

Request for Public Comments

NH Route 122 at Merrimack Road – Proposed Safety Improvements

Board of Selectmen Meeting

February 23, 2026 @ 6:30 pm

Amherst Town Hall

The Amherst Board of Selectmen will hold a public input session on **February 23, 2026**, to receive public input regarding proposed safety improvements at the intersection of **NH Route 122 and Merrimack Road**.

This input session follows prior discussions with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) concerning ongoing operational and safety concerns at this location.

Background

The intersection of NH 122 and Merrimack Road is currently programmed for future improvement under **NHDOT Project 44227**, which was added to the State Ten-Year Transportation Plan in 2025 and is presently scheduled for construction in 2034. The project is funded at \$3 million and is intended to provide intersection improvements, including pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.

However, growing safety and operational concerns—exacerbated by recent crashes—prompted Town officials to request consideration of interim countermeasures prior to full project implementation.

Concerns identified include:

- Vehicle speeds on NH 122
- Impatience and risky turning maneuvers from Merrimack Road
- Sight distance limitations due to vegetation
- Overall crash history and driver behavior patterns

In response, the Town met with NHDOT Highway Safety, Maintenance, and Traffic staff to evaluate short-term safety options.

Proposed Interim Countermeasure: All-Way Stop Control (AWSC)

The primary short-term safety counter-measure under consideration is converting the intersection from two-way stop control to **all-way stop control (AWSC)**.

Why Consider All-Way Stop Control?

Federal guidance (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices – MUTCD) identifies factors supporting AWSC, including:

- Traffic volumes on all approaches

- Approach speeds
- Sight distance
- Crash experience
- Yield behavior of drivers

Traffic data presented by NHDOT indicates:

- NH 122 (south approach): approximately **7,034 vehicles per day**
- Merrimack Road (east approach): approximately **1,970 vehicles per day**

Recent 85th percentile speeds on NH 122 are approximately **43 mph in a 35-mph zone**.

Evidence from Other States and New Hampshire

NHDOT's review included national and in-state experience with similar intersections.

National Experience:

- **North Carolina** reported:
 - 68% reduction in total crashes
 - 77% reduction in fatal and injury crashes
 - 75% reduction in frontal impact crashes
 - Benefit-to-cost ratio of 83:1
- **Delaware** reported significant reductions in crashes, including:
 - 57% reduction in total crashes
 - 82% reduction in injury crashes
 - 100% reduction in fatal crashes at studied intersections

Both states received national recognition for their roadway safety initiatives.

New Hampshire Examples:

Recent conversions in Gilmanton, Franconia, Chester, Lempster, and other communities have demonstrated meaningful crash reductions.

For example, at NH 107/NH 140 in Gilmanton:

- Before AWSC: 26 crashes over 5.67 years (4.6/year), 9 injuries
- After AWSC: 6 crashes over 4.33 years (1.4/year), 0 injuries

While some initial public skepticism is common, post-implementation feedback in other communities has generally been positive.

Pros and Considerations

Potential Benefits:

- Promotes safer speeds on NH 122
- Requires all drivers to stop, reducing angle and high-speed collisions
- Improves pedestrian safety environment
- Largely mitigates sight distance limitations
- Can be implemented quickly

Considerations:

- Requires short-term driver adjustment
- May introduce delay on NH 122
- Full compliance may take time

Implementation and Public Notification

If implemented, NHDOT would provide substantial advance warning and enhanced visibility measures, including:

- Portable changeable message signs 1–2 weeks in advance stating “TRAFFIC CHANGE SOON / ALL WAY STOP”
- Continued message display for approximately one month after activation
- “NEW” panels and bright orange flags on STOP and STOP AHEAD signs for up to one year
- STOP and STOP AHEAD signs placed on both left and right sides of each approach
- “ALL WAY” plaques under each STOP sign
- Updated overhead intersection beacon displaying red beacons for all approaches

What Is Expected of the Board of Selectmen?

While the NHDOT Commissioner has statutory authority to regulate state highways, NHDOT has indicated it is best practice to receive concurrence from the local governing body.

