

Dear Road Wizard: As one drives Fairview Avenue west toward Meridian, traffic backs up. Lights are not synchronized. Can't something be done? J.O. @

And, dear Road Wizard, it's safer to enter Fairview from Hickory Way with the new signal, but why do I sometimes wait three minutes to enter Fairview? T.G. @

J.O., you are right about synchrony. It isn't all there yet. Conduit has been laid below Fairview, but communicating cable hasn't been purchased or installed. Groups of signals do have synchrony, but not the whole route.

Signals from Curtis Road to Records Avenue are connected, but not Records to Eagle. Eagle and Hickory work together. Main Street and Meridian Road work together, but not with points east or west.

Prospects for a Grand Fairview Symphony should improve after Meridian's old controllers are replaced in 2007 with more talented models. Also, widening Locust Grove Road to five lanes between Overland Road and Fairview this year and next will be diverting traffic from Pine Avenue and Locust Grove. This will impact Fairview, disturbing whatever synchrony there is.

So in the Grand Overall Construction Planning and Cart-Before-Horse Symphony, ACHD has put the connecting-cable Horse after the Cart.

Meanwhile, T.G., if you are reporting three minute waits, you are talking the afternoon peak-hour program, which goes from 2:45 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. (Peak of the peak: 5:10 p.m. to 6 p.m.) Your Timex/Rolux tells you true: Eagle/Hickory's signal cycle is 180 seconds.

The signal at Fairview and Eagle has a mighty job to do: move high-volume, high-speed, state-highway Eagle traffic as smoothly as possible along Eagle's coordinated route. Fairview's high volumes are one reason for the three-minute cycle: it moves more traffic in peak times than a shorter cycle would.

To help prevent Fairview traffic from backing up to Eagle Road from Hickory, causing more congestion for Eagle Road, Fairview can get up to 95 seconds of green. After 40 seconds of guaranteed green, if gaps between cars are 3.5 seconds, Fairview loses the green to Hickory. (Cycles and guaranteed minimums at other times of day are shorter.)

The official mission of the Hickory signal is to give you safe passage onto Fairview without interfering with Fairview's role in the coordination plan for Eagle Road. Sounds like it's performing. Mixed blessing.

Dear Road Wizard: Visitors to Boise seeking my house on Rose

Hill Street have told me there's no sign marking Latah Street for people driving up Americana Boulevard. There is a sign, but at night the streetlight reflects on it so strongly that it appears as a shiny rectangle. Can something be done? M.C.@

It took a few passes up the hill to figure this out. The Latah sign is to the left, and the silvery *back* of a sign (facing Emerald Street drivers headed downhill) is on the right. This reflecting surface is so mesmerizing that a driver doesn't look elsewhere for the real Latah sign.

When weather accommodates and the bucket truck is free, ACHD's sign crew will place a second Latah sign in the blank and move it higher to reduce glare. Tell your visitors they are doubly welcomed to Boise!

Dear Road Wizard: On Cory Lane, just west of Maple Grove Road, a utility patch from last summer has turned into a horrible patch of bumpy asphalt. Who should I call? K.W.@

You called the Road Wizard. Good enough! In road lingo, this is a "thin overlay that failed." ACHD will return in March after the hot mix plants open and redo this ugly little blot.