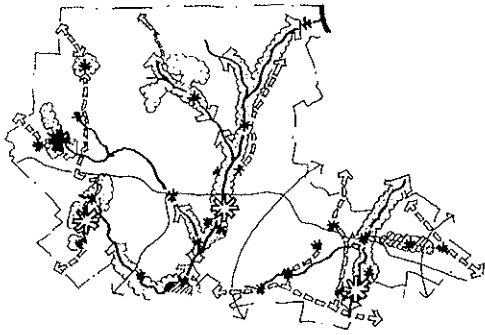
Freedom's Way Heritage Association Steering Committee

The Members of the Steering Committee include:

Freedom's Way Heritage Association
Mildred Chandler
Marge Darby
Robert Farwell
Mass. Department of Environmental Management
James Baecker
African American/Nipmuc History
Elizabeth Tennessee
**Metropolitan Area Planning Council/
Minuteman Advisory Group**
Judith Alland
Minuteman Historical Societies
George Krusen
Montachusett Regional Planning Commission
George Kahale
Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce
Meg Delorier
Nashua River Watershed Association
Robert Levite
Museum of Our National Heritage
Thomas Leavitt
Mass. Historical Commission
Judith McDonough
National Park Service
Nancy Nelson
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Janet Kennedy

Consultants:
ICON architecture, inc.
Jonathan Lane, Principal-in-Charge
Beatrice Bernier, Project Manager

**For more information or to be placed on the
feasibility study mailing list please contact:
Mildred Chandler or Marge Darby at the
Freedom's Way Heritage Association
43 Buena Vista Street, Devens MA 01433;
Tel: (508) 772-3654**

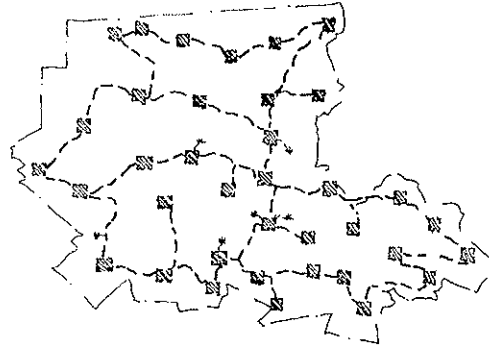


Alternative 1: Regional Greenway Network

This alternative approach to the heritage area would rely on the dominant landscape elements and would focus on primary natural features including Mount Wachusett, Mount Watatic, the Nashua River Corridor, the Sudbury River Corridor and the associated network of federal, state and local open spaces and trails. The concept of this alternative would be to expand the recreational attractiveness of the region, emphasizing understanding and utilization of the area's important landscape features. The consequence of this approach would be a largely local and regional emphasis for the heritage area, emphasizing marketing its advantages to residents of its communities and the surrounding area.

Strengths/Weaknesses - Among the strengths of this alternative most people commented on the emphasis on the preservation of the natural space. *"like emphasis on resources of area and opportunity to better understand man's relationships in and to the the natural landscape," "a heritage corridor should consist of natural corridors used by early Ameican settlers and natives," and "I like keeping focus on conservation"*.

Among the weaknesses, participants often cited the lack of recognition of cultural and historic resources and that it might not appeal to a wide variety of visitors. *"Land stewardship exclusively compromises other heritage resources," "not enough culture or history" and "has appeal only to those interested in natural resources and recreation."* Other comments suggested to combine this approach with other alternatives. *"Needs to be combined with #4 and #5" and "should be a sub-plan or secondary plan."*

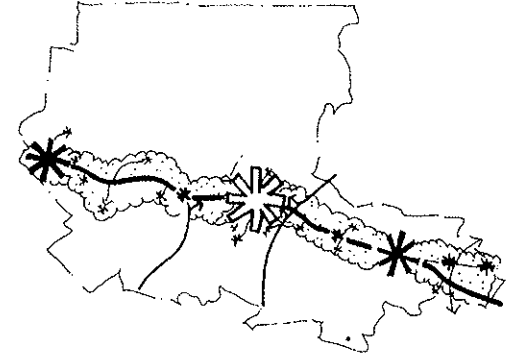


Alternative 2: Freedom's Way - Self-guided Tour

In this alternative, the area would be organized around the multitude of historic sites in the region and would attempt to be highly inclusive of communities and resources. A set of projects would be developed by local initiative in many communities, using town centers, farms and historical societies that would tell the region's story and create the heritage experience. Major visitor centers and existing attractions would remain more or less "as is," emphasizing that each community's story is best told at the local level. A scenic, self-guided automobile tour route would be mapped through the region, directing the visitor to the wealth of existing independent resources and the route would be marked and marketed.

