

# Bob Mollette

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward Councilman

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Correspondence#: 07-008

January 31, 2007

Jim Kalb, Mayor  
728 Second Street  
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662

**Re: Reported Safety Concerns with Coles Boulevard, Sherman Road, Forrest Avenue, and Traffic Signal at Gilbert Avenue**

I appreciate your decision to note and record the above reported referenced concerns, dated January 22, 2007 (#07-002), expressed to you by your constituents living in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward. I also appreciate your instruction to the Police Department to increase awareness in this area to reduce excessive speeding. Although, I am surprised to learn the traffic signal at Coles Boulevard and Gilbert Avenue is covered with plastic and being considered for removal instead of repairs.

I am disconcerted by the fact you have not consulted the City of Portsmouth Traffic Committee prior to making a decision to remove the traffic signal. In fact, you have stated your decision is contrary to the previous Traffic Committee recommendations. The Traffic Committee has dedicated citizens appointed to represent the public with such changes. I am requesting your reconsideration in this matter and ask you to allow the Traffic Committee to evaluate and determine appropriate actions necessary.

You have stated your decision to remove the traffic signal was based on the traffic being monitored at this location and does not warrant a traffic signal. I also note, the Public Service Director stated in his correspondence the intersection no longer meets any warrant criteria as outlined in the OMTCD. He stated the department is in the process of taking appropriate steps for removal of the signal by bagging the lights for a period of ninety (90) days prior to removal. I am requesting the copy of the data used to make this determination.

I would like to thank the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward Traffic Committee representative Mr. Robert Gambill for providing electronic copies on January 25, 2007, relevant sections of the Ohio Department of Transportation Traffic Engineering Manual, dated October 23, 2002, for your review and consideration. I have enclosed those items for further discussion and relevance.

Please note Section *401-3 Periodic Review of Signals* describes the necessity for periodic reviews to evaluate the efficiency and necessity of traffic signals. I presume this traffic signal is not under ODOT jurisdiction but prudent for municipalities to follow there guidelines. Section *401-4 Removal of Traffic Signals under ODOT Jurisdiction - Item 3* describes the steps within the removal process. It appears the first step; (Item *3a*) should be to inform the *local media*, schools, governmental agencies local emergency/safety forces of the intent to study the signal for removal. I consider informing the general public and local residents as a vital step in making a wise decision. It includes those affected the most by the decision and allows for participation. The directive to program the traffic signal to flashing operation for a period of ninety (90) days and posted "*Signal Under Study for Removal*" is intended for a study phase. During this period accident experience and the public concerns shall be monitored, investigated, and answered.

After this ninety (90) day period the data collected should be evaluated and decision rendered. If the decision is to continue with the removal of the traffic signal the signal heads shall be bagged or removed, and the traffic signal turned off for a sixty (60) day period. Again, accidents shall be monitored with the possibility of conversion of the traffic signal to a flashing intersection control beacon. Our constituents have expressed a safety concern with the vehicle visibility and pedestrians crossing Coles Boulevard in this residential district.

I am requesting copies of all gathered information used in the justification for the removal of this traffic signal. I am requesting further review of your decision to remove the traffic signal, at the intersection of Coles Boulevard and Gilbert Avenue, based on the above information and procedures, and that the appointed members of our City of Portsmouth Traffic Committee to be involved in the process.

As always, I look forward to resolution of these concerns by involving our constituents and smart decision making. If you have any further questions or comments contact me.

Respectfully,



Bob Mollette, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward Council

rwm

cc: w/enclosure

Constituents of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward  
Bob Gambill, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward Traffic Committee Member  
Traffic Committee  
Christopher Murphy, Public Service Director  
Charles Horner, Police Chief  
Council (5)  
Jo Ann Aeh, Clerk (Record)

**401 TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNALS - GENERAL****401-1 General**

**OMUTCD Chapter 4D** presents information on the design, location and use of traffic control signals. Construction details are shown on the **SCDs TC-81.10 through TC-85.20**. Traffic signal equipment is specified in **CMS Items 632 and 633**, and **CMS 732 and 733**.

**401-2 Installation of Traffic Signals on State Highways**

**Policy 516-002(P)** documents **ODOT** policy regarding installation of traffic control signals and intersection control beacons on state highways. A copy has also been included in the Appendix of this manual (*Chapter 13*).

**401-3 Periodic Review of Signals**

As noted in **OMUTCD Section 4B.02**, changing traffic patterns may render an existing traffic signal either inefficient or no longer necessary. Therefore, the responsible agency should periodically conduct a traffic engineering study to evaluate the efficiency and necessity of traffic signals under its jurisdiction and determine if revisions may be needed. This traffic engineering study may lead to changing the signal timing, signal phasing, vehicle or pedestrian detection, roadway geometry, or the complete removal of the traffic signal.

Traffic signal installations that are not properly designed and maintained for current traffic conditions, or are no longer warranted, can result in the following conditions:

1. Excessive traffic delay.
2. Increased disobedience of the signal indications.
3. The use of less adequate routes in order to avoid such signals.
4. Increased accident frequency, especially rear-end accidents.

**401-4 Removal of Traffic Signals Under ODOT Jurisdiction**

If a traffic engineering study indicates that the traffic signal is no longer justified, the traffic signal should be removed by a uniform procedure that will consider public input, accidents, site considerations and an appropriate replacement type of traffic control device. Therefore, when **ODOT** determines that an existing traffic signal installation no longer meets signal warrants as contained in the **OMUTCD**, or is no longer the appropriate form of traffic control, the **District** shall proceed through the following removal process to document and determine if the signal installation should be removed:

1. To determine if the traffic signal is still needed, the **District** shall prepare a traffic engineering study for the signal installation documenting the following information, as appropriate:
  - a. Warrant analysis summary. If reasons other than the standard warrants were used to justify the signal installation, determine if these reasons are still valid.
  - b. Accident history.
  - c. Site conditions, especially sight distance problems.
  - d. Public, business, school board or governmental complaints resulting in the original signal installation.
  - e. Present and future developmental growth.

- f. Known reasons for change in traffic patterns or volumes.
  - g. Capacity analysis for the alternate traffic control scheme most likely to be installed if the signal is removed.
  - h. Analysis of the cost of continued signal operation versus a one time signal removal cost.
  - i. Discussion of traffic volume growth needed to warrant the signal.
2. Based on the traffic engineering study, the **District** shall decide whether to proceed with the removal process or defer signal removal. If the removal is deferred, the **District** shall document the reasons for deferral. The signalized location shall be reconsidered for removal every year until a signal warrant or other determination of permanent retention is satisfied.
  3. If the **District** decides to proceed with the removal process, the following steps shall be taken:
    - a. Inform the local media, schools, governmental agencies and local emergency/safety forces of **ODOT's** intent to study the signalized location for removal.
    - b. Remove or reduce intersection sight distance restrictions, if needed.
    - c. Install the SIGNAL UNDER STUDY FOR REMOVAL (W3-H12) sign next to the signal heads on each approach.
    - d. Check the controller cabinet wiring to ensure that the color of the flashing indications will agree with the alternate traffic control scheme.
    - e. Install the alternate traffic control devices, such as STOP signs and advance Warning Signs. Existing Stop Lines on the uncontrolled approaches should not be removed at this time.
    - f. Place the signal in flashing operation for ninety days, in conjunction **with item 3e above**.
  4. If the signal is put in flashing operation for ninety days in anticipation of removal, the **District** shall monitor accident experience during the ninety-day flashing period:
    - a. If accidents of types susceptible to correction by traffic signal control have increased by more than two, the signalized location shall remain in flashing operation for an additional sixty-day period. If more than two such accidents occur in the second sixty-day period, the **District** should retain the signal in stop-and-go operation until the site conditions can be improved to reduce the accident frequency.
    - b. If accidents of types susceptible to correction by traffic signal control have not increased by more than two, continue with the removal process.
    - c. The **District** shall also monitor, investigate and respond to the concerns of the public during this period.
  5. If the **District** decides to proceed with the removal process after considering the information gathered in **item 4**:
    - a. The signal heads shall be bagged or removed, and the traffic signal turned off for a sixty day period.
    - b. The accidents shall be monitored to determine if the absence of flashing traffic signals results in an increase in accidents. If accidents occur, the **District** may consider conversion of the traffic signal to a flashing intersection control beacon.

6. If it is decided to continue with removal of the signal, the **District** shall remove the signal heads, poles, foundations (1 foot below grade), pull boxes, overhead cables and controller. Underground conduit and cables may be abandoned in place. If the **District** wants to monitor the site for an extended period of time, the poles and cables may be left in place for one year.
7. The **District** shall notify all affected parties of the removal of the signal and the termination of any agreements that were in effect. If a signal permit exists for the signal removal location, the **District** will notify the **Office of Traffic Engineering** of the signal removal so that a statewide database on **Village** signal permits can be maintained.

#### **401-5 Identifying Maintenance Responsibility for a Traffic Signal**

Road users often have a need to know the maintaining agency of a traffic signal in order to report malfunctions or signal timing problems. Many agencies install a sign or a decal on the controller cabinet to inform the public of the responsible agency and give a telephone number to report problems.

In general, the maintaining agency of a traffic signal can be determined as follows:

1. **City/Village:** Inside the corporation limits of a **City** or **Village**, the **City/Village** is responsible for the traffic signal unless the signal is located at the end of an Interstate ramp in which case, **ODOT** may maintain the signals.
2. **ODOT:** Outside the corporation limits of a **City** or **Village**, traffic signals at intersections where at least one of the highways is a State or US Route are maintained by **ODOT**. **ODOT** is responsible for all signals at Interstate ramps.
3. **County:** Outside the corporation limits of a **City** or **Village** and the involved highways are not State or US Routes, the **County** will maintain the signal if at least one of the highways is a County Route.
4. **Township:** Outside the corporation limits of a **City** or **Village** and the involved highways are not State, US or County Routes, the **Township** will maintain the signal.

#### **401-6 Village Signal Permit Procedures**

Requests by village authorities for permission to install and operate traffic control signals on state highway extensions within villages (**Form 496-8**) should be substantiated by appropriate traffic studies and submitted to the **District Deputy Director**. If it is determined that a traffic control signal is warranted, authorization for the installation of a traffic control signal will be issued to the village authorities.

The authorization is valid for 180 days. During this time, the village shall prepare and submit to **ODOT** an operation plan for the proposed traffic signal installation (**Form 496-9**). Upon approval of this plan, the village may purchase and install the traffic control signal. The fact that the **Director of Transportation** is authorized to determine whether a traffic control signal is warranted does not relieve the village authorities in any way from bearing the costs of purchasing, installing and maintaining the traffic signal equipment.

As soon as the traffic control signal has been installed and put in operation, the certification at the bottom of the form shown in **Form 496-9** should be filled out and returned to the **District Deputy Director**. The final Traffic Control Signal Permit (**Form 496-10**) will then be issued by the **Director of Transportation** and his agent will install an identification tag (**I1-H2**) with the correct permit number.

A request for modification of the hours of operation or timing of these village traffic control signals shall be submitted to the **District Deputy Director** for approval using **Form 496-11**. However, requests for alteration of any other aspect of the operation of a traffic signal covered by permit shall

## CHAPTER 1A. GENERAL

### Section 1A.01 Purpose of Traffic Control Devices

#### Support:

The purpose of traffic control devices, as well as the principles for their use, is to promote highway safety and efficiency by providing for the orderly movement of all road users on streets and highways throughout the Nation.

Traffic control devices notify road users of regulations and provide warning and guidance needed for the reasonably safe, uniform, and efficient operation of all elements of the traffic stream.

#### Standard:

**Traffic control devices or their supports shall not bear any advertising message or any other message that is not related to traffic control.**

#### Support:

Tourist-oriented directional signs and Specific Service signs are not considered advertising; rather, they are classified as motorist service signs.

## **Section 1A.02 Principles of Traffic Control Devices**

**Support:**

This Manual contains the basic principles that govern the design and use of traffic control devices for all streets and highways open to public travel regardless of type or class or the public agency having jurisdiction. This Manual's text specifies the restriction on the use of a device if it is intended for limited application or for a specific system. It is important that these principles be given **primary** consideration in the selection and application of each device.

**Guidance:**

To be effective, a traffic control device should meet five basic requirements:

- A. Fulfill a need;
- B. Command attention;
- C. Convey a clear, simple meaning;
- D. Command respect from road users; and
- E. Give adequate time for proper response.

Design, placement, operation, maintenance, and uniformity are aspects that should be carefully considered in order to maximize the ability of a traffic control device to meet the five requirements listed in the previous paragraph. Vehicle speed should be carefully considered as an element that governs the design, operation, placement, and location of various traffic control devices.

**Support:**

The definition of the word "speed" varies depending on its use. The definitions of specific speed terms are contained in Section 1A.13.