At the February 23rd public input session, the Board will consider whether to formally communicate support for implementing all-way stop control at this intersection as an interim safety countermeasure.

Timeline

If supported by the Town:

- NHDOT is developing a **statewide systemic project of up to 20 intersections** to be advertised this spring, with construction completed in calendar year 2026.
- If not included in that systemic contract, the intersection could potentially be implemented through NHDOT Operations work plans this summer, subject to resource availability.

If not supported:

- No immediate short-term action would be taken.
- The Town, in coordination with NHDOT and Nashua Regional Planning Commission, would continue advancing Project 44227 through the standard alternatives analysis process.

Importantly, implementation of all-way stop control would **not jeopardize the planned 44227 intersection project**, which will still undergo a full alternatives evaluation.

Public Participation

Residents, business owners, and stakeholders are encouraged to attend the February 23, 2026, Board of Selectmen meeting at Amherst Town Hall to:

- Learn more about the proposed change
- Ask questions of Town representatives
- Provide input prior to any Board action

Public safety, operational efficiency, and long-term planning considerations will all be part of the discussion.

Amherst: NH 122 at Merrimack Road

Discussion of safety concerns and possible countermeasures, including all-way stop

January 26, 2026



Google Maps



NH Department Of Transportation



OUR MISSION

Serving and connecting New Hampshire through transportation

OUR VISION

A safe, reliable, connected, and multimodal transportation system, effectively managed by a dedicated and skilled workforce



Why are we here?

- Background
 - Amherst, 44227
 - Ongoing safety and operational concerns prompted request for intermediate improvements
- Discussion of all-way stop control (AWSC) as a safety countermeasure
 - North Carolina and Delaware experience
 - Recent AWSC implementation in New Hampshire
 - AWSC at subject intersection?
- Discussion/Questions

Nottingham NH 156

Background

Merrimack Rd

Merrimack Rd

Merrimack Rd

Merrimack Rd

122

Smith Ln

Smith Ln

Ponemah Rd

Jennifer Ln

Jennifer Ln

Google Maps

Background – Amherst, 44227

- Programmed to provide “intersection improvements, including pedestrian and bicycle accommodations”
- Introduced to the Ten-Year Plan (TYP) in 2025, Const. 2034
- Scope of “intersection improvements” not determined, subject to public evaluation of alternatives, including “no build”
- Programmed for \$3,000,000

DRAFT TEN YEAR TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN
2027 – 2036

SUBMITTED TO THE LEGISLATURE AS A DRAFT FOR
CONSIDERATION AND INPUT

Pursuant to RSA 228:99 of the Laws of New Hampshire



New Hampshire
DOT
Department of Transportation

Prepared by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and the
Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation

January 14, 2026

Ongoing operational and safety concerns

- October 30, 2025: Town expressed concern with shift of 44227 to 2036 (from 2034), noting “growing concerns...exacerbated by several recent accidents”
- December 19, 2025: Project team (Town of Amherst staff and NHDOT Project Manager) met with NHDOT (Highway Safety, Highway Maintenance-District 5, and Traffic) to discuss concerns and possible intermediate measures
 - Concerns with sight lines due to vegetation
 - Speed on NH 122 and impatience on Merrimack Road cited as primary concern
- January 26, 2026 Board of Selectmen meeting to discuss intermediate measures