Strengths/Weaknesses - Among the strengths of this alternative most people commented on the inclusiveness of this approach and the ability of towns to make decisions for themselves. *"All the towns get their claim to fame - Equality! Democracy?" "this is inclusive."* Another strength noted was the way the plan enabled people to visit the region at their own pace. *"Self-guided tours allow people to visit at own rate..."*

The central weakness cited by participants is the dispersion of this alternative. Many felt that this alternative would fracture the region rather than unifying it, and did not see strong connections or unifying elements in this approach. *"Too dispersed," "Hard to get all communities to agree," "Difficult to project a common theme" and "this is not focused enough to create a sufficient enough draw to our area."*

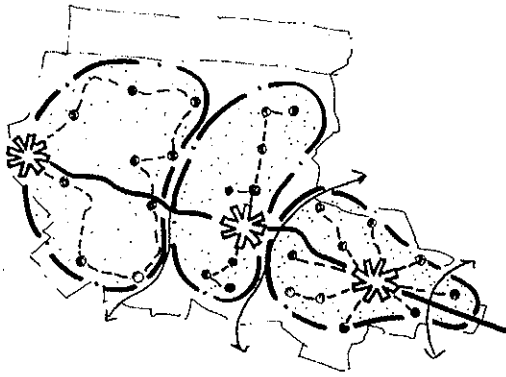


Alternative 3: Route 2 Cultural Attractions Corridor

This approach would concentrate on a set of existing primary attractions and associated historic settings along the Route 2 corridor. Each attraction would serve as a "gateway" to the Freedoms Way area and its communities and would emphasize a different element of its story. This approach would emphasize a focus on magnet attractions, creating a third destination between existing heritage-based attractions: the Minuteman National Historical Park, to the east and the Gardner Heritage State Park, to the west. This alternative would benefit from designation of one single location that might serve as an Orientation Center to the Freedoms Way Heritage area. Communities outside the heritage area could participate but would rely on local initiatives.

Strengths/Weaknesses - Among the strengths of this alternative most people noted the physically defined character of the corridor and that it would be the easiest approach to implement. *"A well connected, cohesive corridor" and the "simplest plan to start with - keeps tourism contained."*

The central weakness noted by participants was the small area included in this alternative. *"too centralized around Route 2 - will become a traffic nightmare," "this excludes many features that deserve inclusion," and "corridor too narrow - encourages quick visit (on and off Rt. 2 approach)."* Another weakness discussed was that this alternative lacked on green space and recreation, and there were several suggestions to combine elements of this approach with element of alternative 1. *"This would need more of an overlay to appeal - such as #1 - to appeal to green group."*

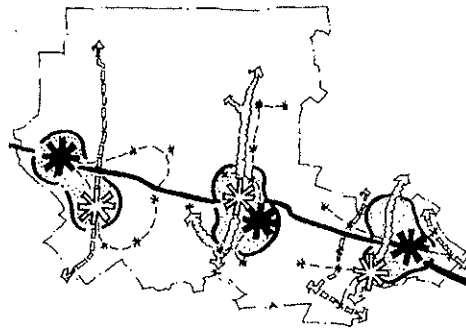


Alternative 4: Heritage Sub-Regions and Discovery Tours

This approach is similar to alternative 3, although focused on three core heritage setting with different experiences that can be understood individually and as a whole. Each setting would be organized around closely linked clusters of resources that are of national significance, including early settlements, revolution, religious and living experiments, transcendentalism, industry and early conservation movements. The easterly setting would include the Minuteman National Historical Park from Lexington to Concord and associated revolutionary sites such as the Minute-men paths and Transcendentalist sites. The central area would include key conservation resources such as the Oxbow and Nashua River, and the Fruitlands Museums and associated scenic landscape and living experiment sites. The westerly setting would include the Gardner State Heritage Park and key industrial and early capitalism resources such as Fitchburg and Leominster.

