

Town of Stowe Selectboard Scenic Roads Policy

Purpose: To help preserve the scenic qualities of Stowe by maintaining the character of our roads in general and designated scenic roads in particular.

This Policy is meant to provide guidance to the Highway Department regarding the maintenance of roads and is not meant to restrict private property owner maintenance or to interfere with private property rights.

Authority: The authority for the Selectboard to designate scenic roads is found in Chapter 24, Title 19 of the Vermont State Statutes.

Designation Process: Any scenic road must be designated by the Selectboard at a publicly warned regular or special meeting. Scenic road designation may be requested by a resident or property owner, the Planning Commission, the Conservation Commission, or the Selectboard may designate a road as scenic on its own initiative.

A scenic road should have a rural quality that has exceptional characteristics or features, such as above average views, a mature tree canopy or a stone wall within the highway right of way.

Appendix A contains the list of designated scenic roads, as well as a summary of the scenic features of each road that designation is intended to preserve or protect. Appendix A shall be revised to incorporate any additional designations. The Selectboard shall also designate scenic roads on the Annual Certificate of Highway Millage filed pursuant to 19 VSA 305 (b).

Maintenance: The Highway Department is permitted to perform normal day-to-day ditching, grading, tree trimming and other road maintenance operations. However, unless necessary to enable an emergency repair or approved by the Selectboard at a public meeting, all scenic roads should be maintained so as to avoid substantially altering the significant features listed on a road's scenic road designation rationale.

Substantial alterations to a scenic road, such as changing a gravel road to a paved road, eliminating a significant feature documented in the road designation form, or a noticeable widening of the road shall not be done prior to a public hearing and approval by the Selectboard at a regular or special Selectboard meeting. Notice shall be sent to property owners abutting the road by mail at least seven (7) calendar days in advance of the meeting shall be warned in the Town's official paper of record.

Emergency Repair: In the case of a natural disaster where the road becomes impassable or unsafe for public travel and access must be provided, maintenance and/or reconstruction standards may be suspended for the purpose of emergency repairs. Repairs should be done trying to balance out the need to reopen the road safely in a timely manner and preventing further need for future emergency repairs (e.g. upsizing a culvert) while striving to maintain the scenic characteristics of the road.

Adopted by the Selectboard at their meeting on November 12, 2013.