



Town of Milton

Long Range Access and Mobility Committee

43 Bombardier Road • Milton, VT 05468 • (802) 893 1605 • Fax: (802) 893 1005

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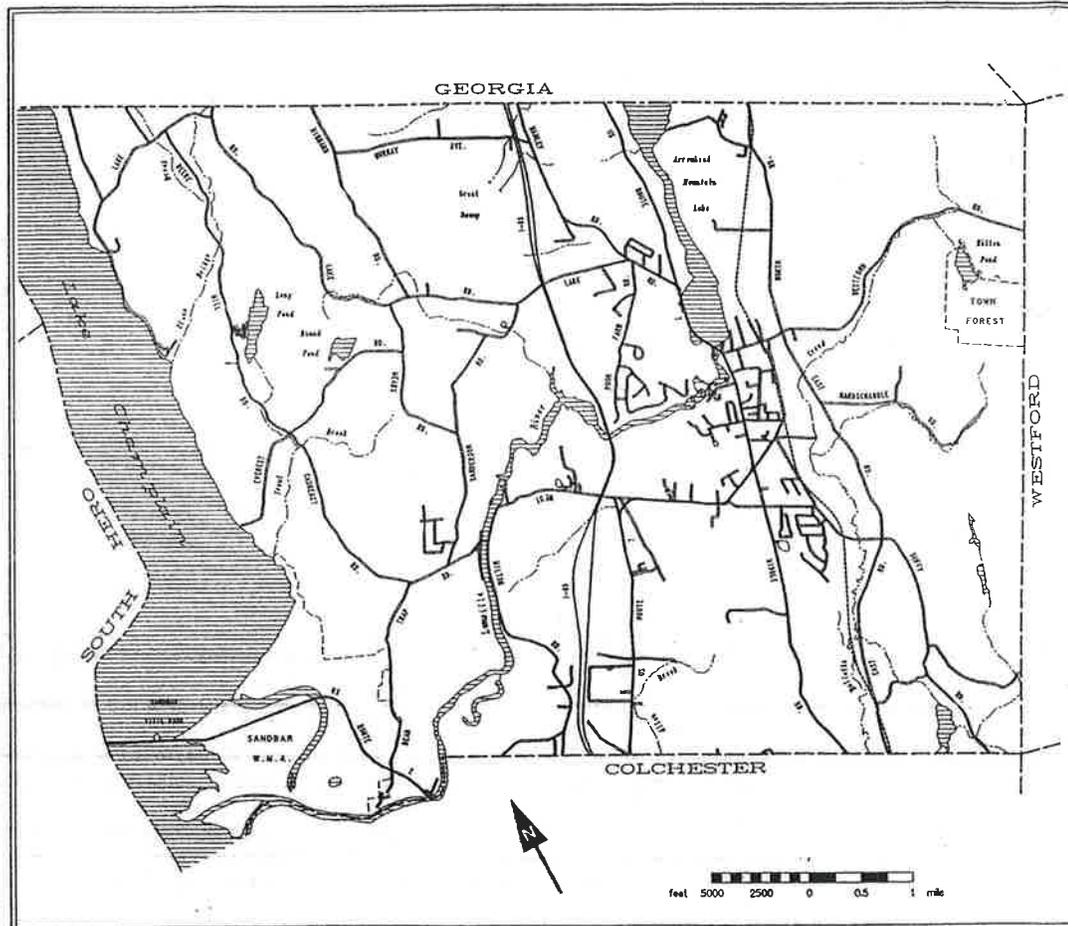


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FINAL REPORT



January 5, 2001

- Ms. Diana Palm – Chairperson
- Mr. Kevin Endres- Vice- Chairperson
- Ms. Genie Soboslai
- Mr. John Sharrow
- Mr. Michael Showalter
- Mr. Stephen Delaney
- Mr. Ronald Hubert
- Ms. Rebecca Stader

Town of Milton						
Long Range Access and Mobility Committee						
Town Sidewalk Program (Proposed)		Typical Unit Cost:				
Cost Estimates	\$20.00	per linear foot				
Priority 1 Both Sides of Road						
X	Birchwood Manor to Bombardier Road	1.42	2	1.2	\$360,000	2.84
X	Bombardier Road (entire length)	0.24	2	1	\$51,000	0.48
X	US7 (Bombardier to Middle Rd)	0.26	2	1	\$55,000	0.512
X	US7 (Middle Rd to Rebecca Lander Dr)	0.34	2	1	\$73,000	0.682
X	Middle Rd (Tennis Court to Bombardier) X	0.16	2	1	\$34,000	0.32
X	Middle Rd (Bombardier to US 7)	0.44	2	1	\$93,000	0.88
X	Railroad St (US7 to Villemaire)	0.38	2	1	\$81,000	0.76
X	Villemaire Lane	0.24	2	1	\$51,000	0.48
		3.48				
					TOTAL \$798,000	6.95
					Time to accomplish @ Town Funding Only @ \$46,000.00/year	17.3
Priority 2 One Side of Road						
13	Hobbs Rd	0.52	1	1.2	\$66,000	0.52
14	McMullen Rd (Railroad St to Winter Lane)	1.20	1	1	\$127,000	1.2
25	US7 southbound side, Gimlet Hill to CV park	0.30	1	3	\$96,000	0.3
26	US7 (Main St to Lake Rd)	0.84	1	6	\$533,000	0.84
28	Lake Road (US7 to James Drive)	0.90	1	1	\$96,000	0.9
					TOTAL \$918,000	3.76
					Time to accomplish @ Town Funding Only @ \$46,000.00/year	20.0
Priority 3 One Side of Road						
7	Middle Rd (Russel Circle to Tennis Court)	0.24	1	1	\$26,000	0.24
34	Manley Road (Lake Rd to James Dr)	0.28	1	1	\$30,000	0.28
37	Poor Farm Rd (Lake Rd to Cardinal Dr)	1.42	1	1.5	\$225,000	1.42
44	Haydenberry to Ellison St.	0.25	1	1.2	\$32,000	0.25
					TOTAL \$313,000	2.19
					Time to accomplish @ Town Funding Only @ \$46,000.00/year	6.8
Priority 4 One Side of Road						
1	US7 (Andrea Ln to Bartlett Rd)	0.84	1	1.5	\$134,000	0.84
2	Bartlett Rd	0.22	1	1	\$24,000	0.22
10	Russel Circle	0.50	1	1	\$53,000	0.5
15	Meadow Rd	0.70	1	1	\$74,000	0.7
16	Woodcrest Circle	0.87	1	1	\$92,000	0.87
17	Hemlock Rd	0.29	1	1	\$31,000	0.29
18	Doris Dr	0.15	1	1	\$16,000	0.15
19	Birch Lane	0.37	1	1	\$40,000	0.37
20	Moss End	0.10	1	1	\$11,000	0.1
21	Bradley St	0.37	1	1	\$40,000	0.37
22	Arrowhead Ave	0.48	1	1	\$51,000	0.48
23	Riverside Dr	0.18	1	1	\$20,000	0.18
24	Lamoille Terrace (Ellison to WWTF)	0.24	1	1.5	\$39,000	0.24
27	Howard Drive	0.15	1	1	\$16,000	0.15
29	Jonzetta Court	0.21	1	1	\$23,000	0.21
30	Sally Way	0.12	1	1	\$13,000	0.12
31	Elmer Place	0.27	1	1	\$29,000	0.27
32	Pep Place	0.27	1	1	\$29,000	0.27
33	June Way	0.21	1	1	\$23,000	0.21
35	Slim Brown Rd	0.32	1	1	\$34,000	0.32
36	Kim Lane	0.20	1	1	\$22,000	0.2
38	Quail Hollow Dr	0.40	1	1	\$43,000	0.4
39	Cardinal Dr	0.11	1	1	\$12,000	0.11
40	Thrush Dr	0.20	1	1	\$22,000	0.2
41	Red Clover Way	1.05	1	1.5	\$167,000	1.05
42	Milton Falls Court	0.45	1	1.2	\$58,000	0.45
43	Waterwheel Way	0.20	1	1.2	\$26,000	0.2
					TOTAL \$1,142,000	9.47
					Time to accomplish @ Town Funding Only @ \$46,000.00/year	24.8
45	US7 to Overlake via water main corridor	0.5	1	2	\$169,000	assume 8 foot wide "bike path"
46	Overlake to Lake Rd	0.3	1	1	\$51,000	assume 8 foot wide "bike path"
	TOTALS	0.8			\$220,000	
	Totals with sections 44/45 substituted for #26	0.4				
		to nearest 0.1 mile	\$200,000		rounded up to nearest \$100K	