Strengths/Weaknesses - Among the strengths of this alternative, people noted the cohesive benefits of this plan, by breaking the region into manageable entities. This could enable groups to work closer to home and is a *'better opportunity for local communities to REALLY get involved.'* People also commented on the capacity for the diversity of interpretations possible in each pod. *"Each area along the way may concentrate on its own uniqueness and thus aid the visitor in exploration."*

Comments on the weaknesses of this alternative included concern about the ability of the 3 areas to work together to create cohesion; some people felt that *"this is desirable but hard to manage."* Other reflected on the need to develop connections between sub areas, and between natural and cultural resources.



Alternative 5: Hybrid Approach - Cultural Nodes

This approach would combine selected features of the above alternatives to offer a more comprehensive approach and strategy to the Freedom's Way Area. This concept would encourage longer visitor stays and repeat visits. As in Scenario 4, This approach would be organized around three anchor type settings which would be defined by paired key cultural and natural attractions, and the physical linkages that can be developed between them. Anchor projects include: The Minuteman National Historical Park and the Great Meadows National Wildlife refuge; The Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge Proposed Visitor Center and the Fruitlands Museums; The Gardner State Heritage Park and the Mount Wachusett Visitor Center. Resources and efforts would concentrate on reinforcing and extending existing core interpretive activities to create a powerful set of attractions within each setting.

Strengths/Weaknesses - Among the strengths of this alternative were incorporation of some of the features emphasized in the other alternatives. *"Combines cultural and natural, which are the main areas of interest in this general area, and includes all four themes."* Many participants noted that this was a good starting place, and that the Freedom's way could gradually expand larger areas as in the other alternatives. *"Start with this or #3 and build on to #4."*

Among the weaknesses most participants noted that the heritage districts might be too narrow and that it would be *"difficult to get people interested in areas outside the yellow areas,"* and that it *"excludes many features that should be included."*

