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**COMMENTS ON DUBOIS-KING INITIAL SCOPING REPORT
PLAINFIELD US2 AND MAIN STREET INTERSECTION TRANSPORTATION
STUDY, FEBRUARY 10, 2005**

March 5, 2005

The three primary concerns of the Selectboard for this intersection in the Town of Plainfield are: maintaining the viability of businesses located at this intersection including handicapped accessibility to businesses; increasing traffic safety, both on Route 2 and at the intersections with Harvey Hill and Main Street, and pedestrian safety. Each of these concerns is of equal importance.

Dubois-King (D-K) selected Alternative 11, the creation of a T intersection with a traffic signal as their preferred choice. This is the alternative that they most thoroughly investigated, and presented in detail to the Town at a public meeting. This design will meet two of the three primary concerns of the Town, it will however negatively impact the hardware store. This is unacceptable.

An alternative selected by D-K as unfeasible, Alternative 12, could be acceptable with some modification. We request D-K to include the possibility of a signalized pedestrian crossing. This option would meet the three primary goals of the Town of Plainfield. This alternative is acceptable to the Town of Plainfield. D-K lists the benefits of this alternative as:

- Minimal expenses
- No construction required, no permits or environmental clearances
- Accommodation of pedestrians
- Adding a traffic signal provides improved safety for vehicles by reducing the number of conflicting movements
- Traffic signal will improve safety of Harvey Hill Road movements by creating gaps on US2

The negative impacts listed under this alternative relate to the intersection remaining in the current configuration: i.e., it does not improve sight distance on US 2 (D-K states that as currently configured, site distance is adequate for posted speed), and it does not improve grade, cross-section width, or stairs. We recognize that the stairs that exist are not handicapped accessible. The D-K report states that there are relatively few accidents at this location, while there have been some notable accidents at this intersection (a semi driving into the hardware store). People know that it is a dangerous intersection and slow down. Widening the intersection could encourage faster speeds, contributing to increased accidents. The cross-sectional width at either side of the intersection is restricted, widening the intersection could contribute to increased problems. We are also concerned about D-K's traffic analysis. We believe that auto traffic may be heavier than the study indicates. Typically, there are long traffic back-ups at the intersection of Route 2 and 14 in East Montpelier. We are concerned that a signal may cause traffic to back-up at this intersection during peak hours. This would degrade the quality of the air, and cause additional problems in Town from idling, starting and stopping.

We had initially asked that the RFP include specific recommendations on traffic calming. The recommendations on traffic calming are very general, and do not include specific

recommendations on pricing, location etc. Some of the ideas we expected would include using the white side lines to visually narrow the roadway, using raised or brightly marked crosswalks, using center markings to get driver attention and possible "gateways" at each end of the village. These would be rather low cost but would need to be shown to be effective.

We recognize that signalization without reconstruction does not correct the structural deficiencies. However, D-K states that the current intersection meets the sight and distance requirements established by VTrans. For minimal expense we can meet three important goals of the Town.

TOWN OF PLAINFIELD GOAL: PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Pedestrians routinely have to cross at this area. The Town Hall is used for Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Selectboard, Conservation and all other meetings of Town Commissions. The Town Hall is also routinely used for public meetings, and rented out for theatre, dances and parties. All of these activities require pedestrian crossing of Route 2. While there have been no pedestrian fatalities, there have been pedestrian/car accidents at this intersection. The intersection is routinely crossed by a blind woman, who has been injured at this intersection (Appendix H). The installation of a signal will increase pedestrian safety. We are concerned that the issue of not enough pedestrians to justify a crosswalk might be due to the fear of crossing causing people to not cross at all. If there were a safer way to cross, we might get more foot traffic.

