

## Municipal Corner – Intersections

I previously worked in Essex Junction, “the land of traffic lights.” When I came to Stowe some citizens often noted to me that there are no traffic lights, which to them was part of the community identity. For someone traveling on Rt. 100 every day to go to work, this was enjoyable to not have to constantly stop and start. However, I can understand that this might not be as enjoyable for those trying to get onto Rt. 100 from a side road. With this being said, Stowe has been immersed recently in discussions regarding traffic improvements throughout the community.

West Hill Road / Rt. 100: The community got a taste of its first traffic light when a temporary signal was installed as part of the Bridge Street Bridge Reconstruction. I have received a lot of phone calls over the last several days expressing disapproval over the removal of the traffic light. The traffic light was not installed to be permanent and is owned by the contractor, so the temporary signal could not be left in place. The Selectboard did ask VTrans if it was possible to install a permanent light as part of the Bridge Street Bridge project and they said no. However, VTrans did perform a warrant analysis indicating a permanent traffic signal is warranted at this intersection, so it is possible to install the traffic light as a separate project. With this being said, the temporary traffic light worked well for those trying to get out of West Hill, but was inefficient when motorists attempted to take a left onto West Hill from Rt. 100 North. If the community desires a permanent traffic signal, a left hand turn lane on at least Rt. 100 may help with efficiency. This will likely require right-of-way acquisition. We will also have to figure out how to pay for it.

Moscow Road / Rt. 100: VTrans is planning on reconstructing Rt. 100 from Stowe near the Public Safety Facility to Exit 10 in Waterbury during the 2016 / 17 construction seasons. Citizens have raised concerns about being able to pull out of Moscow Road onto Rt. 100, especially when taking a left. The Selectboard has asked VTrans to analyze turning lanes, a traffic light and a roundabout.

River Road / Rt. 100: The South Main Street Sidewalk Project includes plans to “T” up the intersection which would remove the telephone pole that is currently in the island. The work is tentatively planned to occur in 2016 when the state reconstructs Rt. 100. (Timing of the project may be affected by any changes to the Moscow Road / Rt. 100 intersection depending if any improvements can stay within the right-if-way or not.) Also, there are utility poles that have to be moved and there is currently a \$488,000 funding shortfall. The Town has applied for a supplemental grant to cover the shortfall, but at a minimum the Town will need to provide twenty percent of this shortfall as a local match. This will be proposed as an FY17 Capital project. If the Town does not construct the project, it must pay back the Federal government the money that has been spent to date.

Luce Hill Road / Rt. 108: The State keeps records of high accident locations and the Luce Hill / Rt. 108 intersection is one of the highest accident locations in Vermont. VTrans proposed to remove the island and “T” up the intersection as a low cost alternative to help alleviate confusion

about who has the right-of-way and improve visibility. The Selectboard gave conceptual approval to it and it should be implemented in the next several years. Tentative plans call for it to be implemented when the Mountain Road Village Sidewalk is extended up to Cottage Club Road.

This summary doesn't include other major intersections in town (e.g. Rt. 100 / Stage Coach Road, Rt. 100 / Randolph Road, Rt. 100 / 108). The community will need to decide what its intersection improvement priorities are and look for opportunities to advance them. We also have to consider several factors (e.g. safety, efficiency, capacity, economic development, funding, aesthetics, and community character). Is our main goal to move as much traffic as fast as possible even if it means a greater asphalt footprint?

Is Stowe prepared to start introducing turn lanes, traffic lights and/or a roundabout? As I often say, *there are better minds than mine to decide these things*, so please watch for the Selectboard agenda's in the Stowe Reporter and on our municipal website ([www.townofstovevt.org](http://www.townofstovevt.org)) to provide your input.