Final Report

Milton Long-range Access & Mobility Committee

January 5, 2001

The Committee was appointed by the Milton Selectboard at the end of 1998, and began meeting under Chair Diana Palm early in 1999.

Its membership included Milton Business Association representative Kevin Endres, who served as Vice-Chair, School Board Chair Genie Soboslai, Village Trustee John Sharrow and Economic Development Commission Representative Mike Showalter, all serving as delegates of their organizations. At-large community members included Clifford Thorpe, who served as Secretary, Greg Nelson, Ron Hubert and Steve Delaney. Bruce Jenkins was appointed from the Planning Commission, but was unable to attend.

Technical support was provided by Ian Smith, then the Town Engineer.

During the past two years Greg Nelson and Clifford Thorpe resigned, Selectboard member Mike Cram and Planning Commission member Rebecca Strader were added, and Bill Patrick replaced Ian Smith as Town Engineer and liaison to the Committee.

The mission assigned by the Selectboard was to study the transportation grid in Milton, and to make recommendations to the Selectboard on improvements that would be desirable and practical over a twenty-year span.

The language of our charge is included here:

To promote and ensure a high level of public participation in all phases of transportation planning for the Town of Milton.

To develop long term Transportation Plan for the Town of Milton which complements the Town Comprehensive Plan and incorporates the following:

A/ Identify history of transportation network;

B/ Identify existing transportation system strengths and deficiencies;

C/ Determine destinations and connections and future congestion locations within the Town;

D/ Identify and define how the transportation network should function for the Town of Milton based on accessibility, mobility and land use;

E/ Identify and recommend access management and alternate transportation strategies that could be utilized, and

F/ Make recommendations for long term strategies for transportation improvements.

To provide input to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Selectboard and Planning Commission for the Route 7 Corridor Study.

To provide input to the Selectboard and Planning Commission for other studies being pursued by the Town of Milton related to long range transportation planning.

As a result of an intensive two-year effort, the Committee envisions significant changes in Milton over the next twenty years:

A developed Downtown area, served by an Interstate 89 exchange at West Milton Road;

service to Milton by mass transit systems, and an alternate transportation system including a strong sidewalk network;
and a stronger grid of east-west roads to connect the dominant north-south roads.

The Committee understood the scope of its assignment two years ago to include looking at the following specific tasks:

- 1/ The desirability and potential location of an Interstate 89 connection within the Town borders;
- 2/ The desirability and potential locations of east-west connectors to the predominant north-south road pattern through the Town;
- 3/ The feasibility, cost and scheduling of sidewalk improvements beyond the Village grid;
- 4/ The desirability and potential locations of bike paths and other off-road pathways to move people from one part of the community to another;
- 5/ The feasibility and potential location of a new road link across the Lamoille River to relieve the through-town commuter traffic from bedroom neighborhoods north of the river;
- 6/ The challenges and potential solutions for relieving the traffic problems at the crest of Main Street, just east of the Railroad Street intersection;
- 7/ The impact on transportation issues of creating a developed downtown center in the Triangle bound by Middle Road, Rte. 7 and Bombardier Road;
- 8/ Identifying the traffic problems associated with each of several intersections along Rte. 7 as it traverses Milton, and recommending solutions;
- 9/ Studying the potential for light rail passenger service to Milton, and establishing a viable bus connection to other communities

The Committee has sought and found consensus on many of the issues listed above. This report will identify and describe alternate solutions in cases where there is no consensus.

The Committee's first action involved the dangerous intersection of Rte. 7, Railroad Street and Middle Road. Following the Committee's recommendation, the Town installed signs at the crossroads portion of that intersection, warning drivers that traffic southbound from Rte 7 onto Middle Road does not stop, while maintaining the stop signs at the other three approaches to the intersection. That was done in the early summer of 1999, and in the intervening 18 months, the number of accidents in the intersection has dropped to one.

The committee also recommended early in its study that the Selectboard install a flashing red warning light at the intersection of Rte. 7 and Bombardier Road, to be activated by an ambulance or police car approaching Rte. 7 on Bombardier Road. That has not been done, and the Committee renews its recommendation.

Task 1

An Interstate exit in Milton

The Committee first considered whether an I-89 exit between the existing 17 in Colchester and 18 in Georgia would be beneficial to Milton, and if so where could the benefit be focused?

That consideration included the issue of whether traffic on Rte. 7 would be affected, whether industrial sites could/would be built adjacent to an off-ramp, whether the local business community would benefit from easier access, and what effect an exit would have on the proposed downtown Triangle. Underlying all those considerations was the more basic issue of whether the Town wants a direct link to I-89, with the growth challenges it would stimulate, or whether Milton would be better off under the current no-exit situation.

The Committee has determined that an exit in the area of West Milton Road could be an asset in several ways. It would bring traffic into the new downtown area from a distance of just over a mile. If accompanied by an access spur connecting to the end of Poor Farm Road, it would draw commuter traffic away from the Rte. 7 corridor, thereby cutting the daily rush hour snarl in the Village, especially southbound in the mornings. Such a spur would also provide a connection between the Checkerberry area and the growing bedroom neighborhoods north of the Lamoille River.