D-K developed the traffic data using traffic data from Danville, not from Plainfield. Danville has a long-standing reputation as a town NOT-to speed in. Drivers routinely slow down when they drive through Danville. This unfortunately is not the case in Plainfield. While we are trying to establish that reputation, we do not currently have it. AOT personnel estimated that 5 - 15% of the drivers routinely speed through Plainfield. At 300 - 665 cars per hour, this means that 30 - 200 cars per hour routinely speed through town. This does not make a safe pedestrian crossing. Is the data from Danville assuming that we have the same traffic? There is a lot of our traffic that originates in Marshfield, Cabot and Calais. The issue here is that the speeding is the reason we are concerned. A pedestrian light should make it safer for those crossing.

TOWN OF PLAINFIELD GOAL: TRAFFIC SAFETY

We were pleased to see that this intersection, as currently configured, meets the needs for a traffic signal. The D-K report states on Page 9 that this intersection meets Warrant 1 for "eight hour vehicular volume, and Warrant 2 for four hour vehicular volume. Because one or more Warrant is met, installation of a traffic signal would be acceptable to VTrans. According to VTrans, Warrant 1 is a typical Warrant that is met for installation of a traffic signal. [Please note that the details applicable to Warrant 2 are not included in the report.]

Since the analysis shows two Warrants are met for 2004, and traffic volumes increase over time, these two Warrants would likely be met for future years as well"

While installing a signal does not correct the structural deficiencies, the current intersection does meet the sight and distance requirements established by VTrans, and a signal could be installed in this location. For minimal expense we can meet three important goals of the Town. Amy

Gamble of AOT noted in an e-mail on March 3 noted that *"We measured 250 feet of sight distance looking westerly from the stairs, which is the absolute minimum allowable for 35 mph. [note: speed limit is 30 mph, not 35] The absolute minimum isn't a desirable situation, as it leaves little margin for less than ideal circumstances... The sight distance we measured in the easterly direction was 440 feet..."*

Installing a signal will improve the safety of pedestrians and drivers. Handicap parking at the Town Hall must exit on Harvey Hill. This is a blind intersection with limited site distance. The installation of a signal will increase the safety for handicapped persons using the Town Hall, and other residents leaving Harvey Hill.

At the public meeting, citizens expressed that a traffic light, that operated during the busy times, and was a blinking light during low-traffic times, was an option to be considered. Concerns were expressed about noise and air pollution from starting, stopping and idling vehicles. This issue needs to be addressed in detail. Currently traffic mostly backs-up to head west on Route 2 in front of the hardware store. D-K said they would present information on air pollution, but there is none in the final report.

At the public meeting we requested air quality information from the installation of a signal, will this information be included in the final report?

PARKING/VIABILITY OF MUNICIPAL AND COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

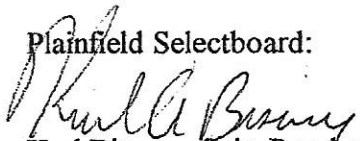
Plainfield has relatively few commercial properties. Two of these, the hardware store and furniture store, as well as the Town Hall are located at this intersection. Parking for the commercial properties is critically important. The preferred alternative selected by D-K reduces parking at the hardware store. The Town of Plainfield has an interest in making all businesses handicapped accessible. The change in configuration presented in Figure 5 will make development of handicapped accessibility difficult at this store. The two choices presented either create 8 steps down to the hardware store, or a 17.4% slope on which to parallel park. The current shallower slope is much more conducive to parallel parking. Trucks are routinely unloaded for the hardware store at this location as presented in Figure 5. A parking area with a 17% slope will create problems when opening car doors, when positioning the vehicles in bad weather, create difficulty for handicapped drivers, and create problems for delivery vehicles.

Alternative 11 is proposed to cost \$508,000. Implementation of Plainfield's preferred alternative #12 is proposed to cost \$80,000 (Appendix F). Does this include design as well as installation?

Thank you for considering our comments. We appreciate the work that the CVRPC and D-K did on this study. We hope that installation of a traffic signal will be approved.

Sincerely,

Plainfield Selectboard:


Karl Bissex, chair, Road commissioner