Dear Road Wizard: I read about the tree obstructing the sign for Summerwind Street. There must be an unwritten law that every street sign must have a tree or bush planted on the same corner. Heading east on Lake Forest Drive is a real winner. I'm in service work, where this is irritating, but it must be a major issue with emergency vehicles. What gives? Lost in Boise

Here's what I think gives: if people who lived on those streets used their signs to navigate their way home, the signs would be unobstructed. Corner-lot owners would care deeply if landscaping hid the signs.

But that's not how we get home. Visual cues other than street signs mean more to us. When inviting visitors, we say, "Turn right at the house with the red tile roof. We are the fifth house on the left – the driveway with the basketball hoop."

Corner-lot owners don't notice when their innocent two-inch tree matures to embrace the street sign. Here are two challenges: If you are a corner-lot owner, inspect your corner and the sign the next time you drive home. Has your greenery been too successful? If so, take action. This would be a useful exercise for homeowner association boards, too.

The second challenge is for all who dwell in a house. At night, go stand at your curb and look at your house numbers. Imagine yourself as the ambulance driver (who didn't get the word about the basketball hoop). Compare the scene with porch light on and off. Then imagine it was YOU whose heart had stopped. Take action.

Dear Road Wizard: Regarding the signal sequence on Myrtle Street: The upstream lights get a green before the downstream lights. When traffic is heavy, cars with green lights can't go because the cars ahead still have a red light. Wouldn't traffic go better if downstream lights turned green first? T.M.@

First of all, be aware that recent lane closures for BoDo construction have made a big impact on Myrtle Street. When capacity gets choked off during the peak hours, it's hard for the signal system to make up for it.

Without lane closures, Myrtle's 85-second morning-peak cycle can get about 40 cars through on **each** of five thru lanes. Things work pretty well until you close a lane and load its traffic on the other lanes.

Don't forget that the signals run a fixed time, not a detection-loop system. Side-street traffic, which includes pedestrians, requires a minimum green time to cross during every 85-second cycle at every intersection.

Now to your question: Your scenario to have the signal at 6th Street turn green before the lights at 13th (which might work

with a detection-loop system) doesn't take into account the time it takes to travel between 13th and 6th. By the time you got there, it would be red! Backup would accumulate.

Instead, think of yourself as a pack member or part of a wave. When 13th goes green, your group wants 11th to go green to meet you, then 9th, then Capitol Boulevard, then 6th. When traffic cooks on all five lanes, you can surf green to Broadway.

Dear K.L., L.B., and D.S.: If you STILL want to know more about the signals at Vista Avenue near the airport...

Click on the link to the “Vista/I-84 Special" just below the one to this week’s column. You will find a graphic depiction of the signal's reds and greens and a narrative interpretation of same.