Alternatives Workshop Results

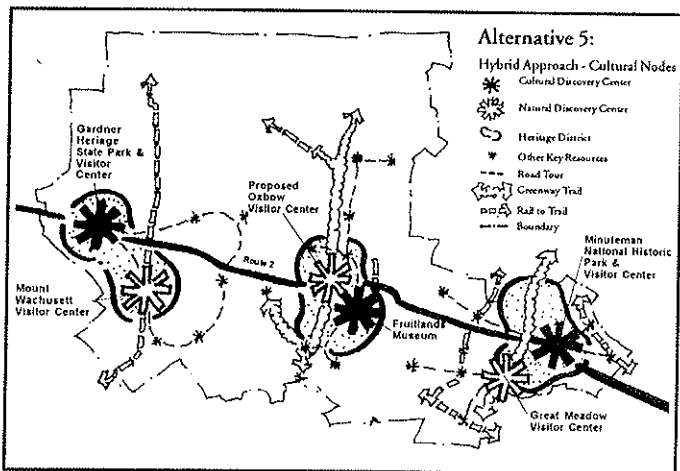
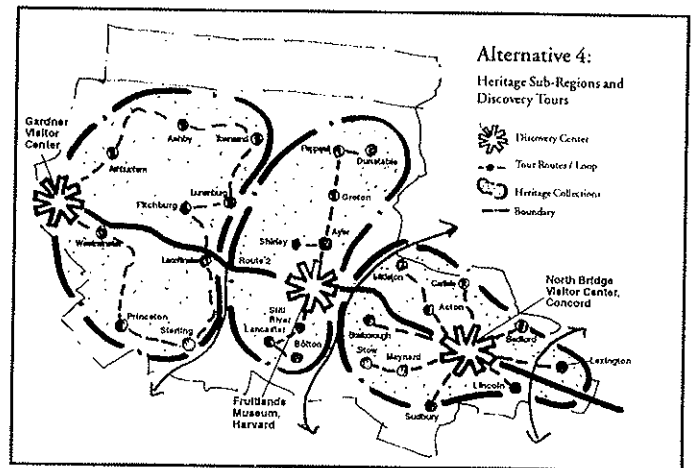
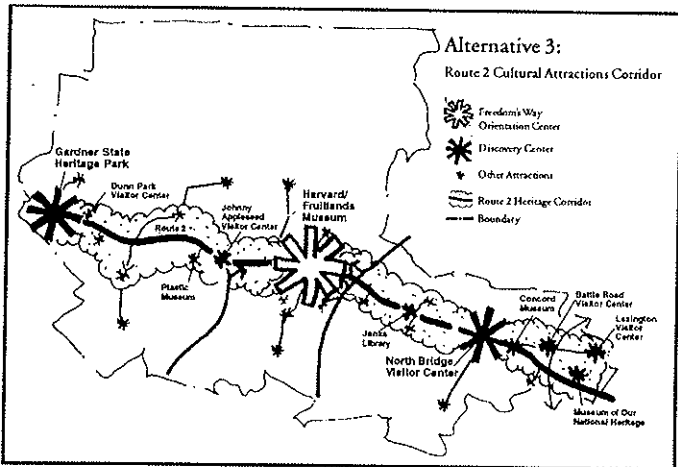
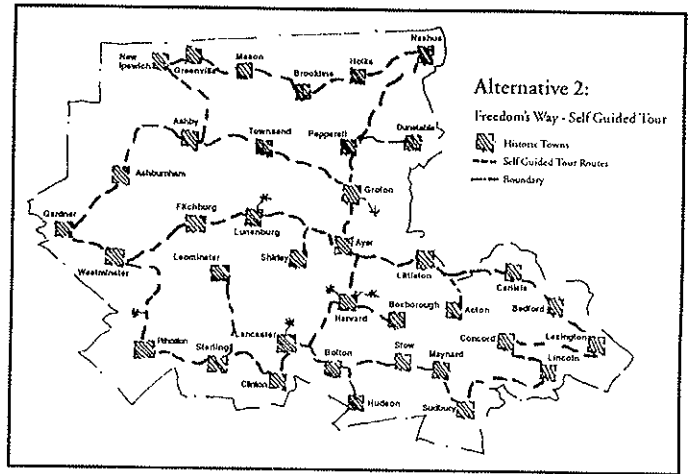
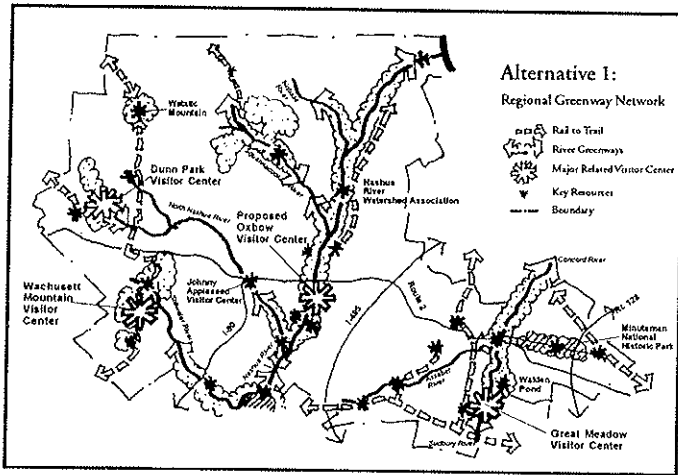
We asked participants to give us their initial reaction to the five alternatives we presented by voting for their 1st and 2nd preferences. It was a hard decision for many people to make. We received many suggestions to combine various alternatives (such as Alternative 1 and Alternative 3 in order to balance cultural and natural resources); one person even split their 1st and 2nd place votes between two of the alternatives! The results were as follows:

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>
Alternative 1:	9	11
Alternative 2:	4	5
Alternative 3:	8.5	9.5
Alternative 4:	22.5	17.5
Alternative 5:	17	16

This exercise was not intended to be a popularity contest, but rather a chance to quantify first impressions. Alternative 4 was not the "winner"; the results simply show that it possessed many of the qualities people felt were important. Also, just because Alternative 2 did not meet the criteria of most participants at the meeting, it will not be removed from consideration. We can use the results from the meeting to analyze why some Alternatives appealed to many participants, while others did not.



If you were unable to attend the Alternatives Workshop, please use the provided insert to let us know which alternative you prefer and give us any additional comments. The alternatives report can be requested from the Freedom's Way Heritage Association.