**Amherst
NH 122 at
Merrimack Road**

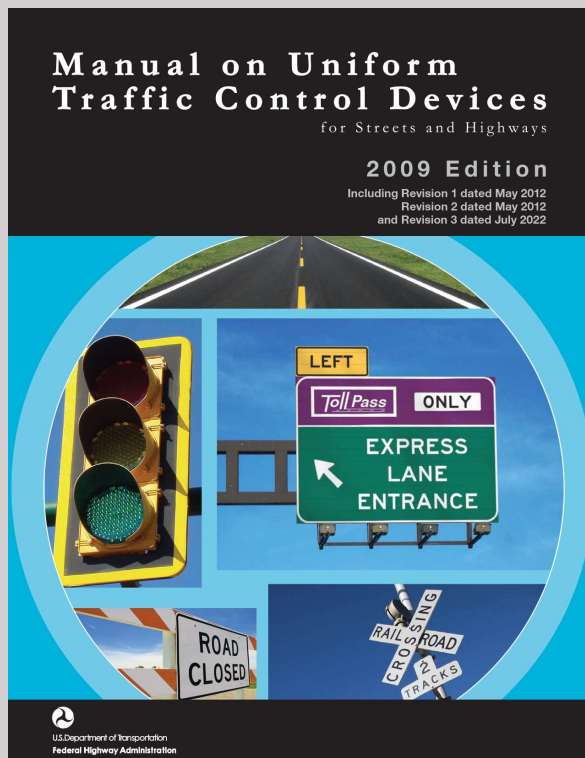
**All-way stop
control**

All-Way Stop Control

- Federal Guidelines (MUTCD)
- Recent experience and crash reduction by other states
 - North Carolina
 - Delaware
- Recent New Hampshire “success” stories
 - Gilmanton, Franconia, Chester, Lempster



All-Way Stop Control Federal guidance (MUTCD)



- Factors to consider include:
 - Traffic volumes on all approaches
 - Driver yield behavior regarding all modes of conflicting traffic, including bicycles and pedestrians
 - Number and angle of approaches
 - Approach speeds
 - Sight distance available on each approach
 - Reported crash experience

All-Way Stop Control

Federal guidance (MUTCD) – Crash Experience

All-way stop control may be installed at an intersection where an engineering study indicates that:

- A. For a four-leg intersection, there are five or more reported crashes in a 12-month period or six or more reported crashes in a 36-month period that were of a type susceptible to correction by the installation of all-way stop control.



“So, it’s true, someone really does have to get hurt before we change something?”

New Hampshire DOT—What has changed?

- National recognition given to two states for converting 2-way stops to all-way stops, Delaware and North Carolina
 - “2023 National Roadway Safety Awards recognize innovations to protect pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists as pandemic spike in road fatalities continues mostly unabated”
 - “Ten innovative highway safety projects, representing the very best of the nation’s roadway safety practices,...honored with National Roadway Safety Awards...”
 - Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) for converting 20 low-volume intersections from two-way to all-way stops.
 - North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for significantly reducing the number of fatal and serious crashes at rural intersections

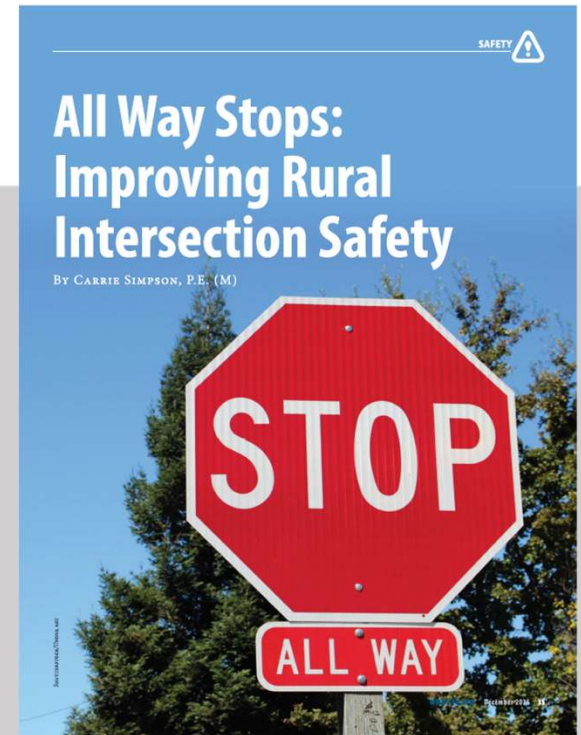
Delaware

Table 2. Annual Crashes at 25 Newly Converted AWSC Intersections

Total Annual Crashes from All Study Intersections	Crash Type					Severity		
	Total	Angle	Rear End	Single Vehicle	All Others	PDO	Injury	Fatal
Before	120.67	67.33	17.00	19.33	17.00	70.33	48.67	1.67
After	52.33	22.67	12.17	11.33	6.17	43.67	8.67	0.00
% Change	-57%	-66%	-28%	-41%	-64%	-38%	-82%	-100%

