

Municipal Corner – Bridge Street Bridge

As part of the Bridge Street Bridge Detour a temporary traffic signal has been set up at the Rte. 100 / West Hill Intersection. Some have asked why a dedicated left turn signal or advanced green for northbound motorists from Rte. 100 onto West Hill Road was not installed. VTrans (State of Vermont Agency of Transportation) has informed the Town that the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, which we are required to follow by state law, no longer permits these without a left turn lane. There is not enough room between the guardrail on one side and the swale / steep bank on the other side to install a left turn lane that would be necessary to accommodate a dedicated left hand turn signal, without substantial construction. VTrans did agree to put up signs encouraging motorists to take the alternate route through Moscow / Barrows / Luce Hill Roads to Rte. 108 as a way to alleviate some of the left turn movements onto West Hill Road.

Others have noticed the nice view from the Bridge Street Bridge and have suggested that we not replace the covered pedestrian bridge. After a series of public meetings during the project design, the Selectboard requested VTrans to provide a replica replacement because it is a local land mark. The Selectboard also agreed to “expedited construction” in order to reduce the impact on our local economy by allowing the contractor to close the bridge during April and May to enable them to get as much work done as possible during when traffic and commerce are less than other times of the year. Part of expedited construction requires road closure and advanced fabrication of elements of the bridge. Notwithstanding the time for the public debate trying to reconcile who wanted to retain the pedestrian bridge and who didn’t, any substantive change to the design of the Bridge at this time would delay the project implementation and increase the project cost.

Also, there have been requests regarding a temporary footbridge during the bridge closure. Establishing a temporary pedestrian walkway would have also delayed project implementation because of the time to acquire the right-of-way and installation. The temporary structure for the water main is not built at-grade and is not otherwise built to safely accommodate pedestrians.

The Town also very much appreciates VTrans’s extraordinary efforts to expedite project construction to minimize adverse impacts on the community. We also appreciate your patience and understanding during construction.