

November 22, 2011

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SCARSDALE  
STATEMENT CONCERNING  
THE POTENTIAL CONSTRUCTION OF A MODERN ROUNDABOUT  
AT THE HEATHCOTE FIVE CORNERS INTERSECTION**

The League of Women Voters of Scarsdale (the “League”) has followed the work of the Village Trustees as they investigate the feasibility of constructing a modern 5-legged roundabout at the Heathcote Five Corners intersection.

Background

The intersection at Heathcote Five Corners continues to be troublesome to the community due to:

- Long wait time at traffic lights
- Long queues
- Confusing turning signage
- NYSDOT LOS Grade D and E\*
- Heavy traffic volume due to Weaver Street and Heathcote Road serving as an east/west county artery

In 2009, the Village Board appointed an Ad Hoc Committee\*\*, comprised of Scarsdale residents, to study the Heathcote Five Corners intersection with the charge to investigate and propose measures to improve the current traffic issues at the intersection. The majority of the Committee concluded that a modern roundabout could be a solution and further study was prudent. The Village Board then commissioned an engineering study by Creighton Manning Engineering, LLP. (“Creighton Manning”). Upon completion of a 2-phased study, Creighton Manning concluded that a modern roundabout, 105 feet in diameter after right of way property acquisition, would be feasible at the intersection.

**\*LOS (Level of service)** is defined by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Highway Design Manual as a qualitative measure of conditions within a traffic stream, based on service measures such as speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort and convenience. Grade D is considered by NYSDOT to be the minimum acceptable level for noninterstate roads. Eleven approaches of the Heathcote Five Corners intersection are currently graded D and one is graded E.

\*\*The Ad-Hoc Committee on the Heathcote 5 Corners and the NY Route 125/Griffen Avenue/Quaker Ridge Road Intersection was established by Mayor Carolyn Stevens and the Village Board of Trustees on August 11, 2009. Peter Strauss was appointed chair. Martin Kaufman, Bill Miller, Vic Goldberg, Pam Rubin, Marc Gross and Melanie Spivak were the other members appointed.

On September 20, 2011, the League held a public information meeting at which a panel comprised of representatives of the Ad Hoc Committee, Creighton Manning and Village management presented information and responded to questions from the League and the audience.

On October 3, 2011, the League held a general membership meeting at which members reached consensus regarding the potential construction of a modern roundabout, set forth in the Statement below.

### **Statement**

The League reached consensus that, absent monetary constraints, the benefits to the Village and the immediate neighborhood of a modern roundabout at Heathcote Five Corners outweigh the challenges anticipated in constructing a modern roundabout for the following reasons:

- Potential traffic improvements
  - Shorter queuing, leading to a reduction of gas emissions
  - Improved intersection capacity during all times of the day
  - Reduced traffic speed in intersection and approaches
  - Improved NYSDOT LOS grade \*\*\*
  - Reduction in number and severity of accidents
- Provision for emergency vehicle access
- Improved pedestrian safety by incorporating safer crossings
- Potential increased business for local merchants as a result of increased pedestrian traffic
- Aesthetic improvements

While we believe a modern roundabout may provide a good long-term solution for the traffic issues at Heathcote Five Corners, the League recognizes the current challenging financial conditions faced by the Village. The League understands that the Village will seek Federal and/or State grants to fund a substantial portion of the anticipated costs, estimated to be more than \$2 million. In considering whether to proceed with a modern roundabout, the Village Board should determine whether the costs not funded by Federal or State monies can be funded by the Village without cutting other budget items that are a higher priority to residents.

\*\*\*The grade is expected to improve to a B, with the average waiting time reduced from 47.6 seconds to 16.8 seconds.

If construction of a modern roundabout is approved, the League notes the following concerns:

- The proposed 105-foot diameter of the roundabout is 10% smaller than the smallest roundabout studied by Creighton Manning in Phase 1. The location of entrance and exit points are challenging due to the proximity of some of the legs. The roundabout must be designed with great care in order to attain the desired safety and traffic improvement benefits.
- The Village must dedicate appropriate resources to provide significant and plentiful public education regarding the traffic rules applicable to driving on the roundabout prior to, during and after its construction.
- Residents and businesses located in this area will be disrupted during construction. The League urges that they be inconvenienced as little as possible during the construction phase.

Whether or not a modern roundabout is constructed, the League urges the Village Board and Village management to investigate improving the Heathcote Bypass signage in order to encourage increased usage of the bypass and further divert traffic from local roads.

The League thanks the Village Board of Trustees and the Village Manager and his staff for their cooperation throughout this process as we gathered information, asked questions and called upon the Trustees and Village staff for data, engineering studies and assistance with our public forum.

The League appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed roundabout. We hope that you will consider our comments and suggestions as you decide what course is best for Scarsdale.

Marylou Green, President  
**Scarsdale League of Women Voters**

**Planning & Zoning Committee**  
Deborah Pekarek, Chair  
Angela Manson  
Kitt Rosenthal  
Carolyn Stevens