This solution is especially attractive in light of its reduction of the traffic along Rte. 7 in the Village. It would also relieve the pressure on a problem intersection at Lake Road and Rte. 7. (See **Task 8** below)

Quite late in the Committee's tenure, its members received the results of a study of the impact on local traffic flows of a possible Exit 17½ at West Milton Road. It was prepared by traffic consultant Mike Oman and presented to the Committee in December, 2000 by Oman and Joe Segale of the MPO staff. (See **Appendix 1**, maps).

It suggests that a Milton interchange would funnel a large volume of traffic into the proposed downtown area, would have relatively little impact on Route 7 in the village, and would lighten traffic on Rte. 7 north of Cherry Street. Moreover, and the consultant found this a bit of a surprise, the numbers indicate that the exchange would handle a larger volume of traffic northbound from Milton toward St. Albans than southbound toward Burlington.

Oman and Segale told the Committee that their survey makes a credible case for an Exit 17½ at West Milton Road, and we endorse their finding.

The Committee has also examined two other possibilities for locating an I-89 exit. One would be where the Interstate crosses Lake Road, in the northern sector of Milton. Our conclusion is that a Lake Road exit would do too little to stimulate the growth of a central business area, would do too much to stimulate detrimental growth along Lake Road, would have a smaller beneficial effect on Rte 7 through traffic, and would increase the congestion at the Lake Road/Rte. 7 intersection.

The other potential location involved siting an exit near the spot where the Interstate crosses the LaMoille River. The advantage would be that it could serve both sides of the river. The disadvantages included limited traffic reduction on Rte. 7, the lack of a good tie-in to existing roads and a disadvantageous terrain, which may elevate costs to a politically unacceptable level.

Conclusion:

The Committee recommends that the Selectboard pursue the siting of an I-89 exit at the West Milton Road site to serve the designated growth center for a "downtown" in Milton, and to place that request on the "do" list at the MPO.

Task 2 East-west connectors to the north-south road pattern

There are six significant north-south roadways through Milton, and several others that branch off them.

Western-most is the Bear Trap/Cadreact/Beebe Hill combination running from Rte 2 in the south to Lake Road near the Georgia line in the north.

Mayo Road/West Milton Road is a spur from Rte. 2 to Rte 7 at Checkerberry.

Interstate 89 does not count since there is no access/exit in Milton.

Rte. 7 carries an increasing traffic load all the way through the town, in addition to a growth-based increase in local traffic. As noted above a significant amount of that local traffic pours out of Lake Road in the mornings and moves south through the village in the morning, returning in the evening. Much of this Committee's work has centered on the effort to devise ways to reduce that congestion without losing Rte. 7's value as a "main street" for Milton's economic activities.

East of Rte. 7 in the southern quadrant, the Middle Road/Railroad Street combination ties the northeastern corner of Colchester to Rte. 7 and Main Street in the village. All projections are that this corridor, Milton's most efficient route to Essex, will continue to grow in traffic count.

Farthest east, the East Road/North road corridor runs the length of the town just west of the hills. There are anticipated to be developmental pressures on the west slopes of those hills, in addition to the growth of Husky-bound traffic as the plant expands in the future. East Road is constrained by the railroad trestle in the southern quadrant, which has long been a dangerous and occasionally fatal spot.

Those are the dominant roadways. A casual look at the map reveals that there are relatively few east-west connectors, and that the existing ones are not always well placed to move traffic from one side of the town to the other. This is due in part to physical factors in the town's geography:

- A) Arrowhead Mountain Lake is a significant east-west barrier, and even if/when the Husky bridge is built, it will be essentially private.
- B) Main Street works well east of Rte. 7, but the river prevents a logical extension west into the Checkerberry area, and there's some concern over the role of the town's main historic street as a carrier of heavy traffic.
- C) South of Main Street, east-west movement is hampered by the combination of the railroad and the wetlands draining into Mallet's Creek. The McMullen Road crossing is the only one that provides access to East Road south of Main Street.
- D) West of Rte. 7 and south of the projected downtown, there's one possibility to create another east-west link, by connecting the old drag strip road to Middle Road at or near the new Turner development south of the Recreation Park.

- E) On a smaller scale there's some merit in pursuing Ritchie Avenue extension tying into residential streets, and into Rte. 7 at or near the Milton Rental/Vet Clinic access roads.

Conclusion:

The Committee invites the Board's attention to possible solutions to the problem posed by the railroad trestle on East Road. They involve going over the tracks at a point north of Marris Hollow Road, or staying east of the tracks to and beyond the Colchester line. The Committee does not present cost figures on these possibilities, but the second alternative requires the cooperation of the Town of Colchester. (See **Appendix 2**, maps)

The Committee makes no other specific recommendations here, but in general its members believe the absence of east-west roadways in the town has a negative impact on both growth and the management of vehicular movements. If we are to develop a "magnet" area in our downtown, we must provide efficient ways to get there. Expanding our ability to move east and west should be a conscious part of all planning processes.

Task 3

Sidewalk improvements beyond the Village grid

In an interim report (Appendix 3) the Committee has recommended to the Selectboard that an extensive system of sidewalks be built over a 20-year period. The Board has received the details of that plan, which includes priority rankings for the most safety-sensitive sidewalk sections, and the Board has responded by setting aside money in the capital budget as a local share matching fund when state financing becomes available. The Committee believes this is a far-sighted allocation of funds, and should be repeated in the budget now under preparation.

The Committee has found that extending the sidewalk south along Rte. 7 from the Grand Union (Hannaford's) to Checkerberry is the most urgent need, followed by Middle Road from Railroad Street to Russell Circle. In both cases, pedestrian traffic including mothers with small children is extensive.

Ideally the Rte. 7 section ought to be done in conjunction with the extension of sewer lines along the same route. However, VTRANS wants the Town's assurance that storm drainage issues along the right-of-way will be addressed. There is a reluctance to approve sidewalks without a massive investment in storm sewers, which the Town has neither the funding nor the inclination to install.

In addition, there are some specific trouble spots along Rte. 7 that would raise the per-foot cost of sidewalk expansion significantly, because of difficult terrain or other constraints. These include the west side of Rte. 7 on the slope of Gimlet Hill in the Village (gully), the causeway from the dam to Lake Road (no shoulder), and the inner curve of Rte. 7 from Bombardier Road to the Dick Wells property (gully).

The causeway problem could be avoided by running a sidewalk through an existing easement across the Curran property to the new subdivision between

Rte 7 and Poor Farm Road. As far as the Committee knows, this idea has not been broached with members of the Curran family.

The Town should continue to work with developers to provide sidewalks in their residential areas and should set a priority on connecting the North Road sidewalk to the Village grid. (See **Task 6 – Main Street** below)

Conclusions:

The extension of sidewalks, especially along Rte. 7, is a top priority for improving the Town's overall ability to move people from where they are to where they want to go, and the gain in pedestrian safety along major roads is an important incentive. The Committee urges the Selectboard to press forward with the sidewalk plan as presented, and to pursue aggressively all State and Federal funding sources, starting with the MPO.

Attachments:

- 1/ The proposed sidewalk grid, color-coded for priorities;
- 2/ The Committee's interim recommendation to proceed with the sidewalk expansion;
- 3/ The current Pedestrian Policy & Sidewalk Plan for Chittenden County from the MPO, dated October, 2000.
- 4/ Typical sidewalk and curbing sections.

Task 4

Bike paths and other off-road pathways

The Committee has had several contacts with the Conservation Commission, which has been working on a riverside walkway along the south bank of the Lamoille between the CVPS parking area off Ritchie Avenue and the Peterson Dam. Judy Kinner, the current Chair of the Commission, has been its point person on that project, and has briefed the Committee. In addition, Selectboard members had a chance to walk part of the proposed route in early December.

While the Committee is aware of the easement and liability issues that may complicate the project, its members support the concept of such a pathway. In addition, the Committee would like the Town to explore the possibility of a cross-river foot/bike path to the Poor Farm Road area on the north side of the river.

Any discussion of bikeways and walking paths soon involves ATVs, motorcycles and other powered vehicles that are not always compatible with walking or biking. The Committee believes that Milton's VAST members are a potential resource for easing any conflict over usage of off-road pathways. There's also a surfacing distinction between trails designed for wheels and for feet: asphalt or gravel/natural.

The Committee recommends that any future road improvements include Class Two bikeways.

As to the bike paths in the center of Milton, the Committee has identified a clear need to provide both pedestrian and bicycle movement across Rte. 7 in a straight line

between the high school and the Rec park. The installation of a short divider on Rte. 7 which could act as a safety island for such crossing movements might make sense in conjunction with improvements to the Centre Drive intersection. (See **Task 8 – Rte 7 Intersections – I** below)

The Committee has not drawn up a grid of proposed off-road transportation trails. But the proposed sidewalk pattern is a partial template for addressing those concerns.

Conclusions:

Off-road pathways and trails must be part of any serious transportation plan. They will emerge haphazardly unless care is taken to provide access to popular destinations.

The Committee believes that Milton should develop a plan for off-road trail development wherever there is a power line or gas line right-of-way, and wherever planned residential developments set aside open spaces.

It would be useful to make an inventory of existing VAST trails, known pedestrian pathways, the proposed riverwalk, transmission line rights-of-way and other existing fragments of off-road passageways, to ensure that they are integrated into a coherent grid.

Attachments:

Task 5

A road link across the Lamoille

Early in its deliberations the Committee recognized the area north of the Lamoille River and east of I-89 as a prime growth site for residential development. That pattern has been set for more than 20 years, and should continue for the next 20.

Almost all that traffic now flows out along Lake Road to Rte. 7, and then moves through the Village to disperse either along Middle Road toward Colchester and Essex or south along Rte.7 toward Exit 17 on the Interstate.

The Committee began looking at the possibility of establishing a road link to drain that traffic along Poor Farm Road to a cross-river link to Checkerberry and a possible Exit 17½. (See **Task 1, paragraph 3** above)

At the Committee's request, Town Engineer Bill Patrick arranged for traffic consultant Mike Oman and Joe Segale of the MPO to study the idea.

Their conclusion was that such a link would not be cost-effective, since the bridge alone would probably exceed \$10 million, and would not drain a large enough volume of traffic to attract state/federal funding. The study was projected forward to show rush hour traffic as it may flow in 2020. (See **Appendix 5, maps**)

As to the safety advantages of having another point of access to the residential areas north of the river, that consideration was not part of the study, but the Committee thinks it's important

The Committee has also raised with the MPO the possibility of having a Bolton-style emergency on/off access to I-89 from the end of Poor Farm Road. At this writing that idea is under study.

There remains the possibility of exploring a local road/bridge combination to make a connection from Poor Farm Road to Checkerberry. The Committee believes

such a link would relieve traffic along the most congested parts of Rte. 7 (See **Task 8 – Rte. 7 Intersections: A/Lake Road** below) without diverting local traffic away from the designated downtown.

Conclusions:

The Committee accepts the consultant's finding that a road/bridge link between Poor Farm Road and the Checkerberry area is not cost-effective at \$12 million. But some of us think their estimates of the traffic volume such a road would serve in 2020 are too conservative, especially if the town continues to develop residential properties in that sector. We ask that the Poor Farm/Checkerberry link be kept in mind as a future project when the Milton transportation pattern is revisited in years to come.

Task 6 Main Street

The problems with Main Street begin with the fact that it has too many functions. It is the center and showplace of the Milton Historical District, containing many graceful structures built in the 19th Century.

It is also one of the few, and the major, east-west link in the Village. In that role Main Street is also Westford Road, the link to North Road/East Road, is crossed by the railroad tracks, and is home to the two most heavily attended churches in Milton.

It is difficult make changes that don't set one of Main Street's roles against another.

The Committee takes note of the inherent conflict in the street's two major roles, east-west feeder, and historic district centerpiece. But the geographic constraints in the Milton road grid mentioned above, do not permit easy alternatives. The buildings are where they are, and no other east-west link (and there are few) works as well.

When the new Rte. 7 bridge over the Lamoille was built in the mid-1990s the Main Street intersection was "improved" by softening the slope of the hill at the West end of Main Street. That intersection is still problematic in winter road conditions, and the absence of a right turn lane for southbound traffic entering Main Street at Rte. 7 is something of a mystery.

Both the churches attract more people than their parking lots can hold, and there's a resulting clogging of Main Street, especially during funerals.

In the early 1990's the railroad and the Town improved the grade crossing at Main Street and smoothed out a very rough patch in the road.

It has been an objective of the Town Plan for some years to link the Village sidewalk grid to the new North Road sidewalk, and to make the promised connection to the Hunting Ridge development. The developer has put money aside to do that, and the North Road/Main Street/East Road intersection has been improved with forethought to making that connection easier. The Committee endorses that objective.

The major obstacle is that thirty yards east of the Railroad Street intersection, Main Street passes through a narrow cut in a ledge. Grade level on either side of the road

is eight to ten feet higher than the pavement, and the cut is not wide enough to permit the installation of sidewalks, even on one side.

In addition, line-of-sight standards suggest that the crest of Main Street should be shaved down by as much as two feet, thus making driveway access more difficult for property owners on either side of the road.

The crest of Main Street will remain a bottleneck until the Town moves to solve the width and elevation problems. This may require some property acquisition and could prove to be expensive. But the problem is significant, and is going to get worse over the next two decades as traffic volume on Main Street increases.

Conclusions:

In its present configuration, Main Street is both an asset, in terms of historic significance, and a problem, in terms of its limited ability to function as Milton's major east-west traffic conduit. The Committee is aware of the difficulties inherent in upgrading the crest of Main Street. However, the removal of that bottleneck is a significant part of the road pattern improvement required by industrial growth on North Road, and by the reality that developments like Hunting Ridge are likely to continue on the west slopes of the hills south of Georgia Mountain.

We believe the Town must take the necessary steps to anticipate that congestion, and make the improvement of Main Street a priority project.

Attachments:

Task 7 The Downtown Area

During the first several months of the year 2000 several dozen Milton residents, including many members of this Committee, spent many nights in discussion of what kind of future Milton should anticipate and work for.

What emerged was the concept of a "downtown" and within that, a central magnet area that would draw people in for shopping, dining, entertainment and municipal services.

The central area is defined, but not bound, by the triangle formed by Bombardier Road, Rte. 7 and Middle Road. Centre Drive crosses that triangle in a rough north/south alignment.

Within and around this downtown area, newly proposed zoning would permit more high-density structures and higher buildings than are now allowed. The Committee is assured that the zoning changes to make that possible are moving toward implementation.

If those changes take effect, they will launch significant changes in local traffic patterns as well as pedestrian and bicycle movements in the town core.

The Committee has already presented documentation showing a significant increase in traffic along Rte. 7 from Checkerberry to the downtown area if an Exit 17½ is built at West Milton Road. To a lesser extent that increase would be felt as far north as the complex formed by the Pomerleau shopping center, the high school, and Villemaire Road.

Because Rte. 7 is the dominant access to the downtown area, its intersections will need significant attention in anticipation of the development of "magnet" destinations within the downtown core. They will be covered in detail in **Task 8**, below.

But if we are to have a known destination point, a place where we encourage people to visit, we must then make it practical for them to do so. That means, in general terms, encouraging steps that facilitate the movement of people and vehicles into the downtown area, and discouraging steps which would make that movement more difficult.

One possibility is the exploration of opening a road from the old drag strip in Checkerberry, through to Middle Road via the Rec park or adjacent lands.

The most important change may well be the completion of the Centre Drive intersection with Rte. 7, by making it a + instead of a T.

The Committee has also addressed alternate routes that avoid the downtown core. These possibilities include a Ritchie Avenue/Milton Falls connector, a Poor Farm Road/Checkerberry connector, the extension of Racine Road from Checkerberry to Cobble Hill Road and the removal of the railroad trestle bottleneck on East Road.

Conclusions:

The Committee is agreed that the Town should concentrate on making a reality of the "vision" that emerged from last Spring's planning meetings. Improved access to the Downtown, by road and by alternate means, is a vital part of enabling that designated growth area to become the centerpiece of a new downtown Milton.

Task 8 The Route 7 Intersections

This has been the most difficult and contentious of the challenges before the Committee, precisely because the problems are complex and the solutions are elusive. We have spent more time on addressing the difficulties posed by the Rte. 7 intersections than on any other task we faced.

A/ Lake Road:

As noted elsewhere, Lake Road drains a large and growing pattern of residential neighborhoods north of the Lamoille, west of Rte. 7 and east of I-89. Traffic studies show that soon, if not already, there will be as much traffic on Lake Road as there is on Rte. 7 north of the Lake Road intersection.

That traffic contributes substantially to the clogging of Rte. 7 in the Village during the morning hours.

The intersection itself is awkward because of the 45-degree corner for northbound traffic entering Lake Road, the same angle for southbound cars entering Rte. 7 from Lake Road. The opposite acute angle is required for Rte. 7 southbound cars turning into Lake Road, and for those leaving Lake Road northbound on 7. This turn is made even more awkward by the steep gradient within the turning lane.

In addition, there's a utility pole in the middle of the island formed by the present intersection, and traffic movements are further complicated by the significant number of

cars entering and leaving the Lake Road Variety store on the east side of the intersection.

A-O-T scoping studies have proposed several solutions for this difficult spot. All of them take substantially from the already-impacted Hamilton property on the north-west corner of the intersection.

The Committee met with the Hamiltons and with the two owners of land across Lake Road from the Hamiltons.

After some vigorous discussion, all three owners agreed to an approach that would "square off" the intersection, by realigning the first fifty yards or so of Lake Road a bit farther south within the existing right-of-way.

The Committee has already forwarded this recommendation to the Selectboard in an interim report.

The Board should take note that this solution also envisions the removal of the utility pole from the island in the current intersection. Some work is required on storm drainage where the sloping Lake Road enters Rte. 7, and the installation of at-grade marking for appropriate turning lanes, both to reduce clogging at the turn, and to preserve access to the business on the east side of Rte 7.

The Committee believes its solution is a significant advance over those proposed by the highway planners, and strongly urges the Town to push hard for it in the final stages of the Route 7 Corridor Study conclusions and action plan.

B/ Main Street

We have discussed Main Street in detail above, but its intersection with Rte. 7 is still problematic, "improved" as it might have been during bridge reconstruction several years ago. The gradient for eastbound traffic entering Main Street is still dangerously steep, but is difficult to improve without compromising the existing residential driveways, especially on the south side of Main Street. Left turns onto Main from Rte. 7 southbound traffic still creates clogging on and near the bridge. In addition the traffic movements are complicated by the Collette's store parking lot on the west side of Rte. 7, and by the entrance to the Town Garage on the east side. We do not believe a traffic signal is justifiable now or in the near future, but we urge the Board to revisit that question in another 5 or 10 years.

The Committee makes no specific recommendation for improvements here, but wishes the Board to note that Main Street will remain a vital east-west link through the Village for at least the next 20 years, and that during that time the traffic flow will surely increase. Just as surely, the flaws in the Rte. 7/Main Street intersection will become more pronounced and more of an irritant unless the Town moves to correct them.

C/ Cherry Street

In the long term, a fix must be found for the chronic winter/spring flooding that compromises this intersection and is due to very high water flows on the river.

D/ Ritchie Avenue

In the short term, the sightlines to the north along Rte. 7 are poor because of overgrown shrubbery. In the long term, if Ritchie Avenue ever becomes the north end of a cross-river road/bridge system, the Rte. 7 corner may need considerable redesign.

E/ Village Court

Sightlines north along Rte. 7 are poor here too, because the gradient of Gimlet Hill hides oncoming traffic. The fix for this, which VTRANS is reluctant to consider, involves reshaping the slope of the hill at its crest near Village Court and Rene's Short Stop. The vexing problem of storm drainage for this entire area, back to and including Arrowhead Avenue, is tied in with any potential solution to this problem.

F/ Mackey Avenue

The Committee discussed with a VTRANS representative the chronic icing at the Mackey Avenue corner. It too is caused by poor drainage, and is not something the state wants to tackle.

G/ Barnum Street/Lamoille Terrace

This offset intersection should be squared off, and the Committee has already issued an interim report asking the Town to use any future sale of the lots involved, to acquire the relatively tiny area required to fix this corner. (See **Appendix 8 – G** maps) It is possible that Lamoille Terrace could become at some future time the outlet for a cross-river road/bridge combination, and would then need additional attention. Moreover, if it ever becomes a significant outlet for school buses, some redesign may become necessary. We think the Board should initiate negotiations toward the purchase of the necessary properties.

H/ Rebecca Lander Drive/Villemaire Drive.

We're linking these, because the Committee believes the best solution to the congestion caused by traffic to the high school is to shut down Rebecca Lander Drive as the main access to the school.

Instead, the Town and school system should work together to acquire the Milton Chiropractic Center building, and to turn that lot into the main entry to the school. It would allow buses to move straight across Rte. 7 rather than the present zigzag from Villemaire to Rebecca Lander, and would empty into the back end of the present high school parking lot. (See **Appendix 8 – H** maps)

There is presently a pedestrian walkway in Rte. 7 at the north edge of the Rebecca Lander corner. But a significant portion of student pedestrian traffic is headed for the Mobil station in the Mid-Town Plaza to buy soda and snacks. They tend to drift across road wherever they please, and usually don't use the designated crosswalk. Moving the main entrance to Villemaire would align the crosswalk with the main student destination, and would thereby increase student safety.

In time this intersection may need to be signalized. It is ¼ mile from the traffic lights at Grand Union, far enough away to be treated as a separate issue. The Committee has already made this realignment recommendation to the Board in an interim report, and renews it now. Again, the Town should initiate negotiations toward the purchase of the necessary properties.

I/ Grand Union/Middle Road/Railroad Street/Centre Drive

This is the toughest nut of all, and the one place where we have not reached consensus on our recommendations.

These corners must be treated as a unit, because anything done to one of them will affect all the others.

The short distance between the light and the present opening to Middle Road for southbound traffic means that car-stacking problems occur at the beginning of the curve.

One solution that has attracted a lot of attention on the Committee involves closing the present Grand Union entrance, and using an extension of Centre Drive as the main access to the shopping plaza. The Committee has been told that Ernie Pomerleau is open to discussions on that issue, and the Town should initiate those discussions.

The Centre Drive option would involve a split in the Centre Drive extension, with one leg meeting the existing road between McDonald's and the former bagel place, and the other providing access to the existing shopping plaza.

The Committee is aware that People's Bank is buying one of the lots across from the Centre Drive access to Rte. 7, and can align its building to be consistent with an extension of the road. Southbound along Rte. 7 there should be a left turn lane into Centre Drive, with provisions made for safe pedestrian and bike crossings, and if Centre Drive is extended, then there should be a left turn lane for northbound traffic on Rte. 7 as well.

Development pressures on the north side of the road, including the ongoing effort to find financing for a recreation building, bring the Board's consideration of the Centre Drive option to center stage.

If the main entry point to the supermarket, (Hannaford's?) the Post office, drug store, restaurant, hardware store etc. is to become Centre Drive, then a secondary access to Rte. 7 may be desirable north of the Chittenden Bank and the Dollar Store. There is a public access easement through there, although whether it's properly aligned, and wide enough, are open questions.

The major difficulty in all this is the question of how to re-align the existing Rte. 7/Railroad/Middle Road intersection.

When the state put in the big curve years ago it did so to ease the flow of through traffic north and south along Rte. 7. That came at the expense of Railroad and Middle Road, which form an "X" just outside the curve of Rte. 7.

As noted at the top of this report, the Committee sought and got signs for the "X" warning that oncoming southbound traffic onto Middle Road does not stop. That one step has virtually halted accidents at the "X", and in the short term, may be sufficient.

But entering Rte. 7 northbound from Middle Road, it's hard to see oncoming traffic, there's no safe zone for pedestrian crossings, and the traffic flow will rise sharply with the development of the downtown area.

For those reasons, and because the Rte. 7 corridor Study is nearly finished, the Town can't wait, but must make a difficult choice in the near future.

The Committee examined several alignments proposed by the MPO planners, and found them all wanting. (see **Appendix 8 - I** maps) Either they make it virtually impossible to go from Railroad Street to Middle Road, or they require encroachment on the cemetery, or they involve new curb cuts on the stretch of Rte. 7 between the Brisson home and the Railroad Street corner, curb cuts that are not currently allowed.

The Committee has tried to balance the requirement to move through traffic along against the requirement to provide reasonable access to the Triangle for local traffic. We considered the option of doing nothing, and rejected it.

The solution must be either an "X" or an "O"; that is either a modified crossroads, complete with left turn lanes for northbound through traffic, and separate lanes for southbound through traffic, or a roundabout, in which entering cars yield to those already in the circle.

The case for a traditional crossroads intersection is that it can be signalized, is familiar to drivers, can provide left turn priorities, and can handle the volumes of traffic projected for this location.

The case against the "X" is that it requires through traffic to stop for red lights, requires extensive stacking space for left turn lanes, and requires northbound through traffic to make a left turn. It's also uncertain that this design would alleviate the existing problems or minimize the pressures caused by expected growth.

The case for the roundabout is that it permits continuous movement, that it minimizes "contact points" in that no one ever has to turn left across oncoming traffic, that no traffic signal is required, and that it can handle high volumes of traffic

The case against it is that it's unfamiliar to drivers, and that cars must sometimes go 270 degrees through a circle to make the equivalent of a left turn. There is some concern that it may be hard to make a left turn toward the circle from a driveway located within a hundred yards of it, because constantly flowing traffic provides no gaps. There's another concern that large trucks may not be able to navigate the circle, or that cars would get stuck in an inner lane and be unable to exit the circle where they wish to get off.

The Committee is divided about evenly over the merits of these competing solutions, and so we offer both to the Board.

J/ Bombardier Road

Some of the professional planners envision a roundabout here at the southern gateway to the downtown Triangle. This Committee does not favor that on the grounds that there is neither room nor need. As noted near the beginning of this report, the terrain to the right of Rte. 7 southbound is a gully at the Bombardier intersection. We believe the current "No left turn" restriction should be kept, marked more clearly and enforced more vigorously. And we urge the Town to move forward on providing remote-activated red flashing lights to ease the way onto Rte. 7 for police and rescue vehicles. Perhaps this system could be adopted for the Centre Drive intersection with Rte. 7, and for the Bombardier/Middle Road corner. While we're at it, North Road/Main Street and Main Street/Rte. 7 might benefit from the same emergency lights for fire trucks.

K/ Landfill Road, Chrisemily etc.

These intersections do not require much attention at the moment. We note that at some point the town may want to square off the corner where Landfill Road almost matches up with the unfinished right-of-way that passes just south of the Catamount Auto Parts building. And the entry points closer to Checkerberry may eventually need another look, but now seem adequate.

L/ Bartlett/Rte .7/ Legion Road/West Milton Road.

This intersection is a large-scale version of the Middle Road/Railroad/Rte. 7 corner, except that it's less complex. The Committee proposes an imaginative solution to the difficult entry from West Milton Road to Rte. 7 northbound. We should block it, and make that point one-way southbound only, toward West Milton. Traffic coming out of West Milton Road to go north on 7 will make a right turn at the Legion Hall, and a left onto 7 from a squared-off corner. Traffic on Bartlett will be one-way southbound. There will be no more entry onto Bartlett from traffic northbound on 7. Instead, those vehicles will turn left at the Legion Hall, and left again onto West Milton Road. There should be a left turn lane on 7 to permit the passage of through traffic northbound.

This eliminates existing dangers at the sharp points on either end of the curve, and allows the potential extension of the old dragstrip road to be aligned with an improved Legion Road. See **Appendix 8 -L maps**)

The Committee notes that Rte. 7 in the Checkerberry area is one endless curb cut from the hardware store around to B&M. We think that should be addressed.

We also believe that curb cuts to the proposed industrial park across from the Milton Diner ought to be controlled. In fact, they are self-limiting because of sightline constraints at the top of the hill just south of the car wash and the used car lot.

Task 9 Bus and Rail

The Committee is fortunate to have two members who are thoroughly grounded in bus transportation issues. We were unable to arrange a meeting with Milton banker Bob Vosburgh, who has some additional ideas about providing bus service to the Town, but we suggest that the Board may want to arrange such a meeting after this Committee is disbanded. The bus issue, briefly stated, is that nobody has ever been able to make a Milton/Burlington service viable, even with subsidies. The ridership projections are not encouraging and the cost estimates are even less rosy.

The Committee urges the Board to bring all the parties interested in mass transit into closer contact with each other and with the Town.

Will it ever make sense to have light rail service between St. Albans and Essex? The answer depends on three factors beyond Milton's control. First, St. Albans must prosper and be recognized as a desirable destination. Second, the Charlotte/Burlington rail experiment must succeed well enough to inspire other experimental lines. And third, Husky must build an employment base sufficient to make it attractive as a rail stop.

If all those wishes come true, the Milton is well placed to be a stop on a commuter rail line. The station could be at Husky or at the old Creamery just south of Main Street.

The Town should keep the suitability of those sites in mind when considering changes involving the properties fronting on the railroad, but the Committee does not anticipate any early movement toward light rail service in Milton.

This completes the Committee's survey of the tasks we have undertaken at the Selectboard's direction.

Each of us has learned a great deal about our town, its challenges and its potential in our two years of service on this Committee. In return we believe we have given back to the Town a valuable review of Milton's transportation problems and potential.

We do not intend for this report to be a shelf ornament, nor is it merely to be cited by the "experts" as evidence that citizen "input" was solicited and received.

This summary is a blueprint for enabling Milton to anticipate changes in transportation patterns over the next 20 years, and to shape those changes in positive directions through solid infrastructure improvements.

We submit it proudly and urge the Board to act on its recommendations.

Signed:



Diana Palm – Chair



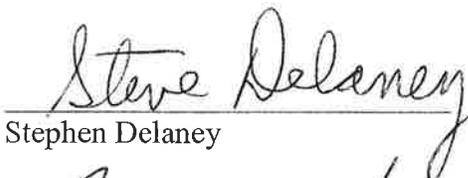
Gene Soboslai



Kevin Endres – Vice-chair



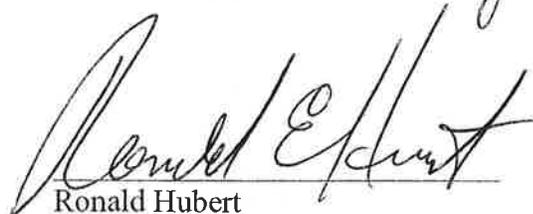
John Sharrow



Stephen Delaney



Michael Showalter



Ronald Hubert



Rebecca Strader

ATTACHMENT
GOALS and OBJECTIVES

7 December 1998

Milton Long Range Access and Mobility Committee

The Town of Milton Select Board wishes to establish a Milton Long Range Access and Mobility Committee. The purpose of this committee is to help the Town of Milton develop a long range Transportation Plan emphasizing safety, accessibility and efficiency for all residents and visitors incorporating the natural features and cultural heritage of the community.

The time frame for preparing this information shall be 2 years from the date the Select Board establishes the committee. The committee shall give quarterly updates to the Select Board and Planning Commission as to their progress and findings.

This committee shall be responsible for the following goals and objectives.

Goals and Objectives

- ◆ To promote and ensure a high level of public participation in all phases of transportation planning for the Town of Milton.
- ◆ To develop long term Transportation Plan for the Town of Milton which complements the Town Comprehensive Plan and incorporates the following:
 - a. Identify history of transportation network;
 - b. Identify existing transportation system strengths and deficiencies;
 - c. Determine destinations and connections and future congestion locations within the town;
 - d. Identify and define how transportation network should function for the Town of Milton based on accessibility, mobility and land use;
 - e. Identify and recommend access management and alternate transportation strategies that could be utilized; and
 - f. Make recommendations for long term strategies for transportation system improvements.
- ◆ To provide input to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Select Board and Planning Commission for the Route 7 Corridor Study
- ◆ To provide input to the Select Board and Planning Commission for other studies being pursued by the Town of Milton related to long range transportation planning.

ATTACHMENTS

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO SELECT BOARD



Town of Milton

Long Range Access and Mobility Committee

43 Bombardier Road • Milton, VT 05468 • (802) 893 1605 • Fax: (802) 893 1005

July 24, 2000

To: Selectboard
Town of Milton

From: Long Range Access and Mobility Committee
Ms. Diana Palm, Chairperson

Dear Selectboard

The Long Range Access and Mobility Committee, (LRAMC) under its charge from the Selectboard to make recommendations to the Selectboard on access and mobility within the Town of Milton, would like to make the following three recommendations to the Selectboard:

1: The LRAMC recommends that the Selectboard direct the town staff to contact the State of Vermont, Agency of Transportation with regard to the US Rt 7/Mackey Street intersection winter ice build up with regard to relieving this problem.

2: The LRAMC recommends that the Selectboard actively pursue right-of-way acquisition with the goal of correcting the alignment of Lamoille Terrace and Barnum Street/ US RT 7 intersection to a true 4-way intersection, and that the Selectboard direct that the Town stay alert to the sale of any properties facing the intersection to see if a realignment can be advanced through such a sale.

