Paul Foley

From: Susanna J. Sturgis [sjs2@gis.net]
Sent: Tuesday, August 09, 2011 10:04 AM
To: foley@mvcommission.org
Subject: About that roundabout . . .

I was at the public hearing last Thursday and am very relieved that the project is finally being considered as a DRI. I also want to thank you for compiling that very useful packet of information and letters of
comment: I didn't manage to send off my e-mail till way past the 11th hour, and I was amazed to see that you managed to get it in. :-)

Although I understand that new and different studies may help the commissioners make a decision, I believe that they should also be asking more rigorous, and more site-specific, questions of the studies that have already been done.

In particular: We're told that roundabouts have a "traffic-calming"
effect and that they reduce accidents by 70-80%. At this particular intersection, the four-way stop has already had a major traffic-calming effect. I believe I heard that the "crash rate" for the intersection is four -- four accidents a year? I'm told that nearly all these accidents are fender-benders, which makes sense, because most traffic is going about 10-15 mph.

Reduced by 70-80%, the crash rate would be about one. One fender-bender a year. Are we seriously talking about spending $1.2 million and rearranging the landscape in order to prevent three fender-benders a year? The logic of this escapes me. I'm no statistician, but I also wonder how meaningful these general percentages are with such small real numbers. Standard deviation, anyone?

I'd like to see accident statistics from the Oak Bluffs police department for the intersection, going back to before 2003, when the four-way stop was instituted. I believe that the burden of proof is on Oak Bluffs and the commonwealth: they have to prove that this expenditure is justified. It's not up to opponents to prove that it isn't.

Another question is what impact the proposed roundabout might have on traffic at the end of the Vineyard Haven Road. At peak times, there's already a serious bottleneck moving through and beyond the Triangle. If traffic moves through the blinker intersection more smoothly but there's no change at the Triangle, what happens down there? Apparently no studies have been done on this. This is a serious omission and it needs to be rectified before this project goes any further.

At the moment, my perception is that we don't need traffic *calming.* If we need anything, it's traffic *regulation* during peak months and at peak times. A traffic light would accomplish this more precisely than a roundabout, and with less disruption to the area around the intersection. Much more attention needs to be paid to this alternative.

Once again, thanks for your work keeping this process organized, and I hope all the e-mails don't crash your computer. ;-)

Susanna J. Sturgis
PO Box 39, West Tisbury, 02575
sjs2@gis.net

New blog! "From the Seasonally Occupied Territories"
http://squattersspeakeasy.com

No virus found in this message.
Checked by AVG - www.avg.com
Version: 10.0.1392 / Virus Database: 1520/3823 - Release Date: 08/09/11