Please check your preferred alternative:

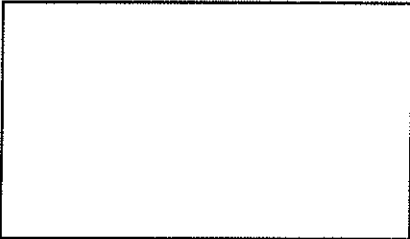
- Alternative 1: Regional Greenway Network
- Alternative 2: Freedom's Way - Self Guided Tour
- Alternative 3: Route 2 Cultural Attractions Corridor
- Alternative 4: Heritage Sub-regions and Discovery Tours
- Alternative 5: Hybrid Approach - Cultural Nodes

Your input is important!

On the back is a section for your comments and a mailing label with our address. Please fold this insert in half, fill in your return address, seal the edge, and mail it to us. Thank you!

YOUR COMMENTS...

From:



Place
Stamp
Here

TO:

ICON architecture inc.
38 Chauncy Street
Boston, MA
02111

BY THE WAY...

JUNE 26

Sunset Concert - "American Heritage"
Concord Band at Fruitlands Museums
7:30 PM \$5 parking fee

JUNE 28

"Town of Emerson and Thoreau:
Exploring Concord Inside and Out" Two
hour walking tour. 10 - 12 AM Adults
\$10 Children/Seniors \$5 "Why Con-
cord?" continuing exhibit. 508-369-9763
- Concord Museum

JULY 2

Summer Luncheon, Westminster
Historical Society 11:30AM-1:30PM
Reservations 508-874-5569

JULY 3

NEW TRADITION! Youth at the Pops
Concert and Fireworks - Thayer Sym-
phony Orchestra at Devens. Gates open
at 4PM, concert at 7:30. Rain or shine.
Free tickets at sponsor locations
call 508-368-0041 Tickets at the gate \$2.

JULY 4

Civic Days Parade, Fitchburg IOAM
Family Events at 4 PM. Events continue
through July 6. 508-345-9550

JULY 5

Concert, Monument Park, Gardner
508-630-1497

Mini-Pow Wow - North Middlesex
Indian Cultural Council, Town Field,
Pepperell 508-433-9733

JULY 6

Six Gardens of Lancaster 10 to 3 Ice
Cream Sundacs on Town Green 1-3
Fee \$10 for the day
508-368-8975

Guided walking tour of Shirley Shaker
sites 12:30 Reservations required
508-425-4513 Fee \$10

JULY 11

"Baseball in Shirley" Bring memorabilia.
Shirley Historical Society 7:30 PM

*This newsletter is an invitation to
membership. Your involvement can
make a difference by helping to
shape our area's plan. Together, we
can protect our area's uniqueness
through the creation of a Freedom's
Way National Heritage Corridor.*

UPDATE...

1. In the **fourth workshop**, we will make a determination as to the feasibility of establishing a Heritage area in the Freedom's Way region and identify the next steps to be pursued. A Draft Feasibility Study will be presented, including a slide show, and feedback will be solicited from participants.
2. The Recommendations workshop will be the final part of this study. Public review will be essential in this step of the process. **Please plan to attend.** If you have any questions or further information, please contact:

Mildred Chandler or Marge Darby
Freedom's Way Heritage Association
43 Buena Vista Street, Devens, MA 01433
Tel: (508) 772-3654

WHAT'S AHEAD...

WORKSHOP - JULY 2 7:00 - 8:30 PM

We will return to the Devens Officer's Club for the final workshop which will focus on Recommendations. Our proposed study area from Nashua, New Hampshire to Mt. Wachusett, Lexington to Gardner, is large and the selection of the Officer's Club as a site for the workshops makes available a room large enough for both the presentation and small group discussions. Additionally, this site is a central location which has the best potential to maintain involvement from all the communities of the study area.

Directions: From Rt. 2, and I-495 interchange go West 6.5 miles to "Devens - Jackson Road", (exit #37B), go North on Jackson Road 1 mile from gate house to T-junction at Givry St.; turn left and go 350 ft.; turn right on Sherman Ave. and go to the entrance of the Officers Club, (1-storey building on Right, adjacent to the parade ground.)



Freedom's Way Heritage Association
43 Buena Vista Street
Fort Devens, MA 01433

TO: