

Department of Buildings and Facilities
Town of Hinesburg
10632 Rte 116
Hinesburg, VT 05461
www.hinesburg.org
hinesburgpw@hinesburg.org
802.482.2096x229

Memo

To: Selectboard
From: Rocky Martin *Rocky Martin*
Date: May 1, 2013
Re: Flashing Beacon, Silver St Crosswalk
CC: Pam Mathews

Preliminary plans for the Safe Routes to School sidewalk included a Flashing Beacon at the Silver St intersection which would be activated by pedestrians by push button to alert motorists that pedestrians would be in the crosswalk. This is fairly new technology and has been used locally in Shelburne and South Burlington (see attached VT Local Roads article and manufacturer's brochure). The rationale for using these devices was that pedestrians would have to cross three lanes of traffic, sometimes with traffic backed up on Silver St. making it difficult to see pedestrians in the crosswalk. VTrans ruled against using this at the Silver St intersection as it didn't meet their standards through the MUTCD. Amy Gamble of Traffic Operations said they couldn't be used at a "regular" intersection, they are meant to be used at mid-block crossings. We argued about the extenuating circumstances with the curve on 116 and traffic heading south in the afternoon and the backup of traffic on Silver St in the morning and folks wanting to turn right not being able to see etc etc etc. They said no. We removed the device from the plans so we could continue with the project.

We could apply to VTrans for an exception to their standards, some of you may remember the year and a half plus it took to receive an exception to reduce lane width in the village from 16 feet to 15 feet. It would involve our representatives in Montpelier, meetings with all sorts of VTrans departments, probably some extra costs with our engineer, with no guarantee they will grant the exception.

Is the board inclined to apply for an exception?

IMPROVING CROSSWALK SAFETY WITH RAPID FLASHING BEACONS



A pedestrian uses the new crosswalk treatment on Farrell Street in South Burlington.



The City of South Burlington and Town of Shelburne have installed flashing pedestrian crossing warning lights at select crosswalks to serve as an extra aid to alert motorists when pedestrians are crossing the roadway. These crosswalks are not controlled by a walk signal. Before someone crossing the street enters the crosswalk they can now hit the button to turn on warning lights below the pedestrian street sign. In addition, these beacons draw their energy from a solar panel.

This treatment, whose official name is rectangular flashing beacons or RRFBs, was recently approved to be used through the MUTCD, reports Jon Kaplan, Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager at VTrans. The agency is working to develop guidance for the installation of these treatments, Kaplan said. The key to the application is to remember it's not a standard crosswalk treatment, but should be used in places to draw extra attention to the crossing with the flashing lights. Examples are long crossings or those with particularly high traffic volume. The South Burlington project utilized a \$190,000 transportation enhancement (TE) Federal grant administered through VTrans with a \$47,500 local match (80/20 split) in 2009 for the numerous crosswalk treatments around the City. That grant program is currently being reconfigured under the new Federal transportation bill (MAP-21), but these crossing projects will likely be eligible to receive funding through the new Transportation Alternatives program, Kaplan said. These projects could also be eligible to apply for funding through the Bicycle & Pedestrian grant program. VTrans is reviewing applications for this year's round. The next round will be determined once the details from MAP-21 are sorted out. It requires a 10% local match for funding.



Shelburne recently installed three of these crossing treatments as part of an improvement project on Harbor Road, Public Works Director Bernie Gagnon said. After the town received multiple resident complaints about safety on the road, the town worked with the Chittenden Co. Regional Planning Commission to perform a study.

