

## Municipal Corner – Highways

The Town offices often get calls about road conditions on the many miles of roads in Stowe. It is important to understand that not all roads in Stowe are the responsibility of the Town of Stowe to maintain. Some roads are State Highways that are the responsibility of the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and some are private. There are a total of 93 miles of Town Highway in Stowe, 14 miles of State Highway and 35 miles of private roads. Yes, the large culvert recently replaced on Rt. 100 was a State project and responsibility.

Public roads fall into the following classifications:

**Class 1 Town Highways (1.5 miles):** These are “Town Highways which form the extension of a State Highway route and which carry a State Highway route number.” The state is responsible for paving Class 1 Town Highways and line striping. The Town is responsible for all other maintenance on a year round basis. Class 1 Town Highways are those that are part of the state highway system within the former village limits, from the top of Pucker Street where the flashing speed signal is to the Public Safety Building on Rt. 100 and Rt. 108 from its intersection with Main Street to the Field Guide Hotel.

**Class 2 Town Highways (14.5 miles):** These are “Town Highways selected as the most important highways in each town.” These are often highways that go between towns and to places which have more than a normal amount of traffic. The Town is responsible for maintaining Class 2 Town Highways on a year round basis. Examples of Class 2 Town Highways include Stage Coach Road and Barrows Road.

**Class 3 Town Highways (65 miles):** These are “all traveled Town Highways other than class 1 or 2 town highways.” They should be passable by a standard passenger vehicle on a year round basis. The Town is responsible for all paving and other maintenance.

**Class 4 Town Highways (12 miles):** “Are all Town Highways that are not class 1, 2 or 3 highways.” These highways “may be maintained to the extent required by the necessity of the Town, the public good and the convenience of the inhabitants of the Town.” This has been generally interpreted that the Town does not have a responsibility to plow them in the winter or otherwise maintain them to the same standard as a class 3 road, but does have the responsibility to maintain bridges and culverts. Waterworks Road, Brownsville Road and Maple Run are examples of class 4 highways.

**State Highways (14 miles):** These are State designated highways that are not class 1 Town Highways. The State is responsible for all paving and maintenance. On Rt. 100 it runs from the flashing speed limit light at the end of Pucker Street to the Morristown border and from the Public Safety Facility to the Waterbury Border. The State tentatively plans on paving this in 2020. On Rt. 108 it runs from the Field Guide Hotel to the Cambridge border in Smugglers Notch. This is currently not on the State’s paving program.

**Private Roads** are roads that are not paved or maintained by the Town or the State. They are the responsibility of the private owners.

Not including capital expenditures, the FY'18 Town Highway budget is \$2,129,319, of which the Town budgets approximately \$350,000 per year for paving on its 33 miles of paved roads. The Town receives approximately \$175,000 of state highway aid annually. The vast majority of the Highway budget is paid for with local property taxes.

The State is responsible for paving class 1 Town Highways. However, their paving cycle has increased over the years, sometimes causing the Town to pave sections in order to hold them in an acceptable condition until the State paves them. Currently the State is planning on paving Stowe's class 1 Highways in 2020.

Also, the State does occasionally provide Towns with class 2 paving grants. They also occasionally will provide the town a structures grant to help maintain bridges and large culverts. Finally, the State inspects bridges over twenty feet in length on all Town Highways. Towns are responsible for their general maintenance and the State takes the lead in replacing them with federal money.

If there is a maintenance issue with a Town Highway, you can contact Abby at the Town Manager's Office (253-7350 or [aearle@townofstowe.vermont.org](mailto:aearle@townofstowe.vermont.org)) and she will dispatch Steve Bonneau, Highway Superintendent, to assess the situation and take appropriate corrective action. On a state highway, you can contact Jim Cota, District Project Manager with VTrans at ( 802-524-5926).