3: The LRAMC recommends that the Selectboard engage with the owners and renter of the Milton Chiropractic Center building to purchase the building and land to develop a new Main Entrance to the Milton High School, retaining Rebecca Lander Drive as an emergency entrance only.

Sincerely,

William Patrick
Town Engineer
LRAMC Staff Representative



Town of Milton

Long Range Access and Mobility Committee

43 Bombardier Road • Milton, VT 05468 • (802) 893 1605 • Fax: (802) 893 1005

August 24, 2000

To: Selectboard
Town of Milton

From: Long Range Access and Mobility Committee
Ms. Diana Palm, Chairperson

Dear Selectboard

The Long Range Access and Mobility Committee, (LRAMC) under its charge from the Selectboard to make recommendations to the Selectboard on access and mobility within the Town of Milton, would like to make the following recommendation to the Selectboard:

That an Emergency Light system should be installed for the following intersections for the protection of emergency personnel and the public while gaining safe access through the intersections. The Emergency Light system will be controlled at the Rescue headquarters and at the new fire station when built.

1. Bombardier Road and US Route 7 intersection
2. Centre Road and US Route 7 intersection
3. Bombardier Road and Middle Road/Hobbs Street intersection.

These systems are in use in many towns in Vermont where emergency personnel must enter directly on to a major arterial highway; directly or from a minor side highway. Examples of these Emergency Light systems are in use in the following locations Winooski for the Main Street Fire Station, Burlington for the North Avenue Fire Station.

Sincerely:

William Patrick
Town Engineer
LRAMC Staff Representative

cc Ted Nelson, Jr.
Town Manager



Town of Milton

Long Range Access and Mobility Committee

43 Bombardier Road • Milton, VT 05468 • (802) 893 1605 • Fax: (802) 893 1005

November 3, 2000

To: Selectboard
Town of Milton

From: Long Range Access and Mobility Committee
Ms. Diana Palm, Chairperson

Dear Selectboard

The Long Range Access and Mobility Committee, (LRAMC) under its charge from the Selectboard to make recommendations to the Selectboard on access and mobility within the Town of Milton, would like to make the following recommendations to the Selectboard:

1: The LRAMC recommends that the Selectboard direct the town staff to under take a cost and feasibility study on the Town of Milton taking position of US RT 7 as a Class 1 highway. This study should look at the feasibility of US RT 7 being a town highway from the Colchester boarder to the Georgia boarder. And/or specific portions of US RT 7 that will allow the town to conform to the Down Town Master Core Plan.

Sincerely:

William Patrick
Town Engineer
LRAMC Staff Representative

APPENDIX ONE

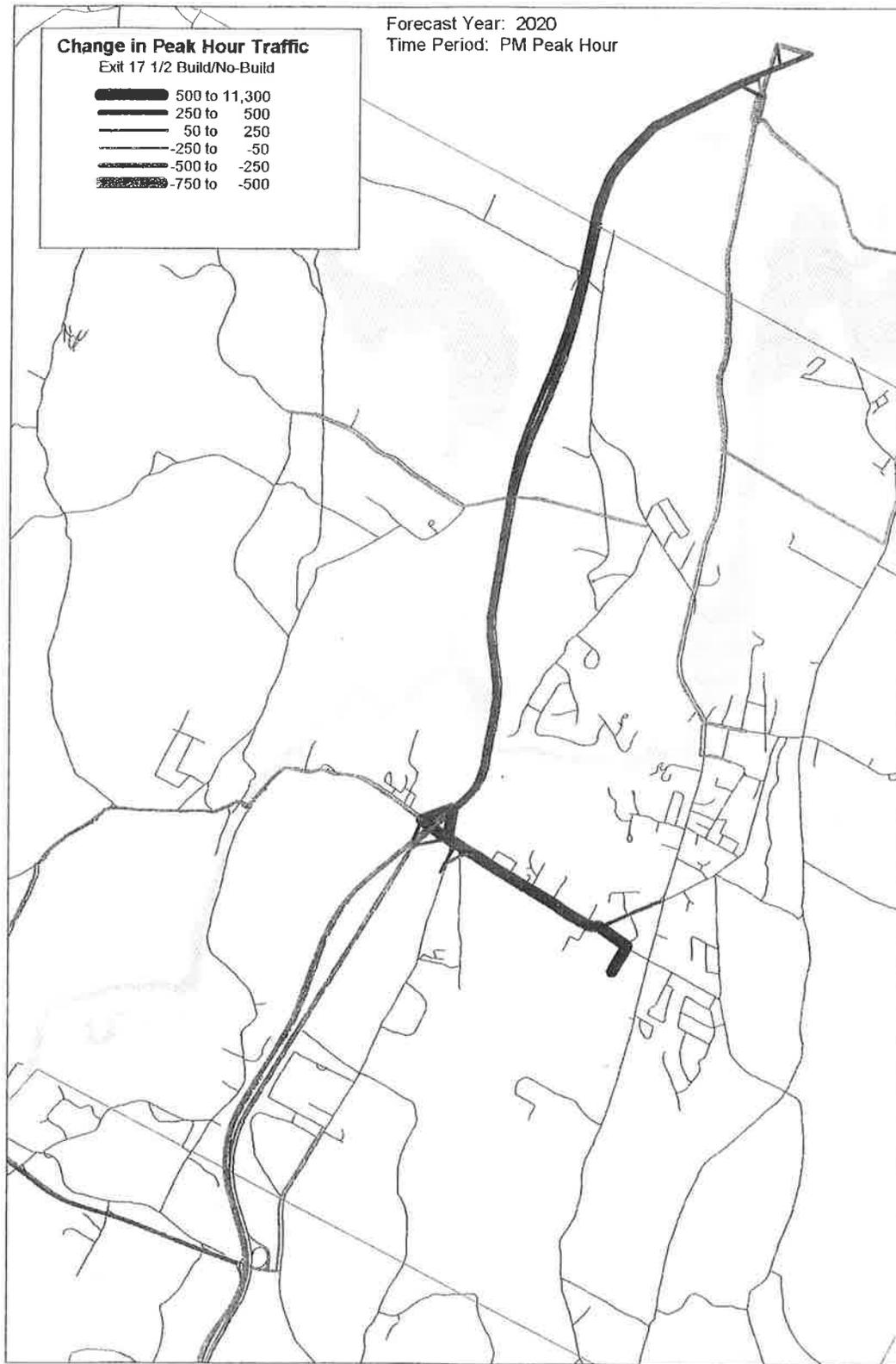
**EXIT 17 ½
I89 AND WEST MILTON ROAD**

IMPACT of I-89 EXIT TO MILTON DOWNTOWN CORE

I-89 West Milton Road Exit and Poor Farm Road Bridge Traffic Analysis

December 12, 2000

Oman Analytics & CCMPO



MAP 1. Impact of I-89 Exit to West Milton Road.
(Base Network Does Not Include Poor Farm Rd. Bridge)