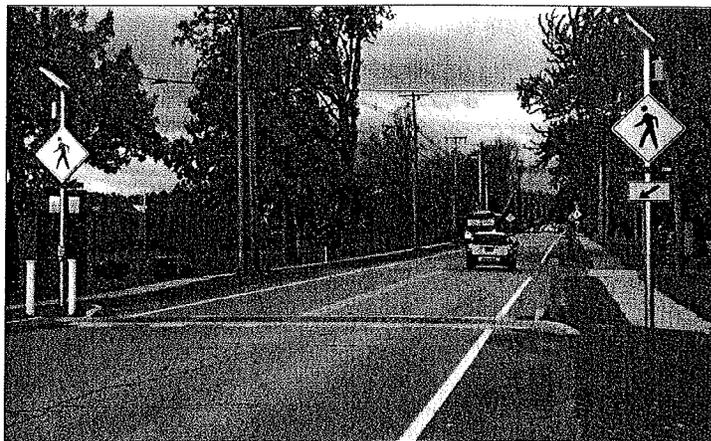
Continued on Page 11

CROSSWALK ALERT TREATMENTS

Continued from Page 7

The town used the RPC's recommendations to improve Harbor Road where two schools and recreational fields are located. In addition to the crosswalk treatments, new sidewalks, speed radar signs and raised brick sidewalks were installed, Gagnon said. The work was funded through a municipal bond passed several years ago for the new sidewalk, he said. A speed study is also underway to see if the street improvements have had an effect on vehicle speed in the area.

The solar panels provide full power to the flashing beacons. They charge batteries which provide a sufficient amount of energy for beacon activations, even if there isn't sun for a while. South Burlington's project was used as a resource as Shelburne put together bid and spec proposals. Spot Devices (www.spotdevices.com) were used in Shelburne. Each complete crossing with the assembly pieces was around \$9,000, Gagnon said. The Highway Dept. handled assembly and installation.



Shelburne installed the crosswalk treatment on Harbor Road as part of a safety improvement project on a stretch of roadway with two schools and recreation fields off it.

ONLINE EXTRA

Erik Wells tried out the crosswalk in Shelburne. Check out a video of his trip on our YouTube Channel, click the link on vermontlocalroads.org

ROAD NOTES

LIST SERVE UPDATE

The Vermont Local Roads list serve now has over 230 subscribers, with half of municipalities represented. We've made significant progress in the last year to increase users in this information sharing network for transportation stakeholders across sectors in Vermont. This mode of peer-exchange has become a means to address service requests through a crowd-sourcing mechanism. Our center is happy to assist in answering questions, but the list serve can be a much more effective tool in providing feedback on a large scale from stakeholders. Our goal is to continue to grow this list to have at least 80 percent of Vermont municipalities represented, a goal that we will meet. If you are not on the list and would like to join or receive further information, please contact Erik.

Recent List Serve Topics:

- Winter Sand
- Winter Leave Time Policy
- Muni. Responsibility for on street parking

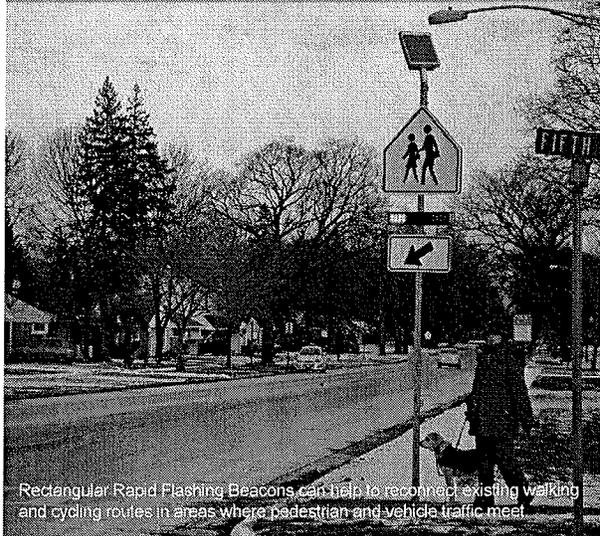
WELCOME MICHELE

Vermont Local Roads welcomed Michele Peoples to our staff in July. As the Office Assistant Michele works on workshop organization and registration, the Roads Scholar Program and ensuring operations go smoothly for the program. A Saint Michael's College graduate, Michele is excited to return to work at her alma mater. She can be reached by calling the office, or through email at mpeoples@smcvt.edu

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Vermont Transportation Board this fall will hold 6 public hearings on a variety of topics. Locations include Brattleboro, Rutland, Montpelier, St. Johnsbury, White River & Winooski. Details at www.aot.state.vt.us/tboard. The board worked in conjunction with VTrans and RPCs to identify 6 "hot topics," for public comment: Transportation Revenues, Bike & Pedestrian Issues, The Future of Passenger Railroad & Inter-City Bus Services, Climate Change - Resilience & Adaptation of the Transportation Network, VTrans' Accelerated Bridge Program and Roadway Safety. Each hearing will also allot time for the public to address any other transportation topics they wish.



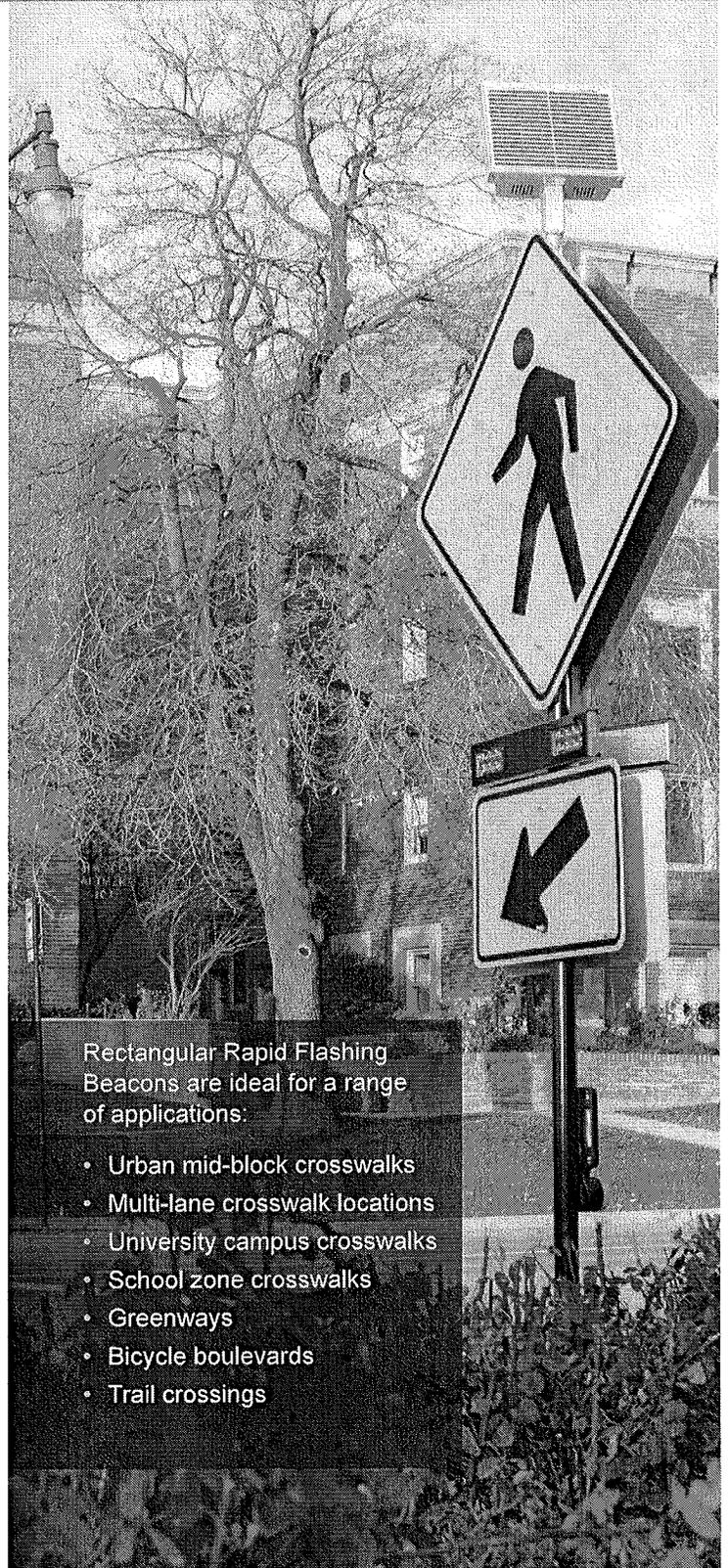


Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons can help to reconnect existing walking and cycling routes in areas where pedestrian and vehicle traffic meet.

AN EASIER WAY TO IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

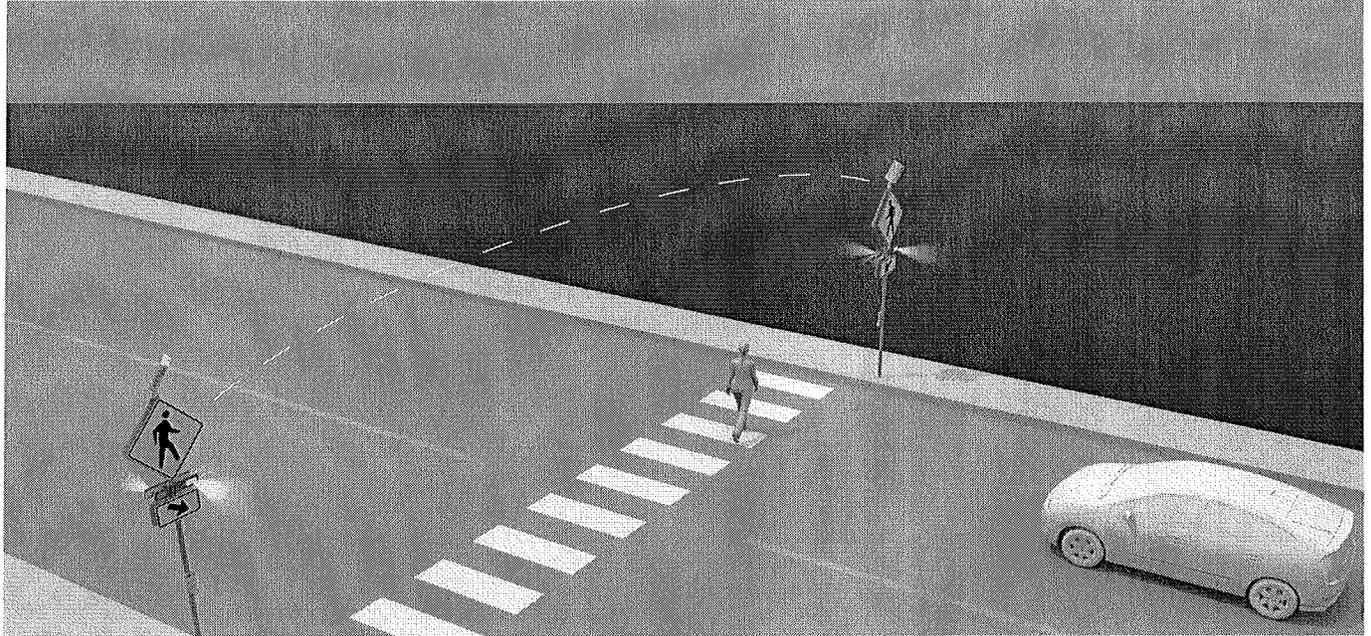
Improving walkability doesn't have to mean significant infrastructure changes for a city. Every community has existing pedestrian-friendly routes. Often all that's required to improve their use is providing facilities that allow pedestrians to comfortably encounter the vehicle traffic that crosses their path.

Using FHWA-recommended Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons is one of the best and easiest ways to reconnect walkable routes, especially at crossings that exist away from traffic signals.



Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons are ideal for a range of applications:

- Urban mid-block crosswalks
- Multi-lane crosswalk locations
- University campus crosswalks
- School zone crosswalks
- Greenways
- Bicycle boulevards
- Trail crossings



Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons are installed on either side of the crosswalk along with a push button system that allows pedestrians to activate the beacons prior to crossing.

RRFB TECHNOLOGY

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) are pedestrian-activated, high-intensity warning lights that notify drivers when a pedestrian is entering the crosswalk.

RRFBs are only for use in crosswalk applications. Specifically, RRFBs are appropriate for use at uncontrolled crosswalks (crosswalks marked with the pedestrian, school, or trail crossing sign).

Uncontrolled crosswalks are generally used at:

- Intersections with thru-lanes on major legs
- Mid-block crosswalks
- Roundabout crosswalks
- Two and four-lane roadways

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons are not intended for crosswalks that already have stop signs.

CARMANAH TRAFFIC

Carmanah's mission is to provide active communities with affordable and accessible crosswalk solutions that improve the places people live, work, and play. Carmanah crosswalk solutions are ideal for communities looking to transform their urban landscapes into vibrant, livable space shared by all modes of transportation. They are an ideal fit for Smart Growth America initiatives, Complete Street projects, and communities seeking LEED ND certification.

Join our discussion on active transportation and urban planning.



Carmanah Traffic

@CarmanahTraffic



Carmanah is a proud sponsor of:



NATIONAL
COMPLETE STREETS
COALITION



Alliance
for
Biking & Walking

America
WALKS
Making America a Great Place To Walk

Email: customerservice@carmanah.com
Toll Free: 1.877.722.8877 (US & Canada)
Worldwide: 1.250.380.0052
Fax: 1.250.380.0062
www.carmanah.com/traffic/crosswalks