North Carolina

- Study Findings
 - 68% Reduction in Total Crashes
 - 77% Reduction in Fatal and Injury Crashes
 - 75% Reduction in Frontal Impact Crashes
- Benefits
 - Low cost (\$20,000 per intersection)
 - Benefit to Cost ratio of 83:1
- All-way stop control can be installed on primary routes without violating driver expectations or creating safety concerns.
 - NCDOT considers AWSC comparable (preferable?) to mini-roundabouts



North Carolina

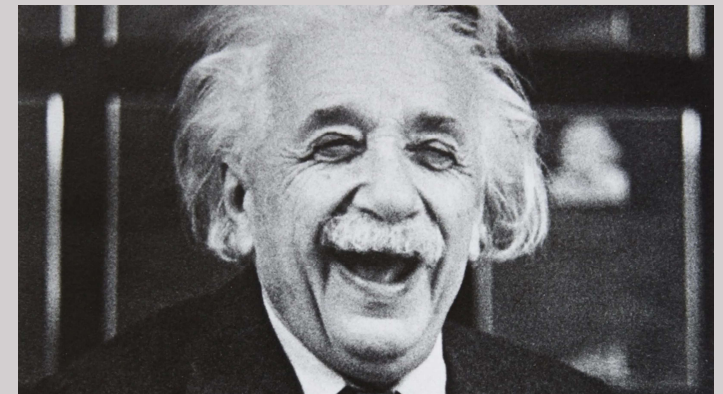
ncdot.gov AWS Guidelines

Safety Treatments – 2-Ln Minor Road Stop

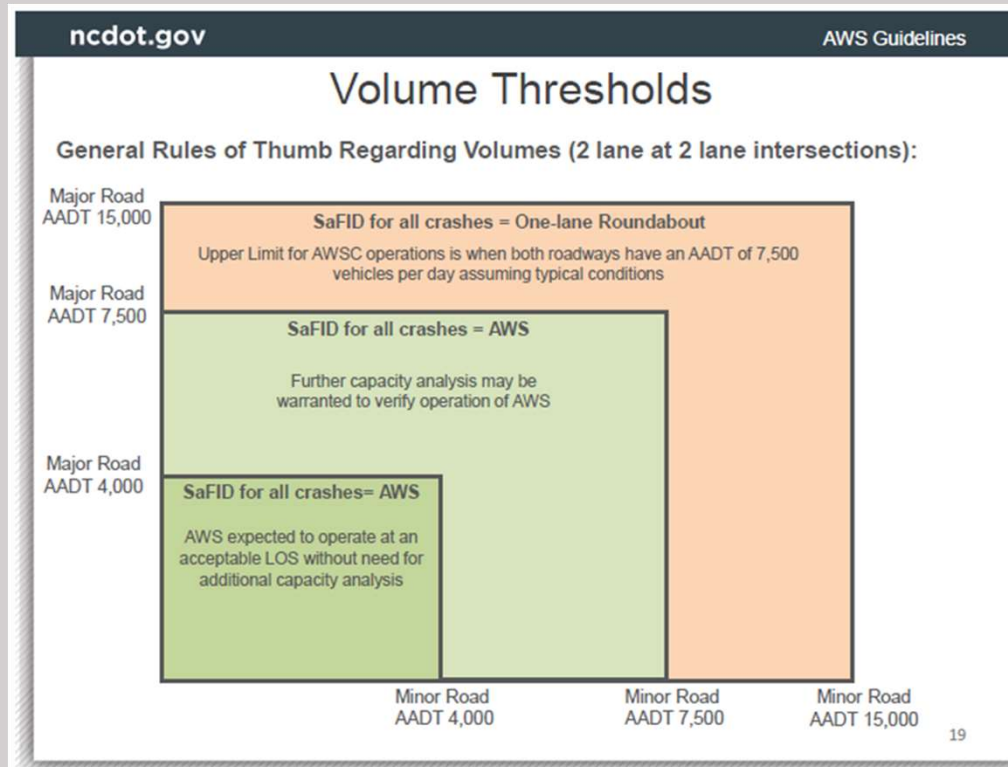
	All Way Stop Roundabouts	Most Confident in Big Safety Improvement	
	Vehicle Entering When Flashing Enhanced Intersection Signing	Middling and Scattered Safety Results	
	Stop Ahead Pavement Markings Overhead Flashing Beacon	Most Likely Missing the Safety Target	

