

VERMONT AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION WAITSFIELD CASE STUDY

PROJECT: Route 100 Frontage Road

LOCATION: Irasville, VT

● Challenge

During the 1970s and 1980s the ski industry was experiencing growth, and development at both Mad River Glen and Sugarbush was attracting more tourism into the region year round. Town officials recognized that retail and other tourism related development was on the horizon, and that Route 100, the only viable route through the Mad River Valley, could become a bottleneck with each retailer having a parking lot off the already busy highway. Worse yet, sprawl was a very real possibility, and residents feared that it could ruin the scenic beauty of the region.

● Solution

The village decided to move commercial development off the highway by building Slow Road, a frontage road running parallel to Route 100 and along which retail and other business development could take place, and which features controlled entrances and exits. On the opposite, or east side of Route 100 from Slow Road, development took on a shopping center form with group off-street parking and limited entrance and exit points, achieving the same result.

● Results

Traffic in and out of shops and restaurants is channeled adding a measure of safety for bicyclists, a growing component of summer tourism, and pedestrians. The potential for accidents was greatly reduced since curb cuts for many businesses were combined. The village was able to preserve and enhance greenspace in keeping with its image. Grouping retail encouraged people to shop, and businesses benefited from combined parking. Waitsfield has been able to retain the charm of a small Vermont ski village in winter, and an outdoor recreation center during the summer. Finally, there is room for additional development off Route 100 to accommodate future growth.



BEFORE ACCESS MANAGEMENT



AFTER ACCESS MANAGEMENT

As one of the first permits granted under the then new Act 250, the development of Slow Road and the shopping center in the Village was the result of a concentrated effort between forward thinking town officials and the developer to plan for the future of Route 100. The project resulted in the closing of several curb cuts and the diversion of traffic from Route 100 to the frontage road that served retailers and others in the shopping center development. It has had a positive impact on the movement of traffic, making Waitsfield safer for motorists, and giving them quicker access to the shops. It was an excellent cooperative effort.

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