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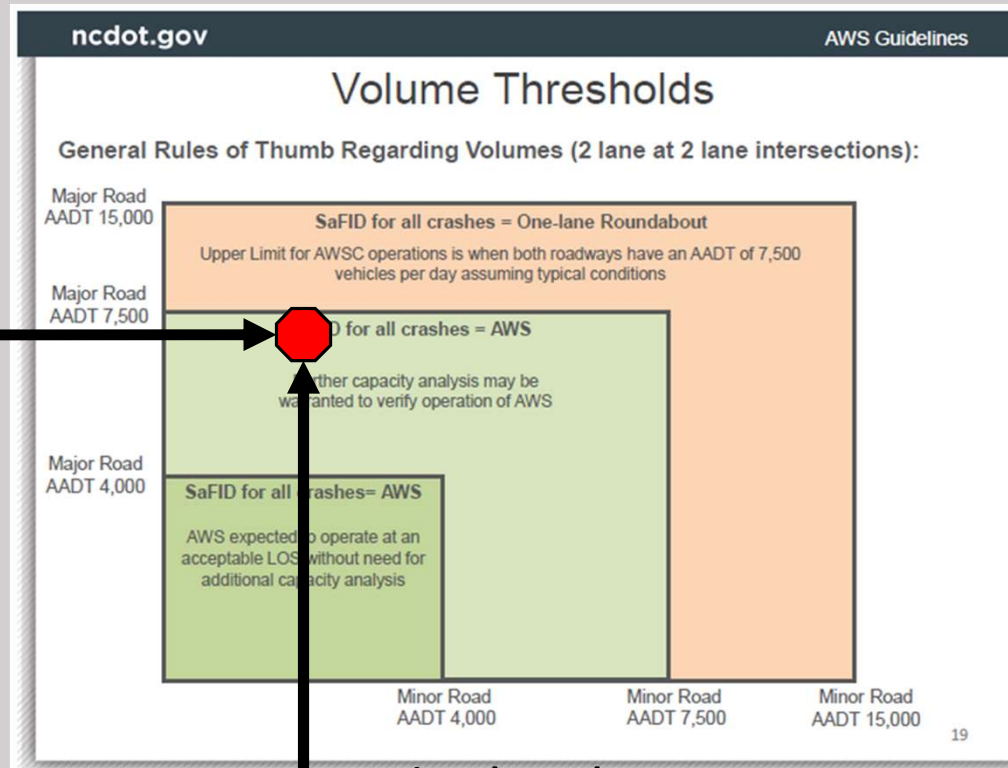
“Insanity”: Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results” Albert Einstein



North Carolina



North Carolina



**NH 122:
7,034 (south) vpd**



**Merrimack Road:
1,970 (east) vpd**

Amherst, NH 122 at Merrimack Road

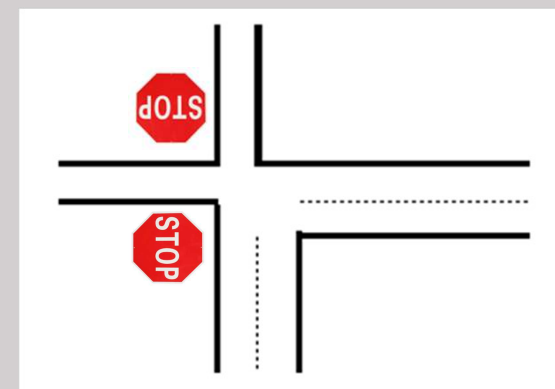
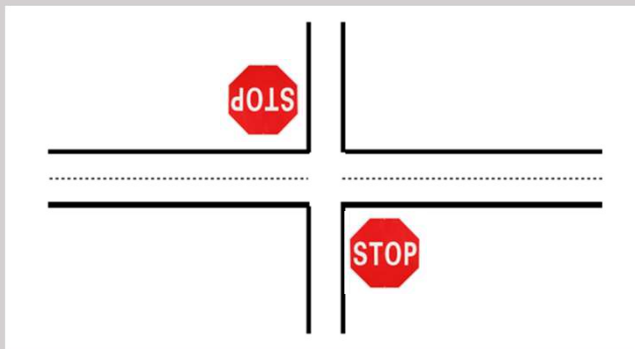
**Nottingham
NH 156**

Recent New Hampshire examples

Recent New Hampshire Examples

General – two types of intersections

- “Major” through route with one or two “minor” roads intersecting or crossing
- “Major” through route represents adjacent legs, with one or more “minor” routes

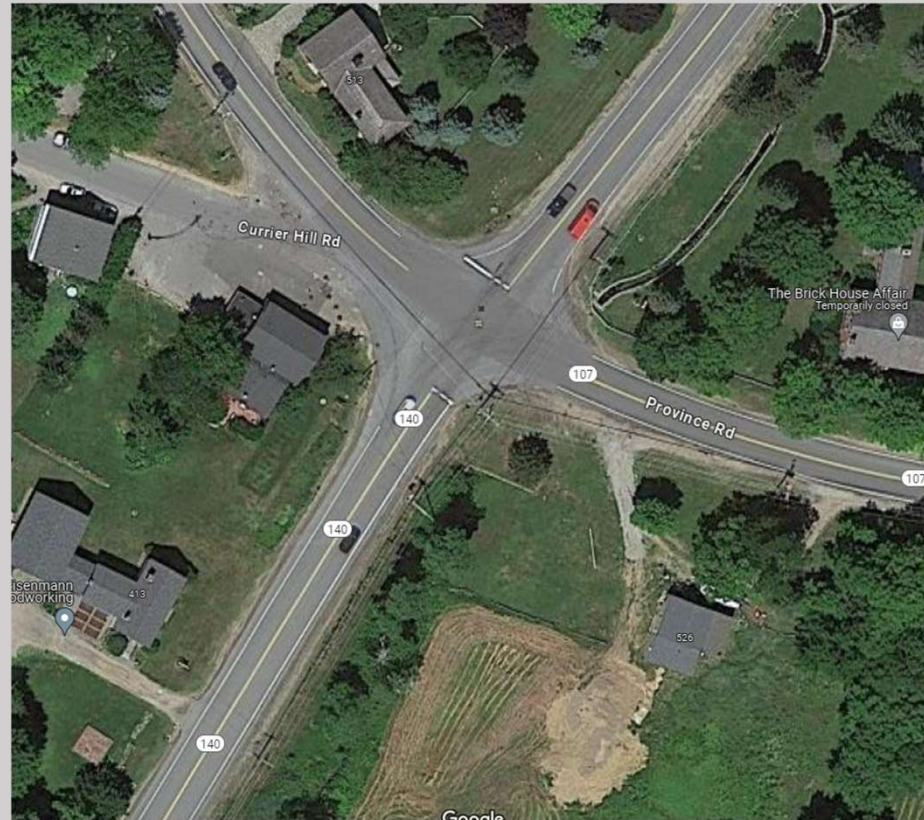


“Recent” New Hampshire Examples 4-leg, 2-way stop controlled to AWSC

- Wakefield, NH 109 at NH 153 (1997)
- Epping, NH 27 at Main Street (2018)
- Gilmanton, NH 107 at NH 140 (2020)
- Franconia, NH 18 at NH 116 (2021)
- Salisbury, US 4 at NH 127 (2024)
- Concord, NH 132 at Hoit Road (2024)
- Hampstead, NH 121 at Depot Road (2025)
- Pelham, NH 128 at Keyes Hill Road/Tallant Road (2025)

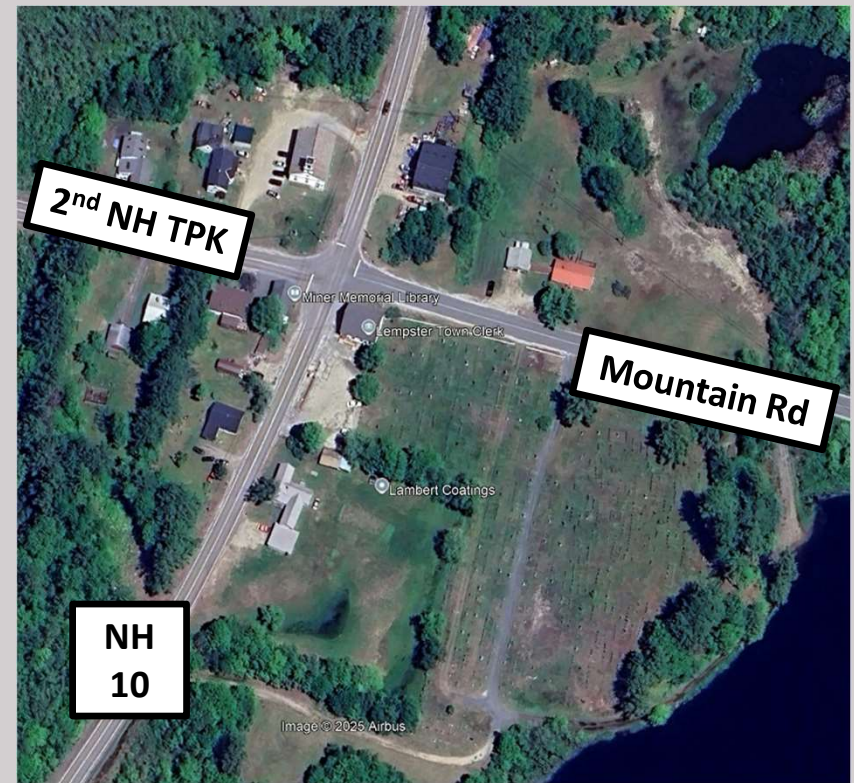
Gilmanton: NH 107 at NH 140

- Volumes:
 - Major: 4,107 AADT
 - Minor: 2,100 AADT
- Crash Data
 - 2015-Aug. 2020
 - 5.67 years
 - 26 crashes (4.6/year)
 - 9 Injuries
 - 9 suspected minor
 - Sep. 2020 - 2024
 - 4.33 years
 - 6 crashes (1.4/year)
 - 0 injuries



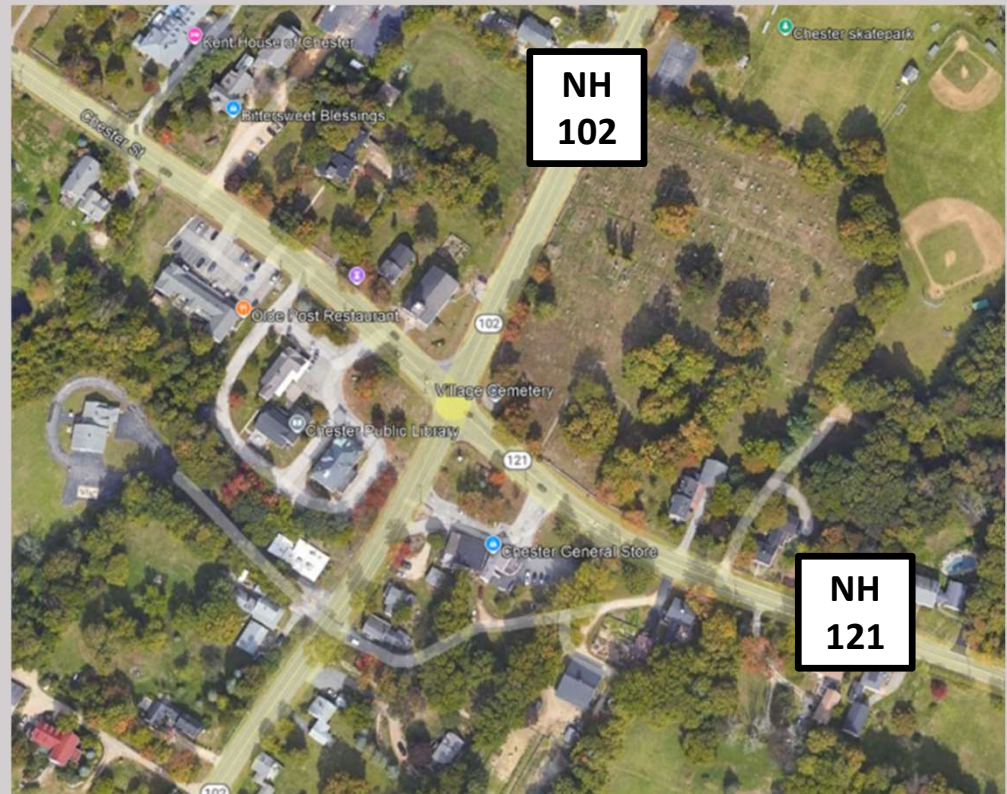
Lempster

- Volumes:
 - Major: 1,715 (N), 1,452 (S) AADT
 - Minor: 1,458 (W), 825 (E) AADT
- Crash Data
 - Action prompted by recent high-profile crashes, including an NHDOT employee
 - Public and local elected officials skeptical of AWSC, but three months later...
 - *"We are pleased with the performance of the 4 way stop, so far. It is not perfect, but we have not had any serious accidents so far. We have confirmed that the neighbors, the UPS & Fedex driver, are all thrilled with the 4 way stop. The items of concern have been several panic stops by tractor trailers, several repeat offenders who run the stop (and do so with some consistency) and we have seen more passing on roads after the intersection with drivers who seem to be annoyed (but that is life). Overall, the 4 way stop is a huge success and we appreciate the help from all of the parties that have made this possible."*



Chester: NH 102 at NH 121

- Volumes:
 - Major: 8,446 AADT
 - Minor: 4,867 AADT
- Crash Data
 - 2015-Sep. 2024
 - 9.75 years
 - 102 crashes (10.5/year)
 - 24 Injuries
 - 2 suspected major
 - 16 suspected minor
 - 6 Possible injury
 - Oct. 2024-Dec. 2024
 - 0.25 years
 - 2 crashes (8/year)
 - 1 injury
 - 1 suspected minor



Change is hard...

- *“You're an absolute idiot for putting a 4 way stop intersection at the CENTER OF CHESTER?! Have you ever lives (sic) in this town or are you just some dumb*** bureaucrat that thinks things look good on paper? I personally will look into what can be done to get you fired. Dumb*** piece of sh** f***ing up everyone's daily lives, go f*** yourself”*
 - E-mail from resident after public announcement of change to AWSC
- *“I will say that even with the icy and snowy weather we've had for the past week or so I've heard zero complaints about/from people coming up the hill from Derry and stopping at the 4-way stop. Zero!”*
 - From town administrator four months after implementation

NH 122 at Merrimack Road as AWSC

- Volumes (NHDOT MS2):
 - See graphic (volumes represent Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT))
- Crash Data
 - May be necessary for further study
- Speed (85th percentile, TomTom, 2026)
 - NH 122 = 43-mph (S/L = 35)



All-way stop control

- Pros

- Promotes safer speeds on major route
- Requires all drivers to stop, reduces odds of two drivers entering intersection at the same time
- Slower/stopped traffic provides a safer environment for pedestrians
- Largely negates lack of sight distance
- Can be implemented quickly

- Cons

- Requires short-term re-education of familiar drivers (enhanced conspicuity for new STOP signs and short-term deployment of changeable message signs)
- Full compliance may be scarce
- Introduces new delay for NH 122 traffic

Next Steps?

- With local support?
 - Consider inclusion of this intersection with Statewide All-Way Stop project, set to convert approximately 20 locations in 2026
 - Could be implemented by NHDOT, subject to resource availability
- If no local support for all-way stop?
 - No immediate action, no other viable short-term alternatives
 - Town of Amherst, in collaboration with Nashua Regional Planning and NHDOT, to continue development of 44227 TYP project
 - Other options are not viable

Questions?

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Google Maps



Implementation

- Advance notice of new stop condition
 - Portable Changeable Message Signs
 - “TRAFFIC CHANGE SOON/ALL WAY STOP”
- Extended emphasis of new stop condition
 - Additional conspicuity for up to one year

